

LOCAL PLAN ALTERATIONS

Adopted July 2006

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN



ALTERATIONS



EPPING FOREST
DISTRICT COUNCIL

ADOPTED
JANUARY 1998



LOCAL PLAN ALTERATIONS

Local Plan Alterations – interim document (July 2006).

This is intended as a “stop-gap” document, primarily for use in development control, while we finalise printing of the Alterations and new Proposals Map. It includes and combines the Inspector’s Report (July 2006) with the extant parts of the Redeposit (July 2005) and the Pre-Inquiry Changes (Dec 2005). It should be used in conjunction with the Adopted Local Plan, and you should therefore be aware of the following:

- There is one completely new chapter (4A) on Core Policies – these are slightly altered versions of the Core Strategy policies of the Replacement Structure Plan.
- The Green Belt, Housing, Shopping and Town Centres, and Transport Chapters of the Adopted Local Plan have been replaced in their entirety. New or revised policies of particular significance include GB14A (Residential Extensions), GB17B (Removal of Agricultural Occupancy Conditions), H5A – H7A (Affordable Housing), TC4 (Non-Retail Frontage) – with the revised town centre boundaries, and replacement of primary/secondary frontage with key frontage; and ST9 (Stansted Aerodrome Safeguarding) – with plan showing consultation limits for buildings above a certain height and for developments likely to attract birds;
- There is a new HC policy (13A) on locally listed buildings – this does not replace HC13 of the Adopted Local Plan, but was given this number to fit in with the order of subjects in the HC chapter;
- Policy RP5 (Development likely to cause a nuisance) has been replaced by RP5A (Adverse Environmental Impacts);
- Policy E4 (Development elsewhere in the urban area) has been replaced by 2 policies – E4A – Protection of Employment Sites, and E4B – Alternative Uses for Employment Sites; there is a new policy (E12A) on farm diversification – again this does not replace the existing policy E12; Policy E13 and all its text have been replaced by E13A – New and Replacement Glasshouses; E13B – Protection of Glasshouse Areas; and E13C – Prevention of Dereliction of New Glasshouse Sites;
- Policy RST10 (Roydon Lodge Chalet Estate) has had some minor amendments;
- There is a new policy (CF12) concerning the retention of community facilities;
- Policies U2 (Development in areas of flood risk) and U3 (Development resulting in increased flood risk) have been replaced by U2A (Development in Flood Risk Areas) and U3A (Catchment Effects). There are new policies (U2B) on Flood Risk Assessment Zones – with associated plans, and U3B on Sustainable Drainage Systems;
- Policy I1 (Legal agreements) has been replaced by I1A (Planning Obligations).

We are in negotiation with GO-East and the DCLG about publishing a combined Adopted/Altered Local Plan document with one set of updated Proposals Maps. This would appear to have many practical advantages, but there are problems regarding the expected different lifespans of Adopted and Alterations policies, as we move into the Local Development Framework.

If there are any questions, problems, mistakes or omissions which you come across, please speak to Ian (4066) or Amanda (4543).

July 2006

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Mapping Information

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Chapter 4A - Core Policies

Chapter 4A - Core Policies

Introduction

4A.1 Alterations to the Adopted Local Plan are necessary to keep it up to date with revised Government guidance (mainly in the form of PPGs and PPSs), the adoption of the Replacement Structure Plan in 2001, and experience of implementing the policies with both applications and appeals. The PPGs, PPSs and Structure Plan place a great deal of emphasis upon achieving sustainable development and the Local Plan Alterations must follow on from them.

4A.2 Sustainable development is a much used term and a much defined concept with perhaps the simplest and best definition being that of John Gummer when he was Secretary of State for the Environment – ‘Don’t cheat on our children’. The Government has, more formally, defined the four following objectives to guide strategy and policies for achieving sustainable development:

- (a) maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment;
- (b) social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- (c) effective protection of the environment; and
- (d) prudent use of natural resources.

4A.3 Sustainable development’s achievement depends to a greater or lesser extent on all four of these factors. All of them need to be addressed but some will matter more than others, depending on local circumstances. In areas of very high unemployment, for example, where there is abundant physical capacity for development, achievement of employment and economic growth may be the priority. In districts with large areas of derelict land, redevelopment of sites can mean that contaminated land is cleaned up so that it will cause less of a hazard. In places of great scenic beauty, economic growth and the social benefits that can follow on have to be managed or restricted, so that the very qualities that are the attraction endure. There are fundamental elements which make up the character of the District, namely distinctive and separate towns and villages of comparatively modest size set in pleasant countryside subject to long term protection policies. The Council will protect the features most vulnerable to change, and work with key partners to enhance these features in both town and countryside.

4A.4 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) includes the achievement of sustainable development as a statutory purpose of the planning system – but does not define the term. In Epping Forest District the broad objectives for sustainable development are as follows:

POLICY CP1 - ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

PLANNING POWERS AND ACTIONS WILL BE USED TO:

- (i) **AVOID, OR AT LEAST MINIMISE, IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT UPON THE ENVIRONMENT, PARTICULARLY IN WAYS LIKELY TO AFFECT FUTURE GENERATIONS. WHERE NEGATIVE IMPACTS CANNOT BE AVOIDED, COMPENSATORY MEASURES WILL BE REQUIRED TO OFFSET SUCH IMPACTS, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES DEPEND UPON THE MAINTENANCE OF A STABLE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT FOR THEIR CONTINUANCE;**

- (ii) **SECURE THE PROVISION OF SUFFICIENT TYPES AND AMOUNTS OF HOUSING ACCOMMODATION, AND DIFFERENT FACILITIES, TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL POPULATION, AND TO RETAIN AND IMPROVE LAND RESOURCES TO MEET THE RECREATIONAL AND COUNTRYSIDE NEEDS OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA;**
- (iii) **GIVE EFFECT TO THE EPPING FOREST COMMUNITY STRATEGY (PRODUCED BY THE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP) WHICH IS IN FORCE AT THE TIME;**
- (iv) **MEET THE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF THOSE WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED AND SECURE/ACHIEVE A MIX OF LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES THAT BOTH MEET LOCAL NEEDS AND REDUCE THE NEED TO TRAVEL, AND REDUCE RELIANCE ON USE OF THE PRIVATE CAR;**
- (v) **AVOID FURTHER COMMUTING, ESPECIALLY WHERE IT IS DEPENDENT UPON PRIVATE CAR USE;**
- (vi) **HELP ACHIEVE PRUDENT USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES; AND**
- (vii) **MINIMISE THE USE OF NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES, INCLUDING GREENFIELD LAND.**

4A.5 The above core policy, and those which follow, are intended to be applied (i) proactively (e.g. in land allocations, partnership working with others, and assessing requirements of planning obligations that may be needed before a development proposal is approved), and (ii) reactively (e.g. in assessing applications for planning permission). They are over-arching policies and other policies in this plan give more detail to various aspects of them. While most of the considerations that the core policies address are not new, they apply to individual schemes and combinations of development proposals which could exacerbate imbalances (e.g. between jobs, workers, infrastructure capacity, services, different types of land use etc).

Protecting the Rural and Built Environment

4A.6a Planning policies which have operated since the late 1940s have, in the main, been successful in maintaining open countryside and separate and distinctive settlements, giving the district its special character despite the proximity to London and Harlow. This special character is highly valued by residents, businesses and visitors and the Council believes it is vital that rural and urban environments should continue to be protected. Some areas of land have become derelict or degraded and the policy therefore includes provision for enhancement. One example of how enhancement might be achieved is through the Green Arc Partnership, which proposes a "Green Arc" around north east London.

POLICY CP2 – PROTECTING THE QUALITY OF THE RURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

THE QUALITY OF THE RURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT WILL BE MAINTAINED, CONSERVED AND IMPROVED BY:

- (i) **SUSTAINING AND ENHANCING THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING CONSERVING COUNTRYSIDE CHARACTER, IN**

PARTICULAR ITS LANDSCAPE, WILDLIFE AND HERITAGE QUALITIES, AND PROTECTING COUNTRYSIDE FOR ITS OWN SAKE;

- (ii) ENHANCING AND MANAGING, BY APPROPRIATE USE, LAND IN THE METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT AND URBAN FRINGE;**
- (iii) RETAINING THE BEST AND MOST VERSATILE LAND FOR AGRICULTURE;**
- (iv) SAFEGUARDING AND ENHANCING THE SETTING, CHARACTER AND TOWNSCAPE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT;**
- (v) PRESERVING AND ENHANCING THE BIODIVERSITY AND NETWORKS OF NATURAL HABITATS OF THE AREA, INCLUDING RIVER AND WILDLIFE CORRIDORS AND OTHER GREEN CHAINS.**
- (vi) GIVING PRIORITY TO PROTECTING AND ENHANCING AREAS DESIGNATED AS HAVING INTRINSIC ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AT INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND STRATEGIC LEVELS, IN COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY NC1 AND PPS9.**
- (vii) MANAGING THE DEMAND FOR WATER RESOURCES AND SEWERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE BY CONTROLLING THE LOCATION, SCALE AND PHASING OF DEVELOPMENT SO AS TO PROTECT ENVIRONMENTAL AND WILDLIFE INTERESTS.**

4A.6b Criteria (i), (ii), (iv) and (v) are intended to draw attention to, and protect or enable mitigation of, the very wide variety of 'non-designated' sites which have importance, or potential value, for wildlife conservation. Such sites will include previously developed land (brownfield sites) and other urban habitats where the use, or lack of use, of land has allowed wildlife to prosper. Buffer strips along watercourses will also receive protection to allow the normal processes of erosion and deposition to take place, with consequent implications for the creation and retention of wildlife habitats. In dealing with proposals for development of land, particular attention will be paid to the prevention of fragmentation of linked, or potentially linked, wildlife habitats.

New Development

POLICY CP3 – NEW DEVELOPMENT

IN CONSIDERING PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND IN ALLOCATING LAND FOR DEVELOPMENT, THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA TO BE SATISFIED:

- (i) THE DEVELOPMENT CAN BE ACCOMMODATED WITHIN THE EXISTING, COMMITTED OR PLANNED INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY OF THE AREA (OR THAT SUFFICIENT NEW INFRASTRUCTURE IS PROVIDED BY THE NEW DEVELOPMENT/DEVELOPER);**
- (ii) THE DEVELOPMENT IS ACCESSIBLE BY EXISTING, COMMITTED OR PLANNED SUSTAINABLE MEANS OF TRANSPORT;**

- (iii) **SEQUENTIAL APPROACHES HAVE BEEN USED TO ENSURE THAT APPROPRIATE TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT OR INTENSIFICATION OF USE TAKE PLACE AT SUITABLE LOCATIONS;**
- (iv) **THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A MORE SUSTAINABLE BALANCE BETWEEN LOCAL JOBS AND WORKERS;**
- (v) **THE SCALE AND NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND RESPECTS THE CHARACTER AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE LOCALITY.**

THE COUNCIL MAY USE PLANNING OBLIGATIONS TO ENSURE THESE CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED.

4A.7 Planned infrastructure or transport, in the above policy, means all necessary additional or improved infrastructure that is both planned and will be implemented e.g. by being secured through a planning agreement (section 106 agreement or similar) as envisaged in policy CP3. Rural areas may not have good access to sustainable transport. Proposals for development and changes of use in such areas will thus need to be considered in light of the nature and volume of trips they would generate; the existence of, or opportunity for, sustainable travel; and alternative locations available (where appropriate). The principles of sustainability (criterion (v)) include conserving and enhancing wildlife and built heritage resources, minimising pollution and energy consumption, making best use of urban land/buildings and providing for transport choice. Where land is contaminated or suspected to be contaminated, appropriate authorities will be consulted. Any assessment or remediation of works should be carried out in accordance with PPS23.

Sustainable Building

4A.8 Energy conservation has not been a traditional concern of the land use planning system, but it is an issue of growing importance in the context of issues such as climate change and the increasing use of finite resources. The Energy White Paper (Our energy future – creating a low carbon economy; February 2003) advises that the “ODPM, in partnership with other government departments, will be examining how to bring consideration of the use of renewables and energy efficiency in developments more within the scope of the planning system, in the context of the review of PPG22 (Renewable Energy) and the Government’s wider planning reforms, and in a way that does not impose undue burdens on developers”.

4A.9 The White Paper has accepted the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution’s recommendation that the UK should ‘put itself on a path towards a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of some 60% from current levels by about 2050’. This is obviously a very challenging target requiring a fundamental reassessment which goes beyond how modern society generates and uses energy. Action is therefore needed across a range of CO₂ sources, including heating, lighting, transport, industry, construction and communications.

4A.10 Attention to design and layout of new development, the use and re-use of materials in construction, and to the subsequent operation of new buildings (e.g. heating and lighting), can contribute significantly to energy conservation, water efficiency and minimising the use of natural resources and the production of waste. PPG1 (General Policy and Principles) advises (para 15) that ‘Good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and should be encouraged everywhere. Good design can help promote sustainable development (and) improve

the quality of the existing environment'. Para 17 then recommends that planning authorities should reject poor designs, particularly where their decisions are supported by clear plan policies or supplementary planning guidance.

4A.11 Buildings are estimated to be responsible for half of all energy consumption in the UK, with space heating accounting for the major part of this demand, and contributing about 25% of the UK's total CO₂ emissions (Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice – DETR October 1998). Reductions in energy and resource use during the construction, and throughout the working life, of new buildings will therefore contribute to the achievement of two of the Government's sustainable development objectives: - (a) prudent use of natural resources and (b) effective protection of the environment.

4A.12 The technology and design of materials (e.g. for using solar energy more efficiently) are improving all the time. Other construction methods which reduce the use of energy are more traditional and well understood – maximising the use of natural light and natural ventilation being obvious examples. The use of natural ventilation rather than air conditioning saves energy from the outset and is likely to reduce maintenance and repair costs in the longer term – it therefore makes economic, as well as environmental, sense to incorporate heating and cooling mechanisms (such as passive stack ventilation and microgeneration) in the structure of new buildings and the overall design of developments.

4A.13 Construction types and materials should be assessed in terms of their thermal efficiency. Those with a higher thermal mass absorb heat during the day and release it at night, reducing the need for additional heat sources in a building, at least during summer months. Lower thermal efficiency of construction materials can lead to excessive heat gain in the summer (causing uncomfortable working or living conditions) and can mean expensive heating bills in the winter as less heat is retained. There is obviously a strong overlap here between Building Regulations and any planning policy which addresses energy conservation in construction. The Regulations apply statutory minimum standards and only address some aspects of energy generation and energy and resource conservation.

4A.14 The DETR document "Planning for Sustainable Development" (1998) advises that the following criteria, at least, should be considered for all types of development:

- internal layout to include consideration of placing rooms needing higher temperatures (e.g. living rooms) on the southerly side to maximise passive solar heating;
- use of atria, conservatories and porches to enable natural ventilation and conservation of heat;
- layout of windows, doors and rooflights to provide larger window areas to the south (to maximise solar gain but without overheating) and smaller to the north (to minimise heat loss, but still provide adequate daylight);
- provision for recycling of rainwater and domestic waste on site to be made feasible;
- provision for active solar systems (e.g. use of photovoltaics) to be included or made feasible as appropriate;
- use to be made of locally manufactured or recycled materials (e.g. bricks), or those whose production satisfies other environmental requirements (e.g. sustainably produced timber), and which have low maintenance needs.

4A.15 Tree planting and other landscaping can be designed as shelterbelts or to create microclimates which can reduce energy use requirements of new developments. The potential is obviously greater on greenfield sites where there is more space for extensive planting. The arrangement, layout and design of buildings can also have microclimate effects and reduce energy use.

4A.16 The Beddington Zero Energy Development (BedZED) at Hackbridge in the London Borough of Sutton is a good recent example of sustainable design in a mixed use development. It includes the following features: (1) high density housing with high levels of amenity – all homes have generous access to sunlight, green roof terraces or gardens, and conservatories; (2) energy efficient design and renewable energy supply to avoid global warming emissions; (3) water efficient design and on-site water recycling to cut mains water demand; (4) a green transport plan for residents and businesses to reduce dependence on the car; and (5) significant re-use of construction materials from the site or the locality. BedZED shows that, with belief and commitment, sustainable design and construction is a totally realistic option.

4A.17a In its response (July 2003) to the Select Committee’s report on “Planning for Sustainable Communities”, the Government states that it ‘will continue to encourage local planning authorities to secure environmentally efficient housing and achieve high environmental standards’.

POLICY CP4 – ENERGY CONSERVATION

ALL NEW BUILT DEVELOPMENT SHOULD INCORPORATE PRINCIPLES OF ENERGY CONSERVATION IN RELATION TO THE DESIGN, MASSING, SITING, ORIENTATION AND LAYOUT OF BUILDINGS. APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO UTILISE RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES AND NEW ENERGY SAVING/GENERATING TECHNOLOGIES AS MAY BECOME AVAILABLE, SHOULD BE PROVIDED WITHIN NEW BUILDINGS OR DEVELOPMENTS WHERE APPROPRIATE. THESE PRINCIPLES SHOULD ALSO APPLY TO THE CONVERSION OR RE-USE OF EXISTING SITES AND BUILDINGS.

4A.17b It is accepted that incorporating new energy saving technologies into the conversion of listed buildings may present difficulties in preserving the historic fabric, character or setting. However, many improvements can be made by innovative design and/or sympathetic alterations. Conversions will therefore be required to use such techniques as far as they are compatible with policy HC10 of the Adopted Plan, and policies GB8A and GB9A of the Alterations.

POLICY CP5 – SUSTAINABLE BUILDING

PLANNING PERMISSION MAY BE REFUSED FOR PROPOSALS WHICH THE COUNCIL BELIEVES DO NOT DO ENOUGH TO CONSERVE ENERGY, MAKE THE MOST EFFICIENT USE OF WATER AND OTHER RESOURCES, RECYCLE WASTE OR PROTECT ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES AND LOCAL AMENITIES. WHERE POSSIBLE, PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT, OR FOR THE CONVERSION OR RE-USE OF SITES AND BUILDINGS SHOULD INCORPORATE MEASURES WHICH:

- (i) REDUCE FUEL USE AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (E.G. HEAT RECOVERY, PASSIVE SOLAR GAIN, CYCLE PARKING/STORAGE, LINKS WITH FOOTPATH AND CYCLE NETWORKS TO ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT);**

- (ii) **MINIMISE OVERALL ENERGY USE AND INPUT OF RAW MATERIALS (E.G. BUILDING FORM, ORIENTATION, THERMAL MASS, FENESTRATION, NATURAL VENTILATION, LANDSCAPING TO CREATE SHELTERBELTS, USE/RE-USE OF CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS);**
- (iii) **ENCOURAGE EFFICIENT USE OF WATER AND RECYCLING OF WASTE (E.G. ENABLE USE OF GREYWATER AND COLLECTION OF RAINWATER, INCORPORATION OF WATER EFFICIENT APPLIANCES WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT, PROVISION OF FACILITIES AND SPACE FOR WASTE RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING);**
- (iv) **INCORPORATE RENEWABLE ENERGY FACILITIES OR SCHEMES;**
- (v) **ADOPT METHODS TO PROTECT WILDLIFE HABITATS, TREES AND OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES DURING CONSTRUCTION AND WHICH MINIMISE DISTURBANCE TO ADJOINING LANDOWNERS AND LOCAL AMENITIES.**

THE COUNCIL MAY REQUIRE THAT PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT, OR FOR THE CONVERSION OR RE-USE OF SITES OR BUILDINGS, DEMONSTRATE IN A 'SUSTAINABILITY REPORT' HOW VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY (INCLUDING THOSE IN CRITERIA (i) TO (v) ABOVE) HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. THE REPORT SHOULD ADDRESS THE SITING, MASSING, DESIGN, ORIENTATION AND LAYOUT OF DEVELOPMENT, AND THE CONSTRUCTION AND LIFE-CYCLE OF BUILDINGS.

4A.18 Assistance in compiling a sustainability report can come from the Building Research Establishment and its Environmental Assessment Model (BREEAM) with versions for different types of buildings. The Eco-Homes standards, with the various levels of achievement, are also appropriate. Other sources of help could include the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) which provides a method for estimating the energy use for space and water heating in new and existing dwellings. The National Home Energy Rating (NHER) is also relevant. Locally the Essex Energy Advice Centre works to enable developers to obtain free and impartial advice on energy efficient environmental improvements and the potential commercial benefits of such practices. In implementing these policies, the Council will use the most current recognised assessment methods.

4A.19 The scope of a sustainability report will inevitably vary according to the scale of the development and/or its likely impacts. The Council will prepare guidelines for sustainable construction which will address this issue and give information on sources of advice. These will be for use by applicants and Council staff and will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents. In preparing its guidelines, the Council will adopt an approach along the lines of BATNEEC (i.e. best available technology not entailing excessive cost) to accord with the spirit of the ODPM review discussed in paragraph 4A.8. Prior to the adoption of the Council's own Supplementary Planning Document in relation to this, best practice advice will be taken from the Building Research Establishment, among other experts in this field.

4A.20 The London Borough of Merton has included a policy in its UDP which requires 'all new industrial, warehousing, office, live/work units outside conservation areas and above a threshold of 1000 sq m to incorporate renewable energy production equipment to provide at least 10% of predicted energy requirements'. This Council will consider the introduction of further planning documents to supplement

policies CP4 and 5, ultimately to be adopted as policy, which could require the provision of specific levels of renewable energy facilities in some development schemes. As above, best practice examples for the inclusion of renewable energy technology in new developments will be taken from other sources (e.g. the Energy Saving Trust) prior to any Supplementary Planning Document being adopted.

Sustainable and Balanced Urban Development

4A.21 For a more sustainable pattern of future development to be achieved, urban areas must be designed to be, and become, more attractive places in which to live, work, shop, spend leisure time and invest. New development should be concentrated in urban areas, making best use of spare capacity in land, buildings and infrastructure, and must be designed so that housing, employment, services, leisure, recreation and other social facilities are available in close proximity and at levels of provision which are balanced. Mixed-use developments are promoted in accordance with national and regional planning policies.

POLICY CP6 – ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH WILL BE ACCOMMODATED IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER WHICH COUNTERS TRENDS TO MORE DISPERSED PATTERNS OF LIVING, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAVEL BY:

- (i) GIVING THE EMPHASIS TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN URBAN AREAS, MAKING THEM MORE ATTRACTIVE PLACES IN WHICH TO LIVE, WORK, SHOP, SPEND LEISURE TIME AND INVEST, AND ACHIEVING A SIGNIFICANT ENHANCEMENT OF THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT;**
- (ii) CONCENTRATING NEW ECONOMIC AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT WITHIN URBAN AREAS BY MAXIMISING THE USE OF SPARE CAPACITY IN TERMS OF LAND, BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE;**
- (iii) APPLYING A SEQUENTIAL APPROACH WHEN CONSIDERING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SO AS TO GIVE PREFERENCE TO DEVELOPMENT WITHIN URBAN AREAS;**
- (iv) GIVING PRIORITY TO INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT PROPOSALS THAT WILL FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION OF URBAN AREAS AND INCREASE CHOICE OF SUSTAINABLE MEANS OF TRANSPORT;**
- (v) REDUCING DISPARITIES BETWEEN THE ECONOMIC PROSPECTS OF DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE LOCAL PLAN AREA;**
- (vi) SEEKING TO ACHIEVE A BETTER BALANCE BETWEEN HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT PROVISION WITHIN LOCAL AREAS;**
- (vii) PROMOTING MIXED USE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENTS;**
- (viii) SEEKING APPROPRIATE RECREATIONAL PROVISION INCLUDING ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE.**

4A.22 PPS1 advises that the achievement of sustainable development includes the prudent use of resources, including land. The sequential approach referred to in (iii) above, is consistent with this national guidance. PPS1, PPG3, PPS6, PPS7 and PPG13 all give guidance on sequential approaches. These documents may be updated (or new definitions of sequential approaches issued). Currently, in broad terms, these say that development should be located in accordance with the following hierarchy:

- o within existing urban areas, making use of previously developed land and buildings where possible;
- o adjacent to existing urban areas, again making use of previously developed land where possible; and
- o otherwise around nodes of good public transport provision.

Isolated or sporadic development in the countryside will normally be resisted, in accordance with the principles of sequential approaches.

4A.23 The sequential approach may be relaxed in special circumstances, especially in rural areas where the supply of suitable development sites is limited. It will be necessary for the applicant to satisfy the Council that special circumstances do exist – e.g. the sustainability of rural communities. The Council will need to balance such cases against the protection of the Green Belt and the rural character of the area.

Urban Form and Quality

4A.24 Sustainable development supports making the best use of existing land and buildings located within established built-up areas, before considering the use of green field sites situated on the periphery of settlements or in the open countryside. The second and third options inevitably involve the loss of some natural resources. This emphasis on ‘urban concentration’ is consistent with other aspects of sustainable development concerned with making the best use of existing infrastructure and community services, reducing the need to travel, providing choice of means of travel, reducing car dependency, and introducing energy-efficient methods of heat and power. The creation of a more sustainable form of development, focused on making better use of urban areas, is further emphasised in policy CP6.

4A.25 Opportunities will arise to use existing built-up areas in a more efficient way to accommodate new development. Brownfield sites no longer appropriate to their existing or proposed use which are vacant, derelict, degraded or under-used should be recycled to enable new development to take place and help promote urban regeneration. Existing buildings should be adapted and modernised so that enterprises can expand or new uses can be accommodated. Also, existing floorspace can often be used more effectively (e.g. flats above shops). There may be opportunities to increase the density of development within existing urban areas, provided these do not adversely affect amenity or destroy the essential character of an area which may be valuable for its own sake.

4A.26 Some existing urban sites may be capable of being re-used for alternative land uses now that they are no longer needed for their existing use. This can include land deemed surplus to educational or other institutional uses and land allocations in development plans where planning strategy is changing.

4A.27 Urban concentration should be sensitive to the environmental capacity of settlements by accommodating further development while avoiding town cramming and the loss of local amenity. There will be areas of some settlements where the further intensification of urban development is undesirable. Examples include valued

open space or sites of special heritage and townscape quality, or where the predominant pattern of existing development should remain largely undisturbed. The street pattern, building type and form, density and landscape features within such areas may produce a quality of urban environment such that further development would be inappropriate in relation to their existing character.

POLICY CP7 – URBAN FORM AND QUALITY

IN LINE WITH POLICIES CP6 AND ST1, ONE OF THE COUNCIL'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVES IS TO MAKE THE FULLEST USE OF EXISTING URBAN AREAS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT BEFORE LOCATIONS WITHIN THE GREEN BELT. IN VIEW OF THIS PRIMARY OBJECTIVE, THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF EXISTING URBAN AREAS WILL BE MAINTAINED AND IMPROVED AS ATTRACTIVE PLACES IN WHICH TO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT. WHERE THE EXISTING URBAN FABRIC PROVIDES FOR HIGH QUALITY IN DESIGN AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENT BY VIRTUE OF ITS EXISTING CHARACTER, OPEN LAND USES AND BUILDINGS AND AREAS OF ARCHITECTURAL, HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE, THIS WILL BE STRONGLY PROTECTED AND ENHANCED. NEW DEVELOPMENT IN ALL URBAN AREAS WHICH RESULTS IN OVER-DEVELOPMENT, UNSYMPATHETIC CHANGE OR LOSS OF AMENITY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. SUBJECT TO THOSE CONSIDERATIONS, EXISTING BUILT-UP AREAS WILL BE USED IN THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY TO ACCOMMODATE NEW DEVELOPMENT BY THE:

- (i) RECYCLING OF VACANT, DERELICT, DEGRADED AND UNDER-USED LAND TO ACCOMMODATE NEW DEVELOPMENT;**
- (ii) RE-USE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS BY REFURBISHMENT, CONVERSIONS, CHANGES OF USE AND EXTENSIONS;**
- (iii) RE-USE OF URBAN SITES, WHICH ARE NO LONGER APPROPRIATE TO THEIR EXISTING OR PROPOSED USE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, FOR ALTERNATIVE LAND USES; AND**
- (iv) USE OF HIGHER DENSITIES WHERE COMPATIBLE WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA CONCERNED AND URBAN DESIGN CONTROLS.**

Sustainable Economic Development

4A. 28 The district is not a significant industrial and commercial centre in sub-regional terms. The Green Belt constrains large scale new developments. Approximately 60% of residents commute out of the district to work. Some parts of the area (Waltham Abbey and Debden in particular) have pockets of relative social deprivation – compared with more affluent parts of the district. The achievement of balanced and sustainable economic success, with equitable distribution of prosperity, is a core objective of the Local Plan. Economic growth should not add to the dependency on commuting and car usage, in order to accord with Government sustainability objectives of reducing the need to travel and reliance on the private car.

POLICY CP8 – SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PROVISION WILL BE MADE FOR ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORT INVESTMENT WHICH WILL:

- (i) **FACILITATE ECONOMIC REGENERATION IN AREAS OF RELATIVE SOCIAL DEPRIVATION TO REDUCE DISPARITIES IN ECONOMIC SUCCESS ACROSS THE DISTRICT;**
- (ii) **REFLECT CAPACITY AND RESULT IN BALANCED AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC AND HOUSING GROWTH IN URBAN AREAS AND ACROSS THE DISTRICT AS APPROPRIATE;**
- (iii) **WITHIN THE RURAL AREAS, MAKE PROVISION FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY AND ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE ACTIVITIES AND ADEQUATE HOUSING TO ENCOURAGE RENEWAL AND MAINTAIN VITALITY;**
- (iv) **ENCOURAGE LOCAL ECONOMIC DIVERSITY;**
- (v) **ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF APPROPRIATE HIGH VALUE-ADDED ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES WHERE THIS IS ECONOMICALLY BENEFICIAL AND ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE;**
- (vi) **SATISFY OTHER PLAN POLICIES.**

4A.29 The Council intends to promote a diverse local economy, recognising the individual character of each settlement and the contribution of the rural areas. Within the constraints imposed by the Green Belt and other conservation policies, the Council will encourage opportunities for balanced growth of existing economic activities and small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs), and for new local firms to start up in business. There may be some opportunities for the attraction of inward investment, and conservation led regeneration initiatives.

Sustainable Transport

4A.30 National and regional policies promote the development of integrated and sustainable transport systems. The emphasis is on reducing the need to travel and on increasing choice of transport options so that use of the car and the need to use cars can be reduced in line with Government policy. Social inclusion means that all sectors of society should have convenient and adequate accessibility to good transport facilities – i.e. including the young and elderly, the mobility impaired and the socially disadvantaged. A modern transport network should be safe to use, efficient and environmentally sustainable.

POLICY CP9 – SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

WHERE APPROPRIATE, DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES WILL BE REQUIRED TO:

- (i) **PROVIDE FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM;**
- (ii) **INCLUDE INVESTMENT IN TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE TO FACILITATE AND SUPPORT ECONOMIC SUCCESS;**
- (iii) **PROMOTE AND PROVIDE FOR SUSTAINABLE MEANS OF TRANSPORT, ESPECIALLY TO KEY COMMUNITY FACILITIES, PARTICULARLY BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT, CYCLING AND WALKING;**

- (iv) **IMPROVE AND MAKE THE BEST USE OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING DEMAND MANAGEMENT AND REDUCING THE NEED TO TRAVEL;**
- (v) **ENSURE ACCESS BY ALL SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY, INCLUDING THE MOBILITY IMPAIRED AND THE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED;**
- (vi) **IMPROVE PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICES;**
- (vii) **PROVIDE FOR A SAFE AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THAT IMPROVES THE ACCESSIBILITY OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES.**

Renewable Energy Schemes

4A.31 PPS22: Renewable Energy (2004) defines renewable energy as “energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment”. Sources include the sun, the wind, oceans and the fall of water. Plant material is also important and combustible industrial, agricultural and domestic waste materials are included as renewable sources. Geothermal energy (i.e. from the earth itself) is renewable but it does not always provide a continuous supply. The use of some of these sources does not contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, the major cause of global warming and climate change.

4A.32 The depletion of non-renewable energy resources is an issue of growing international concern. Increasing emphasis is therefore being placed on the use of renewable sources and significant advances have been made in technology so that there is a realistic chance that renewable energy could provide a fairly significant amount of modern society’s needs in the relatively near future. Government policy is therefore to encourage the development of renewable energy sources where they have the prospects of being economically attractive and environmentally acceptable. A target of 10% electricity being produced from renewable sources by 2010 has been set. The East of England Region has adopted a higher figure of 14%. The Government has also set a goal of 20% reduction (from 1990 levels) in CO₂ production by 2010.

4A.33 The Eastern Region Renewable Energy Planning Study (Making Renewable Energy a Reality – setting a challenging target for the Eastern Region (2001)), concluded that the main potential sources in this part of the country were solar, biofuels and biomass (i.e. plant material such as short rotation coppice). Improvements in technology should, however, mean that other sources may become more viable in the region (e.g. vegetable fuel oil production) in the future.

4A.34 Renewable energy production can have its own environmental issues and concerns. Wind farms and even individual turbines can cause significant visual impact and this needs to be assessed against the benefits of wind energy, particularly in sensitive locations. PPS22 advises that local planning authorities should satisfy themselves that issues such as separation distances from airfields, powerlines etc. have been addressed by the applicant before considering an application. The movement of raw materials such as plant biomass can have considerable consequences for traffic capacity on some road networks. Generation plants which deal with the biomass have to be located fairly close to the source of the material because of the costs of transportation. Such locations tend to be rural and this can again raise issues of visual intrusion.

4A.35 The Council wishes to encourage renewable energy schemes in the interests of promoting more sustainable lifestyles and as a contribution to the Government targets outlined above. A policy for their development, however, has to find a balance between the perceived wider benefits and the potential for more localised costs of such schemes. Proposals for renewable energy schemes should demonstrate that issues have been taken into account and adequately addressed, including the wider national benefits of the scheme and national targets set for renewable energy supply.

4A.36 Changes in technology could mean that some schemes will become uneconomic or fairly quickly redundant. There is therefore a potential problem of (particularly) rural sites being left in a derelict state after only a few years. This would create immediate landscape problems, and could lead to fly-tipping, vandalism and unwelcome redevelopment pressure. This is an issue which must be addressed when an application for a renewable energy scheme is being considered.

POLICY CP10 – RENEWABLE ENERGY SCHEMES

PROPOSALS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY SCHEMES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANTLY ADVERSE EFFECT UPON :

- (i) EXISTING LAND USES FROM LOSS OF VISUAL AMENITY, NOISE, POLLUTION OR ODOUR;**
- (ii) THE LOCAL HIGHWAY NETWORK INCLUDING THE CONVENIENCE AND SAFETY OF ROAD USERS;**
- (iii) TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS, RADAR INSTALLATIONS AND FLIGHT PATHS FOR AIRCRAFT;**
- (iv) SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (i.e. STATUTORY AND LOCALLY DESIGNATED SITES), CONSERVATION AREAS, SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND OTHER NATIONALLY IMPORTANT REMAINS AND THEIR SETTINGS, LISTED BUILDINGS AND THEIR SETTINGS, OR LANDSCAPE CHARACTER.**

IN GRANTING PERMISSION FOR A SCHEME THE COUNCIL MAY REQUIRE, BY USE OF SECTION 106 OBLIGATIONS AND /OR PLANNING CONDITIONS, THAT (a) APPROPRIATE MITIGATION MEASURES ARE PROVIDED TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH CRITERIA (i) to (iv) ABOVE, AND OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES IN THE PLAN AND, (b) THAT THE APPLICATION SITE IS FULLY RETURNED TO A CONDITION APPROPRIATE FOR ITS PREVIOUS USE WHEN OR IF THE SCHEME IS DECOMMISSIONED OR BECOMES REDUNDANT.

4A.37 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a stronger emphasis on monitoring the effectiveness of local planning policies. This will be done via the production of an Annual Monitoring Report every December. The sustainability issues set out in this chapter are difficult to accurately monitor; however, the Voluntary Strategic Environmental Assessment that has been undertaken to assess the Local Plan Alterations Redeposit suggests some indicators that can be used to assess the impact of local planning policies. The suitability of these as useful and available indicators will be considered during the preparation of the first Annual Monitoring Report.

Chapter 5 - Green Belt

Chapter 5 – Green Belt (Replacement Chapter)

Introduction

5.1a Epping Forest District comprises towns and villages set in attractive countryside on the edge of the metropolitan area. Given its proximity to London and the motorway network, the whole District is subject to intense pressure for development. The Council, and its predecessors, have, for the most part, been able to successfully resist this pressure to develop within the countryside. Hence, both the extent and the character and appearance of the countryside have remained relatively unscathed by development. The reason that the Council has been able to defend this area so successfully is because it forms a part of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

5.2a The Metropolitan Green Belt has been a central feature of planning policy in the Home Counties since it was first formally approved in 1957. The concept of a Green Belt around London originated before the Second World War in response to the need to control the outward spread of London. The first Green Belt was defined by the London County Council in the Greater London Plan of 1944. Soon after, the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 led to the designation of a Green Belt by the councils around London. It has proved the most popular and successful regional planning policy of post-war Britain.

5.3a The Green Belt soon proved to be very effective in limiting the extent of development. So much so that, in 1955, the Government published a Circular (No 42/55) setting out the purposes of the Green Belt and encouraging other cities to follow London's example and consider establishing a Green Belt. This Circular suggested that local authorities prepare policies to ensure that new development (a) was only permitted where it would lead to a rounding off of, or infilling within, a settlement in the Green Belt, or (b) was for the purposes of agriculture, recreation, cemeteries, institutions standing in large grounds or other uses appropriate to a rural area. The basic objectives of Green Belt policy have remained unchanged since that time.

Government Guidance

5.4a The current Government stance on Green Belts is set out primarily in PPG2 (January 1995). This points out that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts, the purposes of which are:

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

5.5a The PPG states that the use of land in Green Belts has a positive role to play in:

- providing opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- providing opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- retaining attractive landscapes, and enhancing landscapes near to where people live;

- improving damaged and derelict land around towns;
- securing nature conservation interests; and
- retaining land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

5.6a PPG2 makes it clear that the quality of the rural landscape is not a material factor in Green Belt designations or in their continued protection. Neither should development be allowed in the Green Belt merely because the land has become derelict.

5.7a In preparing Development Plans, planning authorities are called upon to relate proposals affecting Green Belts to a time scale longer than that normally adopted for other aspects of the Plan. This is in order that the boundaries reflect the permanence of the Green Belt and do not have to be altered at the end of the Plan period. When the detailed boundaries have been defined they should be altered only exceptionally (e.g. as a consequence of an alteration to the Structure Plan).

5.8a The general policies controlling development in the countryside apply with equal force in the Green Belt but there is, in addition, a general presumption against inappropriate development. The development of new buildings, even for only a limited range of uses, should not be allowed except in very special circumstances. The PPG states that the reuse of buildings is not inappropriate development subject to criteria relating to the impact of the development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it.

5.9a The Guidance also makes it clear that the visual amenities of the Green Belt should not be injured by development either within or conspicuous from the Green Belt.

County Council Policy

5.10a This is set out in the Essex & Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan (April 2001). It is Replacement Structure Plan policy that :

- the entire rural area of Epping Forest District will form part of the Metropolitan Green Belt;
- the Green Belt boundaries around towns and villages will be defined according to the foreseeable long-term expansion of their built-up areas; and
- within the Green Belt there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. Except in very special circumstances, planning permission will not be granted unless for:
 - development required for agriculture, forestry, and mineral extraction and related restoration ;
 - essential small scale facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which fulfil the objectives of the Green Belt ;
 - limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings ;
 - limited infilling and limited affordable housing for local community needs within existing villages identified in an adopted local plan as suitable for such development in accordance with Policy H5 (of the Replacement Structure Plan) ;
 - limited infilling or redevelopment of major existing developed sites identified in adopted local plans in accordance with criteria included under Policy RE2 (of the Replacement Structure Plan) ;

- the re-use of existing buildings in accordance with criteria included under Policy RE2 (of the Replacement Structure Plan).

Development should preserve the openness of the Green Belt and should not conflict with the main purposes of including land within it. Any development which is permitted should be of a scale, design and siting such that the character of the countryside is not harmed. The Replacement Structure Plan also advises that local planning authorities should undertake a comprehensive review of inner Green Belt boundaries.

5.11a The County Council recognises the Green Belt as an area of planning restraint. Therefore, it does not look to promote development in the Green Belt unless there are exceptional circumstances.

District Council's Approach

5.12a The Council attributes very great importance to the character and appearance of the Green Belt, as well as its functions. The Green Belt has been very successful in restricting the urbanisation of the countryside around London. This has been achieved through strict adherence to policy by way of:

- refusing planning permission for developments contrary to policy; and
- these decisions being upheld at appeal in the vast majority of cases.

5.13a In accordance with Government guidance, the Council does not look to amend the Green Belt's boundaries as a matter of course when Local Plans are prepared or reviewed. This is in order for the Green Belt to retain its permanence. Furthermore PPG2 states that boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the Structure Plan have been approved, or other exceptional circumstances exist. The Council has therefore only countenanced making a change to the boundary under one of the following circumstances:

- there is a need to release land to meet the guidelines (for housing and/or employment-generating uses) identified in the Structure Plan; or
- there is a significant change in circumstances (e.g. the site has been developed); or
- there is an exceptional and urgent reason for the change (e.g. the site is the most appropriate one to accommodate a necessary development).

5.14a A comprehensive review of the Green Belt boundaries in the District will be undertaken in the context of the production of the Local Development Framework. Such a review would look to address when and where the long term development needs of the District should be met and safeguard land accordingly.

POLICY GB1 – GREEN BELT BOUNDARY

THE BOUNDARY OF THE METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT IN THIS DISTRICT IS AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.

Urban Fringe

5.15a The existence of the Green Belt creates a sharp divide between the relatively high value land outside the Green Belt and low value land within the Green Belt

where there is virtually no prospect of development taking place within the foreseeable future. Any additional "hope value" would therefore be long term only.

5.16a The relatively sharp divide between the town and the country does not, unfortunately, rule out all the problems associated with the zone of transition between the two. The "urban fringe" is less prominent in this District than in non-Green Belt locations but still features the characteristic problems of trespass, litter, vandalism and derelict land.

5.17a The Urban Fringe Special Advisory Group has suggested that the key to tackling the problems of the urban fringe in Green Belt areas is to develop its recreational role in ways that improve access but which, at the same time, protect and enhance the countryside. This approach is logical, in fact, increasingly so as progressively more land is being "taken out" of agricultural use and the demand for recreational activities continues to grow. Given this and the purposes of the Green Belt (see paragraphs 5.4a and 5.5a), it is appropriate to adopt a more positive stance towards the use of land on the urban fringe which has been identified as subject to the related problems. This need for a positive approach is reflected in the policies contained in the Recreation, Sport and Tourism chapter although it is imperative that it should not be allowed to weaken the role of the Green Belt.

General Approach to Development

5.18a In order for the Green Belt to continue to achieve its objectives (see paragraph 5.4a) development within it must continue to be strictly controlled.

POLICY GB2A – DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR THE USE OF LAND OR THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BUILDINGS OR THE CHANGE OF USE OR EXTENSION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS IN THE GREEN BELT UNLESS IT IS APPROPRIATE IN THAT IT IS:

- (i) FOR THE PURPOSES OF AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE, OR FORESTRY; OR**
- (ii) FOR THE PURPOSES OF OUTDOOR PARTICIPATORY SPORT AND RECREATION OR ASSOCIATED ESSENTIAL SMALL-SCALE BUILDINGS; OR**
- (iii) FOR THE PURPOSES OF A CEMETERY; OR**
- (iv) FOR OTHER USES WHICH PRESERVE THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT AND WHICH DO NOT CONFLICT WITH THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND IN THE GREEN BELT; OR**
- (v) A DWELLING FOR AN AGRICULTURAL, HORTICULTURAL OR FORESTRY WORKER IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY GB17A; OR**
- (vi) A REPLACEMENT FOR AN EXISTING DWELLING AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY GB15A; OR**
- (vii) A LIMITED EXTENSION TO AN EXISTING DWELLING THAT IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY GB14A; OR**
- (viii) IN ACCORDANCE WITH ANOTHER GREEN BELT POLICY.**

5.19a Proposed changes of use of existing buildings will be assessed in the light of Policy GB8A. In order to be acceptable, any proposal must also comply with all other relevant Plan policies, including DBE1, DBE4, LL2, LL3, LL10, LL11, ST4 and ST6. Engineering and other operations and the making of a material change in the use of land within the Green Belt are inappropriate developments unless they maintain openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The extension of non-residential buildings within the Green Belt is also inappropriate development. All such proposals will need to demonstrate very special circumstances that outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

5.20a The Council will seek legal agreements, where necessary, (in accordance with Policy I1A) in order to restrict the range of goods for sale at farm shops and any garden centres that may be permitted.

5.21a Recreational uses which are open in character will often be appropriate in the Green Belt (see Policy GB2A). However, recreational schemes which involve the construction of large buildings in the Green Belt will not normally be acceptable because of the intrusive impact that they would have. Any such developments will therefore be expected to be located in the built-up areas and not in the Green Belt.

5.22a Any development which is not in accordance with this policy would be inappropriate in the Green Belt.

Extensions to Residential Curtilages

5.23a Extensions of residential curtilages into the Green Belt are likely to alter its character and appearance and therefore be contrary to Green Belt policy. There may, however, be very special circumstances which warrant planning permission being granted as an exception to the normal policy.

POLICY GB4 – EXTENSIONS OF RESIDENTIAL CURTILAGES

THE EXTENSION OF THE CURTILAGE OF A RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY WHICH INVOLVES AN INCURSION INTO THE GREEN BELT WILL BE PERMITTED ONLY WHERE THE COUNCIL IS SATISFIED THAT;

- (i) IT WOULD NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT UPON THE OPEN CHARACTER OF THE LANDSCAPE; AND**
- (ii) IT WOULD RELATE WELL TO THE CURTILAGES OF ANY ADJOINING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES; AND**
- (iii) IT WOULD NOT BE EXCESSIVE IN SIZE.**

IN GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION FOR ANY SUCH DEVELOPMENT THE COUNCIL MAY:

- (a) WITHDRAW PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FOR THE AREA CONCERNED IN RESPECT OF BUILDING AND HARD SURFACES; AND**
- (b) IMPOSE APPROPRIATE PLANNING CONDITIONS.**

Non-permanent dwellings

5.24a The use of moorings for permanent residential development can raise a number of problems in the countryside:

- (a) the use would be contrary to Green Belt policies intended to restrict new residential development;
- (b) permanent uses will bring pressures for other developments (e.g. car parking, storage sheds etc.) which can detract from the open character of the countryside;
- (c) permanent berths will restrict the use of moorings for leisure and recreational purposes.

5.25a The non-permanent dwellings comprising individual mobile homes, caravans, residential narrow boats and house boats are a problem to the Council. They are no more acceptable in the Green Belt than permanent dwellings.

5.26a There are six recognised mobile home parks in the District:

- (1) The Elms, Lippitts Hill, High Beach;
- (2) The Owl, Lippitts Hill, High Beach;
- (3) Woodbine Close, Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey;
- (4) Breach Barns, Galleyhill Road, Waltham Abbey;
- (5) Abridge Caravan Park, London Road, Abridge; and
- (6) Roydon Mill Leisure Park.

5.27a All of the sites are in the Green Belt, however, and consequently the Council will not permit them to expand beyond their existing limits.

POLICY GB5 – RESIDENTIAL MOORINGS AND NON-PERMANENT DWELLINGS

WITHIN THE GREEN BELT, THE COUNCIL WILL REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR:

- (i) **THE CREATION, OR USE, OF MOORINGS FOR PERMANENT RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION; OR**
- (ii) **NON-PERMANENT DWELLINGS, INCLUDING MOBILE HOMES AND CARAVANS, EXCEPT AS REPLACEMENTS WITHIN THE EXISTING RESIDENTIAL CARAVAN SITES SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.**

5.28a In the mobile home parks identified on the Proposals Map, the replacement of existing residential caravans or mobile homes will normally be permitted.

5.29a The Council may permit the siting of a mobile home or caravan where it is to be used on a strictly temporary basis e.g.: during the period of rebuilding or renovating an existing dwelling, or the period needed to establish an agricultural holding. In all such cases, the permitted home or caravan must be removed at the end of the temporary permission.

Garden Centres

5.30a The term "garden centre" has no specific definition, but may be taken to be "premises retailing plants, gardening and horticultural materials, supplies and equipment, including garden furniture and, as an ancillary use, supplies for pet animals." Garden centres generally have a particular character because their primary function is as a retail outlet for horticultural produce not grown at the site, and goods associated with gardens and gardening. Their overall character derives primarily from their links with horticulture.

5.31a Any intensification of the use of garden centres will, by its nature, tend to damage the overall character of the Green Belt. This is in terms of their impact upon the landscape and traffic generated.

POLICY GB6 – GARDEN CENTRES

WITHIN THE GREEN BELT THE COUNCIL WILL NOT GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE USE OF LAND FOR, OR ERECTION OF BUILDINGS FOR USE AS, A GARDEN CENTRE.

5.32a Where garden centres already exist with the benefit of planning permission, the Council will continue to recognise their activities and may allow them to intensify their operations. There will, however, be a presumption against their expansion further into the Green Belt. Proposals which would ensure the retention and future maintenance of buildings of architectural or historic significance will be assessed in accordance with the requirements of Policy HC13.

Conspicuous urban development

5.33a As well as protecting the character and openness of the Green Belt it is also necessary to maintain and protect its role as a recreational resource. This could be severely damaged by inappropriate developments even though they are within the urban area such as new buildings which are inadequately landscaped. It is therefore necessary to control any such developments in the light of their impact on the Green Belt and in accordance with PPG2 (see paras. 5.4a and 5.5a). The policy will also apply to developments that may be seen from built up areas as a result of being visible across, or as a backdrop to, an area of open Green Belt.

POLICY GB7A – CONSPICUOUS DEVELOPMENT

THE COUNCIL WILL REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT CONSPICUOUS FROM WITHIN OR BEYOND THE GREEN BELT WHICH WOULD HAVE AN EXCESSIVE ADVERSE IMPACT UPON THE OPENNESS, RURAL CHARACTER OR VISUAL AMENITIES OF THE GREEN BELT.

5.34a In implementing this policy the Council may also seek the enhancement of the visual amenity of the Green Belt where necessary and appropriate. This will apply to sites which are visually prominent from public rights of way used for recreational purposes (e.g. footpaths, bridleways and towpaths). Such improvements will be sought by legal agreement in accordance with Policy I1A.

Change of use or adaptation of buildings

5.35a The change of use and adaptation of rural buildings can reduce pressure for new buildings in the countryside. In sustainability terms, it is generally preferable that

existing buildings have an appropriate use, rather than remaining unused and falling into disrepair or dereliction. New uses for existing buildings may also contribute to a reduction in commuting. The reuse of any such buildings needs to take into account their potential occupation by protected species such as bats and barn owls (see policy NC4). The Council is aware of the need to protect the character and openness of the Green Belt from the adverse consequences of cumulative change of use of a large number of agricultural or horticultural buildings typical of the urban fringe. Such proposals therefore must (i) form part of a sound strategy for the holding in which the buildings are located ; and (ii) be in accordance with policy E12A regarding farm diversification. Finally, conversions can present opportunities for upgrading energy saving measures in older buildings, and for introducing sustainable design and construction techniques. Many of these are inherently “low tech” or involve little alteration to the building’s fabric or character and can therefore be readily assimilated into designs as required by policy CP4.

POLICY GB8A - CHANGE OF USE OR ADAPTATION OF BUILDINGS

THE COUNCIL WILL GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE CHANGE OF USE AND ADAPTATION OF A BUILDING IN THE GREEN BELT, PROVIDED ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET:

- (i) THE BUILDING IS OF PERMANENT AND SUBSTANTIAL CONSTRUCTION, CAPABLE OF CONVERSION WITHOUT MAJOR OR COMPLETE RECONSTRUCTION, AND IS IN KEEPING WITH ITS SURROUNDINGS IN TERMS OF FORM, BULK AND GENERAL DESIGN; AND**
- (ii) THE USE WOULD NOT HAVE A MATERIALLY GREATER IMPACT THAN THE PRESENT USE ON THE GREEN BELT AND THE PURPOSE OF INCLUDING LAND IN IT; AND**
- (iii) THE USE AND ASSOCIATED TRAFFIC GENERATION WOULD NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON THE CHARACTER OR AMENITIES OF THE COUNTRYSIDE; AND**
- (iv) THE COUNCIL IS SATISFIED THAT WORKS WITHIN THE LAST TEN YEARS WERE NOT COMPLETED WITH A VIEW TO SECURING A USE OTHER THAN THAT FOR WHICH THEY WERE OSTENSIBLY CARRIED OUT; AND**
- (v) THE USE WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACT UPON THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF A TOWN CENTRE, DISTRICT CENTRE, LOCAL CENTRE OR VILLAGE SHOP.**

IN SEEKING TO PROMOTE A LIVING AND WORKING COUNTRYSIDE PREFERENCE WILL BE GIVEN TO EMPLOYMENT GENERATING USES SUCH AS RECREATION, TOURISM, SMALL WORKSHOPS AND STORAGE. PROPOSALS WHICH INVOLVE A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF VEHICLE PARKING, COMMUTING (ESPECIALLY BY CAR) OR OPEN STORAGE WILL BE REFUSED PERMISSION. WHEREVER POSSIBLE, CONVERSIONS WILL EMPLOY SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES AS REQUIRED BY POLICY CP4.

5.36a In order to determine whether a building is capable of conversion without major reconstruction, applications for the change of use and adaptation of a rural building

must be accompanied by a structural survey of the existing building. Any necessary alterations to the building should not adversely affect its character. The Council may require a method statement to accompany applications for the change of use and adaptation of rural buildings specifying the work that will be necessary to the building to carry out the conversion. This is to ensure that the latest Building Regulations are taken into account, and that, in line with policy CP4, sustainable design/construction techniques are used wherever possible. Where necessary, permitted development rights will be removed and subsequent applications for extensions and outbuildings will be strongly resisted. This is to ensure that any new use will not have a greater impact upon the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it.

5.37a The new use should not detract from the public amenities of the rural area and should not result in the cessation of any public rights of way or diminish their enjoyment. The potential impacts of traffic generation, noise, fumes, dust, illumination and security measures will therefore be considered. The private amenities of residential properties in close proximity will be similarly assessed. The change of use and adaptation of glasshouses will not be in accordance with this policy. Additionally, where the building is situated in or adjacent to the Lee Valley Regional Park, the proposal should be in accordance with policy RST24.

5.38a When granting planning permission for any change of use the Council may seek to secure benefits for the surrounding countryside to mitigate any impact. The types of benefits to Green Belt or countryside objectives which the Council would expect are landscaping; clearance of part of a group of buildings; enhancement of nature conservation; and improving access to the countryside. Any landscaping scheme should be appropriate and effective (see Policy LL11) and will be required to be implemented during the first available planting season. Proposals which require significant alteration to the building to enable environmental improvements to the Green Belt to be achieved will be considered on their merits.

5.39a The amount and type of traffic generated by the new use must:

- be safely accommodated on the existing roads and lanes providing vehicular access to the site;
- not result in a significant reduction in the quality of the environment of the areas through which it passes (e.g. in terms of overall character, the residential environment or the condition of banks and vegetation at the roadside) (Policy ST4); and
- not adversely affect the character of Protected Lanes(Policy HC4).

5.40a The requirements of other relevant policies of the Plan including adequate on-site parking (Policy ST6), traffic generation and highway safety (Policy ST4) will also apply. The potential cumulative or aggregated effects of individual proposals will also be taken into account. In the interests of reducing the impacts of increased traffic movements on sensitive countryside roads, the Council may restrict permissions for change of use to B8 (storage or distribution) to long-term storage only. Such facilities are increasingly in demand, e.g. for storage of legal documents and wine. This enables the Council to support a genuine need to diversify but limits the impact on the countryside and the environment by minimising traffic generation. Conditions restricting the size of vehicles and the number of traffic movements may also be imposed.

5.41a Proposals for the reuse of recently constructed agricultural buildings, including those erected under permitted development rights which have not been used or little used for their original purpose, will be investigated and where appropriate either

refused or enforcement action taken to ensure the removal of the buildings. A ten year period is used within criterion (iv) as this accords with the General Permitted Development Order 1995, Part 6 Class A2(5), in relation to agricultural buildings and operations. Where following works for the erection, significant extension or alteration of an agricultural building, the use of the building permanently ceases within ten years from the date when the works were substantially completed, the building or extension should be removed unless the planning authority has agreed otherwise in writing.

5.42a Where the conversion of rural buildings may lead to the demand for a replacement building the Council may restrict such further development on the holding by the use of planning obligations. Restrictions may be imposed upon further changes of use or user which would not otherwise require the express consent of the local planning authority. In appropriate cases a condition may be attached to a permission removing specific categories of permitted development rights e.g. extensions. Applications for residential conversion of buildings currently or lastly in business use must comply with policies GB8A and GB9A amongst others.

5.43a Where a change of use, extension or alteration to a Listed Building in the Green Belt would be essential for, or contribute significantly to, ensuring a viable future for the building or for maintaining it in good order, this could constitute or contribute to the very special circumstances which can justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Proposals would have to be of a high standard of design to complement or enhance their surroundings, and any proposal would need Listed Building Consent as well as planning permission.

Conversions to Residential Use

5.44a PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (August 2004) advises that 'Re-use for economic development purposes will usually be preferable, but residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations, and for some types of building' (para 17). Residential conversions can have an adverse effect upon the character of the countryside by changes to the appearance of buildings, and the associated paraphernalia of modern living accommodation (e.g. flower gardens, garages, play equipment, lines of washing) and traffic generation. In addition to complying with policy GB8A further justification for residential conversions is therefore necessary.

POLICY GB9A - RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS

RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS OF RURAL BUILDINGS WORTHY OF RETENTION WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS THE CRITERIA IN POLICY GB8A ARE MET AND:

- (i) IT HAS BEEN CLEARLY PROVEN BY THE APPLICANT THAT BUSINESS REUSE IN LINE WITH POLICY GB8A IS UNSUITABLE; OR**
- (ii) THE RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION IS A SUBORDINATE PART OF A SCHEME FOR BUSINESS RE-USE; OR**
- (iii) IT IS FOR THE PURPOSES OF AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE OR FORESTRY.**

CONVERSION FOR RESIDENTIAL USE MUST NOT REQUIRE SUCH CHANGES TO BUILDINGS THAT THEIR SURROUNDINGS, EXTERNAL APPEARANCE,

CHARACTER AND FABRIC COULD BE UNSYMPATHETICALLY OR ADVERSELY AFFECTED. THIS INCLUDES FEATURES SUCH AS NEW CURTILAGES, BOUNDARY TREATMENT (INCLUDING WALLS AND FENCES), WINDOWS, DOOR OPENINGS AND CHIMNEYS. WHERE APPROPRIATE, PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS WILL BE REMOVED TO CONTROL POTENTIALLY INTRUSIVE STRUCTURES SUCH AS GARAGES, SHEDS, HARDSTANDINGS AND DOMESTIC STORAGE.

5.45a This policy will be used to enable the reuse of vernacular rural buildings. It will not apply to modern or utilitarian agricultural buildings, as they are not generally considered to be worthy of retention or suitable for conversion in accordance with Policy GB8A (i). The requirements of policy CP4 shall apply to all conversions, but where the building is listed, only measures which can be implemented without adversely affecting its fabric, character or setting will be accepted, in accordance with policy HC10.

5.46a Where the Council considers it appropriate, applicants will be required to submit a statement, with an application, which must demonstrate that a reasonable attempt has been made to achieve employment-generating activities in accordance with Policy GB8A. The statement must explain why the building is not suitable for business reuse, e.g. poor vehicular access, design or its location.

5.47a Where the proposed dwelling is a subordinate part of a scheme for business reuse, the Council will seek a planning obligation to link the occupation of the dwelling with the main commercial use of the building. This is intended to control the separate sale or rental of the dwelling and to allow consideration of the implications of further subdivision of use of the property.

5.48a Applications for conversion to dwellings for agriculture, horticulture or forestry workers will be considered in accordance with Policy GB17A.

5.49a The Housing Needs Survey (2003) demonstrates that there is a severe shortfall in the amount of affordable housing (encompassing key workers as necessary) being delivered to meet the needs of the district. Contributions on new development sites alone cannot meet the entire annual requirement. This is particularly true in rural areas where suitable sites are limited. Conversion of rural buildings may therefore be considered as a potential contributor to meeting the affordable housing needs of the local community provided that they are suitable for RSL purposes. It is felt that far from being a restrictive policy this approach to conversion of rural buildings reflects Government guidance in PPG2, PPG3 and PPS7. The Council may seek to ensure more specific benefits for landowners in addition to the community gains if conversion of rural buildings to affordable housing units proceeds.

Development within the Lee Valley Regional Park

5.50a The provisions of the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966 require that different considerations apply to those parts of the Metropolitan Green Belt covered by the Park. Moreover the character and appearance of those parts of the Park within the District are different from other parts of the District's Green Belt in that some areas are despoiled or derelict in appearance, although they may still have nature conservation value. In particular, certain existing and proposed developments within the Park would not be appropriate elsewhere in the Green Belt.

POLICY GB10 – DEVELOPMENT IN THE LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK

WITHIN THE AREA OF GREEN BELT WHICH LIES IN THE LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK, USES WHICH ARE NECESSARY TO ENHANCE THE FUNCTION AND ENJOYMENT OF THE PARK FOR ITS USERS WILL BE GRANTED PLANNING PERMISSION PROVIDED THAT:

- (i) THE DEVELOPER SHOWS, TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE COUNCIL, THAT THE PROPOSED SITE IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE ONE FOR THAT ACTIVITY;**
- (ii) ANY BUILT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROVISION OF RECREATION OR NATURE CONSERVATION FACILITIES WILL BE KEPT TO THE MINIMUM NECESSARY.**

5.51a In order to be acceptable, a proposal must also comply with other relevant Plan policies, including design (Policies DBE1 and DBE4), landscaping (Policies LL10 and LL11), car parking (Policy ST6) and traffic impact (Policy ST4).

Agricultural Buildings

5.52a Planning permission is needed for all but minor developments on agricultural holdings of between 0.4 ha. and 5 ha. For larger units generous permitted development rights apply and planning permission is only required for very large buildings (over 465 square metres). These rights only apply if the parcel of land is:

- (a) not less than 1ha in area;
- (b) included in an agricultural unit of 5ha or more;
- (c) in use for agriculture;
- (d) used for the purpose of a trade or business; and

the development would not impact upon a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) or Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The area of any development on the unit within the past two years and within a certain distance of the new proposal must also be taken into account in establishing whether permitted development rights apply. Full details of the differing requirements are given in the General Permitted Development Order 1995.

POLICY GB11 – AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSALS:

- (i) ARE DEMONSTRABLY NECESSARY FOR THE PURPOSES OF AGRICULTURE WITHIN THAT UNIT;**
- (ii) WOULD NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE LOCALITY OR TO THE AMENITIES OF NEARBY RESIDENTS;**
- (iii) WOULD NOT HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE ADVERSE EFFECT ON HIGHWAY SAFETY OR, WITH REGARD TO WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, ANY WATERCOURSE IN THE VICINITY OF THE SITE;**

(iv) WOULD NOT SIGNIFICANTLY THREATEN ANY SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION.

5.53a To satisfy criterion (i), the Council may require other details of any plan or strategy for the holding, similar to the requirements described in 5.35a above.

5.54a The policy also applies to any excavation or engineering operations required for agriculture within the holding but wholly excludes any building, structure or other works not designed for agricultural purposes. Proposals which are not dependent upon the agricultural use of the holding, or which may be dependent upon agriculture but need not take place on the unit or other agricultural land, will be refused.

5.55a The General Permitted Development Order also includes a system of discretionary control over the siting, design and external appearance of agricultural (and forestry) buildings, including proposals for extension or alteration, and for farm and forestry roads and other engineering operations. This is dealt with in paragraphs 16.22 - 16.24 and Policy LL4.

Housing

(i) Subdivision

5.56a The Council is anxious to prevent the establishment of further dwellings in the Green Belt where this would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the countryside. It is, however, also keen to ensure that existing buildings are utilised to the full, provided any consequences of this are acceptable.

POLICY GB13 – SUBDIVISION OF HOUSES

THE COUNCIL MAY PERMIT THE SUBDIVISION OF EXISTING LARGE HOUSES IN THE GREEN BELT INTO TWO OR MORE DWELLINGS. IN SO DOING THE COUNCIL MAY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT:

- (i) THE SUITABILITY OF THE PROPOSED NEW UNITS AND THEIR CURTILAGES IN TERMS OF LIVING SPACE, GARDEN SPACE, PRIVACY, ACCESS, CAR PARKING, AND OTHER RESIDENTIAL AMENITIES;**
- (ii) THE DESIRABILITY OF PRESERVING A BUILDING OF HISTORIC OR ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST WHICH IS OTHERWISE SHOWN TO FACE IMMINENT DERELICTION OR DEMOLITION;**
- (iii) WHETHER THE APPEARANCE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE WOULD BE IMPAIRED; AND**
- (iv) ACCESSIBILITY TO EMPLOYMENT, SCHOOLS, SHOPS, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT.**

THE COUNCIL WILL REMOVE CERTAIN PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FROM THE RESULTING DWELLINGS.

5.57a The subdivision of existing large houses may, therefore, be countenanced but the Council will remove certain permitted development rights from the resulting dwellings, so as to inhibit further residential development in the Green Belt. There can be no presumption in favour of sub-divisions but the appropriateness of the

development will be assessed against the criteria set out in the policy. In considering the suitability of the existing building and its curtilage it will be necessary for any proposals to satisfy all other relevant policies of the Plan including those relating to amenity space (policy DBE8), car parking (policy ST6) etc

(ii) Residential extensions

5.58a PPG2 specifies that limited extensions to existing dwellings are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided that they do "not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building."

5.59a There is a need, then, to restrict extensions, including conservatories, to those of a proportionate size, whether attached to or detached from the existing properties. The careful control of extensions is necessary to (i) prevent the cumulative adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt, and (ii) ensure, in accordance with PPG3, that a range of dwelling sizes and types (and therefore of affordability) is safeguarded within the area of restraint.

5.60a Extensions will only be approved if the Council is satisfied that the existing living space is inadequate by contemporary standards, taking into account the need to retain a range of dwelling sizes and types, and that there is no conflict with other Green Belt objectives or creation of an undesirable precedent. The appearance of the countryside must not be impaired. The Council will, therefore, attach particular importance to the scale, size and design of proposed extensions to dwellings. Extensions which are out of scale with the existing dwelling, or where the appearance of the countryside is not being safeguarded, will be resisted and the full extent of the premises (including the open space incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling) will be regarded as part of the countryside. It is important that the Green Belt should be kept free of new building generally and proportionateness will not solely be determined in relation to visual impact.

POLICY GB14A – RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS

WITHIN THE GREEN BELT, LIMITED EXTENSIONS (INCLUDING CONSERVATORIES) TO EXISTING DWELLINGS MAY BE PERMITTED WHERE:

- (i) THE OPEN CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE GREEN BELT WILL NOT BE IMPAIRED; AND**
- (ii) THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDINGS IN THEIR SETTINGS WILL BE ENHANCED OR NOT UNDULY HARMED; AND**
- (iii) THEY WILL NOT RESULT IN DISPROPORTIONATE ADDITIONS OF MORE THAN 40%, UP TO A MAXIMUM OF 50M², OVER AND ABOVE THE TOTAL FLOORSPACE OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDING.**

5.61a In considering the impact of an extension on the Green Belt the Council will have regard to:

- (a) its appearance when viewed from the surrounding rural area. The impact is likely to be proportionately less when the dwelling is within a built-up enclave or when additional floorspace is largely contained within the existing roof space of the dwelling;
- (b) the size of the existing house in relation to the character of the plot and its proximity to its boundaries;

- (c) the cumulative effect of similar extensions and the likelihood of an undesirable precedent being set;
- (d) the impact of the development upon the rural character; and
- (e) the need to retain a range of small accommodation and rural housing consistent with the character of the Green Belt as a whole and affordable to as many of the residents of the District as possible.

5.62a For the purposes of calculation the 'total floorspace' refers to the gross internal measurements taken from the inside of the external walls and includes the space occupied by internal partitions, but excluding cellars, lofts, outbuildings and any stairwells. When the maximum amount of floor space increase has been reached, further applications for extensions (including conservatories that require planning permission) will not be permitted except for minor extensions (e.g. for minor porch or bathroom extensions). The 'original dwelling' refers to the floor space of the building as existing on the first appointed day of the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 (i.e. 1st July 1948) and, in relation to a building built on or after that date, as so built. Conservatories are included in the calculation of total floorspace because they represent an extension of living accommodation.

5.63a Policy GB14A is intended to allow a degree of flexibility for changing social needs while aiming to retain a range of house types and sizes in the Green Belt. This policy should cover the reasonable requirements of modern living standards and should not need to be breached in any foreseeable circumstances. It is intended to provide transparency and consistency for all parties. The figure of 40% is based on analysis of permissions over recent years. The Council believes that, in association with the other criteria of policy GB14A, environmental and social objectives can be met.

5.64a Detached outbuildings such as garages, games rooms or swimming pools (where it is necessary to apply for planning permission) will only be granted where the proposals are in scale and in keeping with the property which they serve, and do not unduly impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. Where appropriate a condition will be imposed to prevent the conversion of outbuildings to habitable use.

5.65a Where extensions which are likely to gain approval would be screened by trees or bushes on the site, planning conditions are likely to be imposed requiring the retention of the screening.

(iii) Replacement dwellings

POLICY GB15A – REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS

THE REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING PERMANENT DWELLINGS IN THE GREEN BELT, ON A ONE FOR ONE BASIS, MAY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE NEW DWELLING WILL:

- (i) NOT BE MATERIALLY GREATER IN VOLUME THAN THAT WHICH IT WOULD REPLACE; AND**
- (ii) NOT HAVE A GREATER IMPACT ON THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT THAN THE ORIGINAL DWELLING; AND**
- (iii) NOT RESULT IN THE SIZE OF THE PRIVATE OR CULTIVATED GARDEN OF THE REPLACEMENT DWELLING EXCEEDING THAT WHICH IT REPLACES.**

WHERE THE EXISTING DWELLING HAS ALREADY BEEN EXTENDED, PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS ON THE NEW DWELLING WILL BE REMOVED TO PREVENT FURTHER EXTENSIONS OR OUTBUILDINGS.

5.66a The extension of the private or cultivated garden of a replacement dwelling needs to be controlled to limit the urbanisation of the Green Belt.

5.67a Where a replacement dwelling would be capable of occupation independently of the existing dwelling, planning permission will be conditional upon the demolition of the existing dwelling upon completion of its replacement.

5.68a In order to be acceptable, development proposals should also comply with the policies relating to design and location (DBE1 and DBE4), landscape (LL2) and landscaping (LL10 and LL11) and car parking (ST6). This policy is also subject to compliance with Policy RST9 which relates to the chalet estates at Carthagen and Riverside.

(iv) Affordable Housing

5.69a The lack of housing which is "affordable" to rent or buy, may often result in villagers (particularly those starting new households) being obliged to move away in search of accommodation and work. This has a severe effect upon the community with those who are able to afford the housing available on the open market often being from elsewhere.

5.70a The Government has, however, recognised the need for affordable rural housing. PPG3, Annex B enables local authorities to grant planning permission for small sites, within and adjoining existing villages, even if the sites are in areas subject to policies of restraint (such as the Green Belt). It therefore concludes that it is for local planning authorities to judge whether affordable housing, to meet local community needs, is appropriate in such areas. PPG2 acknowledges that limited affordable housing for local community needs may be appropriate in the Green Belt.

POLICY GB16 – AFFORDABLE HOUSING

PLANNING PERMISSION MAY BE GRANTED FOR SMALL-SCALE "AFFORDABLE" HOUSING SCHEMES WITHIN THE SMALLER SETTLEMENTS, AS AN EXCEPTION TO THE NORMAL POLICY OF RESTRAINT, WHERE THE COUNCIL IS SATISFIED THAT:

- (i) THERE IS A DEMONSTRABLE SOCIAL OR ECONOMIC NEED FOR THE ACCOMMODATION IN THE LOCALITY WHICH CANNOT BE MET IN ANY OTHER WAY AND WHICH CAN REASONABLY BE EXPECTED TO PERSIST IN THE LONG TERM. AN APPLICATION WOULD BE EXPECTED TO BE SUPPORTED BY THE LOCAL PARISH COUNCIL AND A PROPER APPRAISAL OF NEED;**
- (ii) THE DEVELOPMENT IS WELL-RELATED TO THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT AND THERE IS NO DETRIMENT TO THE CHARACTER OF THE VILLAGE OR THE COUNTRYSIDE, OR TO GREEN BELT OBJECTIVES. PROPOSALS INVOLVING EXTENSIONS INTO THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OR THE CREATION OF RIBBONS OR ISOLATED POCKETS OF DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE AVOIDED. THERE SHOULD BE NO SIGNIFICANT GROUNDS FOR OBJECTION**

ON HIGHWAYS, INFRASTRUCTURE OR OTHER PLANNING GROUNDS; AND

- (iii) **SUITABLY SECURE ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE TO ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF THE ACCOMMODATION, AS BUILT, FOR INITIAL AND SUBSEQUENT LOCAL NEEDS HOUSEHOLDS WHOSE TOTAL INCOME IS INSUFFICIENT TO ENABLE THEM TO AFFORD TO RENT OR BUY A DWELLING OF A SUFFICIENT SIZE ON THE OPEN MARKET.**

5.71a Not all settlements are appropriate for an affordable housing scheme, however. To be suitable they are likely:

- to have a recognisable community which is distinct and separate from that on the edge of the metropolitan area; and
- to be too small to be capable of offering sufficient alternative housing to meet local needs.

5.72a Settlements which could therefore be suitable include Epping Green, Matching Tye, Matching Green, Moreton, Sheering, Fyfield, Willingale, Toot Hill, Little End and Stapleford Abbots. Those which would not be appropriate include Lower Nazeing, Theydon Bois, Chigwell Row, North Weald Bassett, Sewardstone and Chipping Ongar.

5.73a A scheme will only be acceptable, however, if it can be proven, to the satisfaction of the Council, that any would-be occupiers of an affordable housing scheme actually need to live in the village in question or a neighbouring village. The policy is not intended to provide cheap housing in the Green Belt for those who might happen to live there already and could perhaps live in a nearby town just as readily. Prospective occupiers should therefore comprise some or all of the following:

- (a) long-established local residents (i.e. those who have lived in the village for at least five of the preceding ten years) requiring separate accommodation (including new households);
- (b) immediate family dependents of long-established local residents;
- (c) former long-established local residents;
- (d) households living elsewhere where the main earner cannot otherwise take up an offer of a permanent, full-time job in a local service or continue in such an existing job.

5.74a In accordance with Government guidelines no sites are identified and, before planning permission is granted, the Council will need to be satisfied that secure arrangements will be made to ensure that the dwellings remain available to the local households in need in perpetuity. This will be through the involvement of a Housing Association or Village Trust, covenants, or legal agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (see Policy I1A). Satisfactory evidence that the cost of the rent or rent/mortgage is affordable by the potential occupiers will also be needed in order for the scheme to be acceptable.

5.75a It will be necessary to remove "permitted development" rights in order to ensure that the size and therefore cost to future occupiers does not become excessive.

5.76a Whilst the policy is in line with the "enabling" role, the Council does not countenance the development of other sites, which would not otherwise receive

planning permission, to cross-subsidise the development of affordable housing. This is in order to minimise any incursions into the Green Belt and avoid undesirable precedents.

5.77a In the application of this policy, favourable consideration will be given to new dwellings only in the most exceptional circumstances and there can be no presumption in favour of development. Any affordable housing which is provided in this way will be in addition to the needs identified in the Structure Plan.

5.78a Developments will also be required to comply with other Plan policies relating to lifetime homes (Policy H9A), design, location and layout (Policies DBE1, DBE4 and DBE5), landscape (Policies LL2 and LL3), landscaping (LL10 and LL11) and car parking provision (ST6), although that relating to amenity space (DBE8) may be relaxed.

(v) Agricultural, horticultural and forestry workers' dwellings

POLICY GB17A – AGRICULTURAL, HORTICULTURAL AND FORESTRY WORKERS' DWELLINGS

THE COUNCIL MAY GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR A DWELLING FOR AN AGRICULTURAL, HORTICULTURAL OR FORESTRY WORKER ONLY WHERE IT IS COMPLETELY SATISFIED THAT: -

- (i) THE DWELLING IS ESSENTIAL, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE NATURE OF THE ENTERPRISE (E.G. PRESENCE OR OTHERWISE OF LIVESTOCK), POSSIBLE REORGANISATION OF THE EXISTING LABOUR FORCE, THE POTENTIAL OFFERED BY EXISTING RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION ON THE FARM OR HOLDING, AND THE OUTCOME OF ANY APPROACH MADE TO THE COUNCIL AS HOUSING AUTHORITY UNDER THE RENT (AGRICULTURE) ACT 1976;**
- (ii) IF (i) IS INCONCLUSIVE, THERE IS FIRM EVIDENCE OF VIABILITY OF THE AGRICULTURAL, HORTICULTURAL OR FORESTRY ENTERPRISE CONCERNED AT THE TIME OF THE APPLICATION AND OF CONTINUED VIABILITY IN THE LONG TERM;**
- (iii) GENUINE AND SUSTAINED EFFORTS TO FIND ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION WITHIN REASONABLE TRAVELLING DISTANCE HAVE PROVED UNSUCCESSFUL (UNLESS THE ACCOMMODATION IS REQUIRED TO HOUSE A SPECIALIST WORKER WHO, BY THE NATURE OF HIS OR HER JOB, NEEDS TO LIVE ON THE FARM OR HOLDING);**
- (iv) THE TOTAL FLOORSPACE DOES NOT EXCEED 150M²; AND**
- (v) PLANNING PERMISSION FOR SUCH A PERMANENT DWELLING WILL ONLY BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO:**
 - (a) A PLANNING CONDITION TO ENSURE THAT THE DWELLING IS OCCUPIED BY A PERSON EMPLOYED LOCALLY IN AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE OR FORESTRY. THAT CONDITION WILL NOT NORMALLY BE REMOVED ON A SUBSEQUENT APPLICATION UNLESS IT IS SHOWN THAT**

THE LONG-TERM NEEDS FOR DWELLINGS FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS, BOTH ON THE PARTICULAR FARM OR HOLDING AND IN THE LOCALITY, NO LONGER WARRANT ITS RESERVATION FOR THAT PURPOSE; AND

(b) THE MAKING, IN APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES, OF A LEGAL AGREEMENT ENSURING THAT THE DWELLING SHALL NOT BE SOLD OR LEASED SEPARATELY FROM THE HOLDING. TEMPORARY DWELLINGS MAY BE PERMITTED WHILST THE LONG-TERM VIABILITY OF THE ENTERPRISE IS BEING ESTABLISHED.

(vi) WHERE APPROPRIATE A CONDITION WILL BE IMPOSED REMOVING SELECTED PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FOR DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE CURTILAGE OF A DWELLING HOUSE AND FOR MINOR OPERATIONS.

5.79a The Council will require evidence of need (in terms of the enterprise rather than of the owner or occupier) and will expect an application to be supported by a technical and, where appropriate, a financial appraisal from a suitably qualified agricultural consultant.

5.80a The Council is particularly concerned about the size of this type of dwelling. This is to ensure that the dwellings can be kept available to meet the needs of the types of worker for whom they are intended. Size has a bearing on cost of construction, the rent or mortgage, the cost of upkeep, and the future selling price. In practice, where larger units have been granted permission and extended and made more luxurious, pressure arises to remove occupancy conditions because farmworkers, whose wages/salaries have historically been low, cannot afford the property. Thus, restricting the size of such properties has become necessary and reflects the need to protect the Green Belt and the countryside.

5.81a Agricultural workers' dwellings will not retain their permitted development rights. Any application for permission for an extension will be assessed with regard to both the considerations set out in para 5.60a above and policy GB14A relating to residential extensions in the Green Belt. Permitted development rights within the curtilage of a dwelling house include enlargement, improvement or other alteration (including to the roof), porches, swimming pools, hard surfaces, and the erection of containers for the storage of oil. 'Minor operations' include erection of gates, fences, walls or other means of enclosure, construction of an access road, and the painting of the exterior of the building.

5.82a The Council will not consider sympathetically an application for a dwelling for an agricultural or horticultural worker unless it is completely satisfied that the proposed development is entirely appropriate to the appearance of the countryside and the character of the Green Belt. The potential aggregated effect of previous permissions and similar proposals will be taken into account.

5.83a There is a presumption against proposals for a dwelling where a holding has been sold off without its previously associated dwelling, unless special circumstances exist.

5.84a In order to be acceptable, development proposals should also comply with the policies relating to design and location (DBE1 and DBE4), landscape (LL2),

landscaping (LL10 and LL11), car parking (ST6) and road safety and traffic generation (ST4).

5.85a Planning permission for a permanent dwelling will be given only if an agreement is made, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (see Policy I1A), with the effect that the proposed dwelling cannot be sold separately from or severed from its associated holdings, and will always be subject to the following condition:

"The occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to a person solely or mainly employed, or last employed, in the locality in agriculture as defined in Section 336 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, or in forestry, or a dependant of such a person residing with him/or her, or a widow or widower of such a person".

5.86a Any granting of planning permission may also be subject to a condition requiring the dwelling to be completed to the level of the roof timbers within two years. This is to ensure that implementation reflects an immediate need for the new dwelling and thus satisfies criterion (i) of the policy.

5.87a Only in very special circumstances is temporary caravan or mobile home accommodation acceptable in the Green Belt. Where this is expected to lead in due course to an application for a permanent dwelling (e.g. where long-term viability of an agricultural enterprise is maintained), the Council will not permit the temporary accommodation if permission would not subsequently be given for a permanent dwelling. Permission for temporary accommodation will be granted for a limited period only, which will not normally be extended, and will be conditional upon restricted occupancy. In the interests of maintaining the openness of the Green Belt the Council will require the removal of the caravan or mobile home in periods when the temporary dwelling is not being used, unless very special circumstances are demonstrated.

Removal of Agricultural Occupancy Conditions

5.88a For the integrity of policy GB17A to be maintained it is important that, if an application for the removal of an occupancy condition is made, it is clearly proven that need for an agricultural worker's dwelling no longer exists on the holding or in the locality.

POLICY GB17B – REMOVAL OF AGRICULTURAL OCCUPANCY CONDITIONS

THE REMOVAL OF AGRICULTURAL OCCUPANCY CONDITIONS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT HAS BEEN CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THAT: -

- (i) THERE IS NO LONGER A FUNCTIONAL NEED FOR THE DWELLING ON THE HOLDING; AND**
- (ii) THERE IS NO LONGER A NEED FOR THIS TYPE OF DWELLING IN THE LOCALITY; AND**
- (iii) THE DWELLING HAS BEEN MARKETING WITH ITS AGRICULTURAL OCCUPANCY STATUS MADE CLEAR THROUGHOUT (WITH RECORDS OF RESPONSES KEPT) FOR A MINIMUM OF ONE YEAR. THE MARKETING MUST INCLUDE:**
 - (a) 'FOR SALE' SIGNAGE VISIBLE FROM THE HIGHWAY; AND**

- (b) LOCAL NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING ON A REGULAR BASIS THROUGHOUT THE MARKETING PERIOD; AND**
 - (c) NATIONAL OR REGIONAL ADVERTISING IN SPECIALIST AGRICULTURAL PUBLICATIONS ON A REGULAR BASIS THROUGHOUT THE MARKETING PERIOD; AND**
 - (d) THE ASKING PRICE FOR THE DWELLING BEING AT LEAST 40% BELOW ITS GENERAL HOUSING MARKET VALUE.**
- (iv) A SURVEY OF THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY IS CARRIED OUT TO ASSESS THE EXISTING AGRICULTURAL NEED IN THE LOCALITY FOR THE DWELLING.**

5.89a When assessing need via the production of a survey of the agricultural community within the locality for the dwelling, an 8 km radius around the dwelling will generally be applied. This reflects a reasonable commuting distance for someone employed in agriculture or horticulture, taking into consideration the rural road patterns and the geography of the area. The survey should test existing need via direct marketing of the holding but also establish any potential demand in the near future that could be generated via planned expansion by individual holdings. Where suitable, opportunity for rental, sub-division, multiple occupancy, and occupancy that is more intensive should be explored. This is of particular significance in areas close to horticultural glasshouses, where demand for accommodation for seasonal agricultural workers continues to be high.

5.90a For the purposes of completeness when assessing the marketing strategy, it is necessary that a record of expressions of interest in the property be maintained. The eligibility of those interested and able to comply with the agricultural occupancy condition, and their reasons for not pursuing their interest should be clearly presented.

5.91a All advertising should state the extent of any holding associated with the dwelling. The advertising schedule outlined in criterion (iii) of policy GB17B is necessary to ensure that all dwellings or holdings are advertised consistently. Additionally it represents a vigorous approach to marketing a site, allowing for seasonal variations in the property market.

5.92a The level of discount applied to a dwelling to reflect its agricultural occupancy restriction in this area has to be much higher than in less sought after rural locations. A 40% reduction is considered to be appropriate in view of the desirable nature of this district as a Green Belt location close to London for commuters and people who have retired. These demands create very high residential property values in the locality. The discount must also be seen in the context that the property was permitted for the purposes of maintaining a farm business and new AOC dwellings would similarly be considered to be for business purposes. The asking price of an AOC dwelling should therefore not be a great deal over the current average construction cost of a new dwelling, taking into account the relatively low value of agricultural land.

5.93a The removal of an agricultural occupancy condition is not justified merely because the siting of a dwelling adjacent to a village envelope leads to its subsequent inclusion within the village envelope (and exclusion from the Green Belt). The special circumstances which have allowed the effective extension of the village into the Green Belt must still be acknowledged.

The former Radio Station site at North Weald Bassett

5.94a This site was used for radio transmission from the 1920s to the mid 1980s. Despite the construction of buildings and erection of masts (all of which have been removed) the area retained its rural character by staying mainly in agricultural use. The site is also important for walking and riding and its network of definitive and informal rights of way is an amenity greatly valued by the local community.

5.95a The Local Plan for Epping and Ongar proposed part of the site as a public golf course. This was on the basis of there being no public golf course in the District at the time, the central location of the site within the District, and its topography. The Council subsequently endorsed a leisure, recreation and tourism strategy for the Epping/North Weald Bassett/Chipping Ongar area (see para 12.107). A 'leisure corridor' was proposed between Epping and Chipping Ongar with the radio station site being seen as suitable for an informal 'country park'. In essence, this meant promoting public access and enjoyment rather than the more formal designation of such a substantial site. A 'pay-and-play' golf course, a picnic area with interpretation at the Redoubt, and an extended network of footpaths and bridleways, were seen as the main elements. The golf course would be a self financing commercial venture.

5.96a The site forms the northern half of Ongar Great Park, which is believed to be the earliest recorded Deer Park in this country (references date from 1045). The best surviving feature of the Park is its boundary, which is still recognisable as a hedge. The Park has been designated an "Ancient Landscape" (see paras 6.11 and 6.12).

5.97a Planning permission was granted in 1998 for a pay and play golf course with clubhouse, the creation of a 'pocket park', and for residential development on a small part of the site. A Section 106 Agreement addressed:

- (a) demolition and removal of the Radio Station buildings;
- (b) retention of open space and hedgerows;
- (c) erection and maintenance of security fencing around the Essex Redoubt (a Scheduled Ancient Monument);
- (d) transfer of land to the parish council for the pocket park, and some land to the bowls club;
- (e) a financial contribution to fund management of the Redoubt and pocket park; and
- (f) creation of a new rights of way.

At the time of preparing these Alterations (June 2005), the redevelopment of the site was virtually complete (including the golf course), but the following policy will be retained until all works associated with permission and Section 106 agreement are finalised.

5.98a That part of the site which has been developed for housing will subsequently be taken out of the Green Belt when the appropriate opportunity arises. A consequence of this is that an area of land behind the Kings Head PH will be deleted from the Green Belt should redevelopment take place. This will, however, strengthen the need to retain open space and the Green Belt boundary on land west of Station Road and to protect the "green wedge" leading from the station into the village.

POLICY GB18 – THE FORMER RADIO STATION SITE AT NORTH WEALD BASSETT

PROPOSALS FOR THE REUSE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE OF THE FORMER RADIO STATION AT NORTH WEALD BASSETT WILL BE REQUIRED TO:

- (i) MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE PUBLIC ACCESS FOR WALKERS AND HORSE-RIDERS;
- (ii) MAINTAIN THE OPENNESS, RURALITY AND TRANQUILLITY OF THE AREA, AND MAKE PROVISION FOR A POCKET PARK WITHIN EASY ACCESS OF THE VILLAGE;
- (iii) RESPECT THE SETTING OF THE SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT (INCLUDING THE DEMOLITION AND REMOVAL OF THE ADJACENT RADIO STATION BUILDINGS) WITH LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS;
- (iv) MAKE PROVISION FOR A PAY-AND-PLAY GOLF COURSE;
- (v) MAKE PROVISION FOR ANY NECESSARY FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME;
- (vi) RETAIN THE BOWLING CLUB AND ITS FACILITIES OR ENSURE THEIR REPLACEMENT;
- (vii) MAINTAIN THE GREEN WEDGE LEADING TOWARDS NORTH WEALD STATION.

THE COUNCIL MAY GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT EAST OF STATION ROAD, AS REPLACEMENT FOR THE FORMER RADIO STATION BUILDINGS, IN THE CONTEXT OF AN ACCEPTABLE SCHEME FOR THE WHOLE SITE WHICH SATISFIED CRITERIA (i)-(vii) ABOVE.

Grange Farm, Chigwell

5.99a Grange Farm is an important site (lying just outside Chigwell Conservation Area) which has been an important recreational amenity with more than just a local catchment. It is now vacant and has deteriorated over recent years.

5.100a The proximity of the site to the urban area calls for a sensitive development or redevelopment, which would probably rely on significant private expenditure. Outline planning permission was granted in 2002 and again in 2005 for residential development on that part of the site which contained buildings associated with the previous use. A Section 106 Agreement dealt with rehabilitation of the rest of the site to return it to a mix of formal and informal recreation uses, and to make provision for nature conservation and associated management for the next 25 years, including provision of a sports pavilion and an interpretation centre for the Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature Reserve. A detailed application had not been submitted, and no other implementation of the permission started, by June 2005, so the following policy is retained.

POLICY GB19 – GRANGE FARM, CHIGWELL

THE COUNCIL MAY GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE OF GRANGE FARM, CHIGWELL (IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP) PROVIDED THAT:

- (i) ANY NEW OR REPLACEMENT DEVELOPMENT IS LIMITED TO THE EXISTING AREA OF BUILT DEVELOPMENT;

- (ii) **THE REMAINDER OF THE SITE REMAINS GENERALLY OPEN IN NATURE;**
- (iii) **A SUITABLE AREA FOR NATURE CONSERVATION WITH OPEN PUBLIC ACCESS FOR INFORMAL RECREATION IS PROVIDED;**
- (iv) **THE SCHEME INCORPORATES:**
 - (a) **A PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY THROUGH THE SITE AS PART OF A ROUTE ACROSS THE RODING VALLEY; AND**
 - (b) **ADEQUATE AND APPROPRIATE FACILITIES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF THE RODING VALLEY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE.**

5.101a The Council will require planning applications to relate to the whole site whether or not it is proposed to redevelop all of the existing buildings.

5.102a The site is a very important one for great crested newts. Any planning application should therefore include provision of adequate and appropriate terrestrial habitat (immediately adjacent to the aquatic one) within the curtilage of the site. In order to be acceptable, any proposal must also comply with all other relevant Plan policies, including design (Policies DBE1 and DBE4), landscaping (Policies LL10 and LL11), car parking (Policy ST6) and traffic impact (Policy ST4).

Environmental Implications

5.103a The implementation of the policies in this chapter will contribute to the achievement of the following Plan aims (see pages 24 and 25):

- (ix) To increase the scope of appropriate recreational activities in the countryside.
- (xx) To ensure that any new development does not have an unacceptable impact both in environmental terms and in the provision of local facilities.
- (xxiii) To protect and, where possible, enhance the character and environmental qualities of the countryside.
- (xxx) To protect the Green Belt from development which is unnecessary or undesirable.
- (xxxii) To safeguard and, where possible, enhance the landscape.
- (xxxiii) To safeguard and, where possible, enhance the District's tree cover, flora and wildlife.
- (xxxiv) To make the most efficient use of land and buildings wherever practicable.
- (xxxviii) To enable the continued implementation of the Council's Environmental Charter.

5.104a The extent to which the policies have regard to, and are likely to impact upon, environmental considerations is set out in Appendix 2. This indicates that, on the national scale, the countryside will be protected which, transposed to the local scale, means the Green Belt. The general restraint on development in the Green Belt will protect the local environment. The concentration of development in the urban areas should, in conjunction with other policies, enhance the urban environment.

5.105a However, at the wider scale, it means that much additional housing required at the sub-regional scale (i.e. to meet the needs of London) is deflected beyond the Green Belt to growth points (e.g. Bishop's Stortford). This may mean that the residents of these new houses have to travel to work to the major employment focus

of London. Various factors may, however, contribute to the increase in journeys being on public, rather than private, transport.

5.106a This approach may seem to conflict with the concept of sustainability in terms of travel. However, the alternative would be to develop housing, to contribute to London's needs, in the Green Belt rather than beyond it. Such an approach would not be sustainable in that the Green Belt, and the important functions which it fulfils, would be eroded. In view of this, the Council's approach is to protect the Green Belt. It also seeks to provide local employment opportunities to minimise the journey to work.

Chapter 6 – Heritage Conservation

Chapter 6 - Heritage Conservation (Alterations)

(Insertion after paragraph 6.65)

Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Importance

6.65a In addition to protecting statutorily Listed Buildings, the Council will make every effort to identify and protect unlisted buildings which contribute to the historic, architectural and visual character of the district. In particular, the Council will compile a "Local List" to ensure that any future development proposal preserves, and where possible enhances, the character and appearance of a building included on the list and its setting. Owners of such buildings will be encouraged to avoid demolition, unsympathetic alteration or any other changes that would diminish the value of their buildings in architectural, historic or townscape terms.

6.65b To be included on the Local List, a building should satisfy (a), and either (b) or (c) below:

- (a) authenticity –buildings should be recognisably of their time, or of a phase in their history. If they have been unsympathetically altered, the change should be easily reversible. A building which is substantially unaltered, or retains the majority of its original features, qualifies under this criterion;
- (b) architectural, local or townscape significance – be a good example of a particular local building type, craftsmanship, architectural quality, style or detailing;
- (c) historical significance – display physical evidence of periods of local economic, technical, or social significance, well known local people or historic events.

Before a building is included on the list, owners and local interest groups will be consulted on the basis of a plan and description identifying the extent of the building and reasons for the local listing. The Local List will be reviewed, and additions or deletions made, on a five yearly basis. The Council will produce a guidance note on the procedure for adding further buildings/structures to the Local List. Owners, Parish Councils and local interest groups will be encouraged to submit suggestions for further additions to the List, which will then be assessed in accordance with the criteria above.

POLICY HC13A – LOCAL LIST OF BUILDINGS

THE COUNCIL WILL PREPARE A LIST OF BUILDINGS OF LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC IMPORTANCE (THE 'LOCAL LIST'). MAINTENANCE OF THESE BUILDINGS WILL BE ENCOURAGED AND THEY WILL RECEIVE SPECIAL CONSIDERATION IN THE EXERCISE OF THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PROCESS.

6.65c Encouragement and special consideration could include grants for repairs and the provision of specialist advice on materials, construction and skilled contractors.

Chapter 8 - Recycling and Pollution

Chapter 8 - Recycling and Pollution (Alterations)

(Changes to paragraphs 8.19 to 8.21 and policy RP5)

(3) Adverse environmental impact on neighbouring land uses

8.19a Some types of development or land use may be unacceptable when sited next to, or near, housing and other sensitive locations such as protected wildlife and historic sites. Excessive outputs of, for example, noise, smell, dust, vibration or light can all cause unacceptable problems in the wrong locations or where they cannot be properly controlled. Conversely, sensitive new development or uses should not be located next to or near existing uses which would result in unacceptable environmental problems or conflicts.

POLICY RP5A – ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

THE COUNCIL WILL NOT GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR:

- (i) **DEVELOPMENT WHERE IT COULD CAUSE EXCESSIVE NOISE, VIBRATION, OR AIR, GROUND WATER OR LIGHT POLLUTION FOR NEIGHBOURING LAND USES, PROTECTED WILDLIFE SPECIES AND HABITATS; OR**
- (ii) **SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT SUCH AS HOUSING (OR OTHER FORMS OF RESIDENTIAL OCCUPATION, INCLUDING MOBILE HOMES AND CARAVANS), HOSPITALS OR SCHOOLS WHICH COULD BE SUBJECT TO EITHER EXCESSIVE NOISE FROM ADJOINING LAND USES OR TRAFFIC (ROAD, RAIL AND AIR), OR OTHER FORMS OF ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS SUCH AS AIR POLLUTION;**

EXCEPT WHERE IT IS POSSIBLE TO MITIGATE THE ADVERSE EFFECTS BY THE IMPOSITION OF APPROPRIATE CONDITIONS.

8.20a Consultations with the Council's Environmental Services and other relevant authorities will be carried out in determining planning applications that may result in any excessive adverse environmental or health impacts both during and after construction. Consideration will be given to the possibility of granting planning permission subject to conditions covering such issues as:

- (i) traffic movements during and after construction including measures such as reuse of on-site materials to minimise the need for such movements;
- (ii) daily cleaning of access highways and other techniques to minimise dust emissions during construction;
- (iii) days and hours of operation or use of the completed development;
- (iv) noise and vibration from plant and machinery; and
- (v) the location, spread, intensity and timing of use of any exterior lighting.

Reference will be made to current Government and national guidance and any other relevant standards in establishing adverse environmental impact limits for particular types of land uses.

8.21a The review and assessment of air quality within the district is continuing. This includes a thorough investigation of air quality management areas. When assessing

any proposal including planning consultations from adjoining authorities, particular attention will be paid to impact on sensitive areas such as Epping Forest.

Chapter 9 – Housing

Chapter 9 – Housing (Replacement Chapter)

Introduction

9.1a There is consistent demand for further housing in the district because of:

- its proximity to central London and other employment centres;
- the accessibility of the urban areas to the motorway and rail networks and to the London Underground;
- the attractiveness of the surrounding countryside and villages;
- the generally high standard of housing and perceived quality of life; and
- changing national population trends such as more single households and greater longevity.

9.2a House prices are consequently high. The average price of a semi-detached dwelling in February 2005 as shown by the HM Land Registry was £281,517, 44.7% higher than the average in the rest of Essex (£194,577). House prices are also high in relation to other comparable districts, such as Hertsmere and Reigate & Banstead, where average semi-detached house prices are £266,973 and £251,030 respectively. This means that most young people, whilst having been brought-up in the district, cannot afford to buy property and are therefore obliged to either rent locally at high prices or move out of the district (e.g. to Harlow).

9.3a Open market rental prices are also high when compared to other Essex authorities, the rest of the East of England region and even some areas of London. In April 2005 the average cost of a 1-bedroom flat within Epping Forest District was £650 per month. For this type of dwelling, this District has comparable rent prices to other similar local authority areas and some London Boroughs, as was found with the property purchase prices.

9.4a The high property and rental prices within the district are compounded by salaries that are low in comparison. The National Housing Federation research “England’s Housing Crisis in the East” (2005) has shown that Epping Forest District has the highest property price to salary ratio in Essex, at 8.98 times the annual local income, compared to the national average of 7.92 times. When compared with property prices in the capital, the ratio in Epping Forest is on par with Boroughs such as Kensington and Chelsea, Islington and Richmond upon Thames. The 2003 Housing Needs Survey (HNS) has identified that a minimum salary of £30,100 is required to access the smallest dwelling in the cheapest part of the district. This figure rises to £49,700 for the smallest dwelling in the most expensive areas.

9.5a The 2003 Housing Needs Survey recorded approximately 51,000 dwellings in the district in April 2001, 80.6% of which are within the private sector. Of this 80.6% only 6.2% are private rented dwellings with the remainder being owner occupied either with or without a mortgage. The remaining dwellings are owned by the Council (13.7%); Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) (2.8%) and other sources (2.9%).

9.6a The composition of dwellings within the district has changed very little since the 1991 Census was completed. The 2001 Census shows a slightly higher proportion of flats (19.91%) and terraced houses (23.53%) and a marginally lower proportion of detached properties (23.39%) when compared to the averages for the county. The percentage of semi-detached dwellings (31.83) in this district is almost identical to the county average. The district reflects the county average for vacant dwellings, with these accounting for 2.3% of the total (compared with 2.5% across the county).

The increasing number of one-person households (from 24.1% to 29.1%), especially of retirement age, means that under-occupation is likely to increase since there is a general shortage of suitable small units of accommodation in the private sector stock.

Government Guidance

9.7a PPG3: Housing (2000) and Circular 6/98 'Planning and Affordable Housing' contain the most relevant Government advice. The underlying principles of PPG3 have existed for many years, but the current document sets a number of objectives for local authorities to consider when formulating and implementing housing policy. These are to:

- plan to meet the housing requirements of the whole community, including those in need of 'affordable' and special needs housing;
- provide wider housing opportunity and choice and a better mix in the size, type and location of housing than is currently nationally available, and seek to create mixed communities;
- provide sufficient housing land, giving priority to re-using previously developed land within urban areas (often called 'brownfield' land), bringing empty homes back into use and converting existing underused buildings, in preference to the development of 'greenfield' sites;
- make more efficient use of land by reviewing planning policies and standards;
- seek to reduce car dependence and increase sustainability by facilitating more walking and cycling by improving linkages by public transport between housing, jobs, local services and amenities, and by planning for mixed use;
- promote good design within housing developments to create attractive, high quality living environments.

9.8a Circular 6/98 amplifies the Government's preferred approach to planning and 'affordable' housing, and aims to provide advice on preparing plan policies and practical implementation of those policies. It is intended to:

- help local planning authorities to adopt a realistic and consistent approach to preparing plan policies and handling planning applications involving affordable housing;
- encourage a co-operative approach to preparing affordable housing policies, which ensures that the views of all those involved in delivering affordable housing are taken into account;
- clarify that affordable housing policies should be based on a clear and up-to-date assessment of local need for affordable housing;
- provide guidance on securing and controlling the occupancy of affordable housing; and
- ensure that affordable housing delivered through the planning system is likely to be attractive to lenders of private finance.

9.9a Regional Planning Guidance (now Regional Spatial Strategy) for this area is currently under review. The district has been transferred from the South East Region (RPG9) to the East of England Region. Changes to the planning system via the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act will abolish Structure Plans. It will therefore fall to the new Regional Spatial Strategy (the East of England Plan) to provide housing allocations to be met within each district. This additional housing will be allocated locally via the Local Development Framework process. In doing so, all new development will be properly planned and resourced, so as to achieve sustainable development. To allocate land prior to the final publication of the East of England

Plan, whilst the final amount of housing to be provided in Epping Forest District is not yet confirmed would jeopardise the achievement of a comprehensive planned approach.

Housing Provision at April 2005

9.10a The Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan makes provision for 72,250 new dwellings across Essex from 1996 to 2011. This requires a net dwelling stock increase in Epping Forest District of 2,400 over that period.

9.11a The following figure demonstrates the number of net new dwellings that have been completed in Epping Forest District since April 1996.

Figure 9A

| Year | Completed Dwellings |
|---------|---------------------|
| 1996/97 | 361 |
| 1997/98 | 300 |
| 1998/99 | 217 |
| 1999/00 | 270 |
| 2000/01 | 467 |
| 2001/02 | 237 |
| 2002/03 | 270 * |
| 2003/04 | 202 * |
| 2004/05 | 225 * |
| TOTAL | 2,549 |

Source: Essex County Council Annual Monitoring Report, March 2002

* Epping Forest District Housing Monitoring Results, March 2005

9.12a A further 833 dwellings were committed via planning permissions granted, giving a total estimated provision of 3,382 at the end of March 2005. This results in an overprovision of housing in the District of 41% by the end of March 2005, while there were still six years of the Structure Plan period remaining. It is not appropriate to set a 10-year supply for housing land at present, as there is no higher tier of plan from which to take a lead. An Urban Capacity Study, completed by consultants in 2002, identified capacity to accommodate a further 798 dwellings by 2011. Of this capacity, approximately 30% has already been released, as permissions have subsequently been granted. The Council is not proposing housing for the remaining Urban Capacity Study sites, either because they are in appropriate alternative uses or they are not likely to become available until after 2011.

POLICY H1A - HOUSING PROVISION

AS THE REPLACEMENT STRUCTURE PLAN TARGET OF 2,400 (NET) HOUSES DURING THE PERIOD 1996-2011 HAS ALREADY BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY EXCEEDED, NO FURTHER PROVISION FOR HOUSING LAND IS MADE BY THIS PLAN.

9.13a All of the sites allocated for housing development in the Adopted Plan have been taken up and completed. As it is not proposed to allocate any further sites for housing development in these Alterations due to the current over-supply in the district, any new housing, until the adoption of the East of England Plan, will only

come forward from windfall sites. Over the period 2000/01 to 2002/03 these have averaged approximately 133 per annum. Windfall sites will be managed under the Plan, Monitor, Manage approach advocated in PPG3 and its supporting documents which promote sustainable development. It is an essential feature of this approach that housing requirements and the way in which they are to be met should be kept under regular review. This will allow for the effective management of housing land to meet the needs of the district. The Council will continue to consider proposals for residential and mixed-use development (including residential) outside the Green Belt, and will assess them in the light of all other development plan policies. It is also intended that the Council will commission a further Urban Capacity Study in preparation for allocating housing land in the future. This will help protect the Green Belt and promote the use of previously developed land.

Previously Developed Land (PDL)

9.14a There is a limited supply of available land for housing development and as a result PPG3 promotes the use of previously developed land (PDL is defined in Annex C of PPG3), and sets a national target of 60% of new housing to be provided on PDL. The use of PDL instead of greenfield sites promotes sustainability by encouraging the re-use of land, protection of the countryside and, in the case of this district, supports the strategic role of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

9.15a However, the classification of a site as previously developed does not automatically guarantee planning permission will be granted. It is important that all sites considered for housing development are assessed against the sequential approach (as set out by policy CP3). A previously developed site may not be suitable for development due to constraints such as access arrangements, presence of wildlife, distance from local services or reliance upon private car use. In considering the suitability of a site for housing, it is also important that the competing needs of other land uses are provided for. The aim is to achieve mixed, balanced developments and settlements.

POLICY H2A - PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND

THE RE-USE OF PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND WILL BE ENCOURAGED WHEN CONSIDERING RESIDENTIAL AND MIXED USE (INCLUDING RESIDENTIAL) DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES. THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO DELIVER AT LEAST 70% OF ALL NEW HOUSING ON PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED SITES. A PLAN, MONITOR, MANAGE APPROACH WILL BE TAKEN TO MEET ADOPTED TARGETS.

9.16a The emerging East of England Plan suggests that the target for the re-use of PDL should be set at 60% across Essex. Due to the historically high amount of housing completions on PDL, the Council adopted a 70% target in its Best Value Performance Plan 2003/04.

9.17a The Council will monitor periodically the amount of housing development provided on PDL to ensure the 70% target is being achieved. An average from the years 1999/00, 2000/01 and 2001/02 has been calculated, which shows 89.5% of housing development has been built on PDL in the district. This matter will be fully reviewed when the East of England Plan is adopted.

Housing Density

9.18a PPG3 promotes the efficient use of land for development and indicates that housing developments should achieve a density of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare. This higher density range reflects a return to previous building standards, prior to the 1950s, when there was a move away from high density dwellings to provide bigger houses in larger plots. This has resulted in many decades of inefficient land use. The density requirement set out in PPG3 is strengthened by the Town and Country Planning (Residential Density) (London and South East England) Direction 2002, which requires a local authority to inform the Secretary of State if planning permission is not refused for any development on a site of 1 hectare or more, where a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare is either not met or not stated on the application.

9.19a Full use of the Design and Built Environment policies in this plan and the Essex Design Guide will be made to ensure that increased density does not compromise good urban design.

POLICY H3A - HOUSING DENSITY

NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS WILL ACHIEVE A NET SITE DENSITY OF AT LEAST 30 - 50 DWELLINGS PER HECTARE, UNLESS THE FOLLOWING FACTORS DICTATE OTHERWISE:

- (i) THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF THE SITE, INCLUDING ANY SIGNIFICANT HERITAGE, LANDSCAPE OR WILDLIFE FEATURES;**
- (ii) THE CHARACTER AND DENSITY OF ANY SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENT;**
- (iii) THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON THE RESIDENTIAL AMENITY OF ADJOINING DWELLINGS;**
- (iv) WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT ON THE WIDER SETTLEMENT, INCLUDING LONG DISTANCE VIEWS;**
- (v) THE NEED TO PROVIDE WELL DESIGNED PUBLIC SPACE AND PARKING FACILITIES; AND**
- (vi) GOOD QUALITY DESIGN AND LAYOUT.**

9.20a In areas where there is good public transport and other facilities, it will be expected that higher densities will be achieved provided this is in accordance with other development plan policies. There may be some instances where it is appropriate for a lower density development to be provided (e.g. in Green Belt locations where a development based on the footprint of previous buildings is proposed). However, it will be for an applicant to fully justify why this is an appropriate course of action.

9.21a The net site density is calculated by only taking into account the area of land that is used to provide the actual dwellings and the immediately associated facilities. This calculation is made using the guidance given by Annex C of PPG3, which is further supported by the Residential Density Direction (2002) mentioned above.

Dwelling Mix

9.22a It is important that all new housing development caters for the needs of the population and plays a role in creating mixed and balanced communities. PPG3 advises that local authorities should ensure all new developments promote better social mix, by avoiding developments which result in large areas of housing of similar characteristics. A varied mix needs to be achieved on all suitable sites so that the needs of a large proportion of the community can be met. The range of dwellings required on a particular site will be derived from the 2003 Housing Needs Survey (or any updated version) at ward level. This will give a more localised view of the needs of a particular area of the district. Population trends indicate that the majority of household growth will be single occupant and small households, and the Housing Needs Survey reflects this. Higher provision must therefore be made for smaller dwellings in the future in open market, key worker and affordable properties.

POLICY H4A - DWELLING MIX

THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE THAT PROVISION IS MADE FOR A RANGE OF DWELLINGS, INCLUDING AN APPROPRIATE PROPORTION OF SMALLER DWELLINGS, TO MEET IDENTIFIED HOUSING NEED ON A SITE-BY-SITE BASIS. THIS MIX SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN BOTH MARKET HOUSING AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING. WHEN CONSIDERING EXTENSIONS TO, CONVERSIONS OR AMALGAMATIONS OF, EXISTING DWELLINGS, NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE LATEST HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY WILL BE CONSIDERED TO ENSURE THAT AN ADEQUATE MIX OF DWELLINGS IS MAINTAINED. THE COUNCIL MAY THEREFORE REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR EXTENSIONS TO, OR CONVERSIONS OF, EXISTING DWELLINGS WHERE THE RESULT WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT THE RANGE AND MIX OF DWELLINGS AVAILABLE.

9.23a In recent years there has been an increasing number of applications for large extensions to small dwellings, and especially bungalows. The Council intends to monitor the number of this type of application in the future, as there is a need to maintain the current stock of smaller dwellings. This is in recognition of the needs of the ageing population, and the increasing affordability problems within the district. There is a statutory requirement to produce an Annual Monitoring Report from December 2005. The information collected will build up a picture of overall housing mix in new developments, and will be used to assess future applications.

Sustainable Residential Environments

9.24a PPG3 advocates the creation of sustainable residential developments that promote:

- accessibility by a range of non-car modes;
- energy efficiency;
- a greener residential environment;
- the most efficient use of land; and
- mixed use development.

It also emphasises the need for local planning authorities to regularly review parking standards and advises against the rigid application of minimum parking standards, particularly in urban areas with good access to public transport. Parking standards should be reviewed to allow for significantly lower levels of off-street parking

provision for developments in locations where services are readily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport (e.g. town centres) or which provide housing for elderly or single people and students. Specific parking standards to be applied to residential development are mentioned in Policy ST6 of the Alterations.

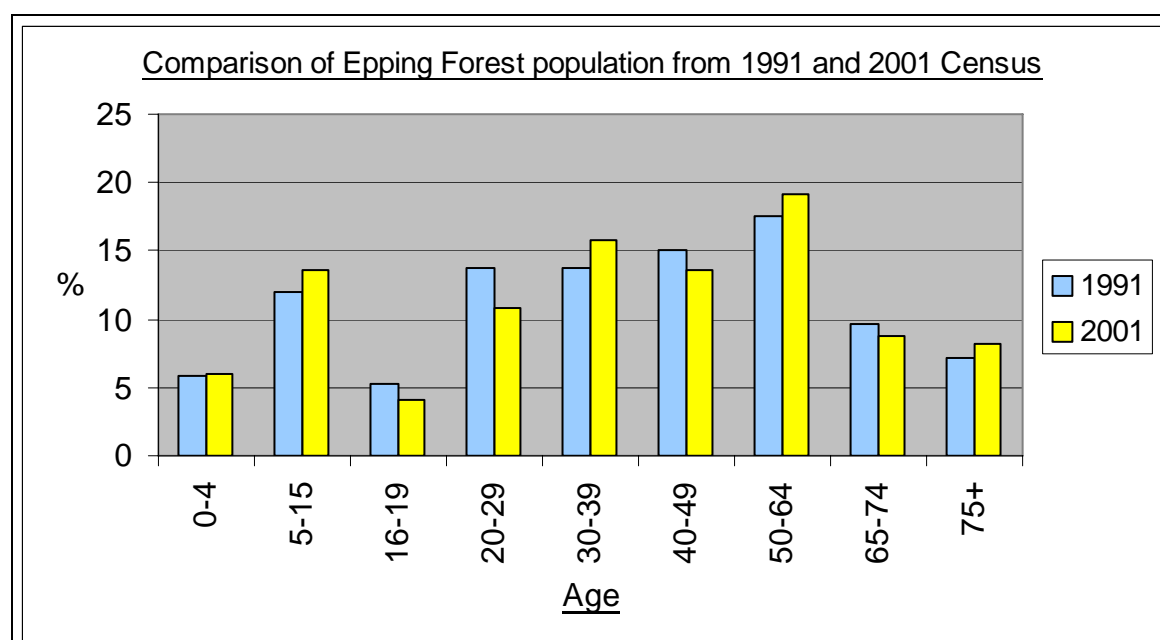
9.25a It is important that all new development and conversions of existing buildings take into account the principles of energy conservation and generation to minimise their impact on their surroundings and wider environment. These principles are set out fully in Chapter 4A. In relation to achieving sustainable and environmentally conscious developments, all new housing developments should also include sufficient space to allow recycling facilities to be incorporated into their design. These policies should be used in conjunction with the Design and Built Environment policies set out in the Adopted Local Plan (Chapter 15).

9.26a Existing urban open space must be protected from development, and both existing and new open space should be used to its full potential to enhance the residential environment. It is also vital to the setting of the completed development that landscaping matters are fully addressed. Policy advice on these matters is given in Chapter 16 'Landscape and Landscaping'.

Affordable Housing

9.27a The 2001 Census shows that there is a generally ageing population with, for the first time, more people over the age of 60 years than under 16 years (see Figure 9B). Within this district the effect of an ageing population is compounded by the high property prices already discussed at the beginning of this chapter, as many younger people have to move out of the district to find affordable accommodation.

Figure 9B



9.28a House prices in Epping Forest District are among the highest in the country and have been for many years, as previously discussed. The cost of private residential accommodation, either to buy or rent, is therefore well beyond the means of many existing residents. The high cost of housing also serves to deter people coming into the district to fill jobs, some of whom (e.g. nurses and teachers) provide

very important services. In this district there is an acute shortage of 'affordable housing' and of housing specifically for 'key workers'.

9.29a Affordable housing is that which is provided for people who are unable to rent or buy a home on the open market. It can be provided under a number of different tenures including housing for rent and shared ownership properties. Low cost market housing may also be made available as affordable housing, if the means of retaining the benefit presented to the first occupier can be secured for subsequent occupiers. If such housing is provided it is important that there is a significant discount on the open market value, and that the dwellings provided are not simply 'starter homes'. A Registered Social Landlord (RSL) – normally a Housing Association - usually manages affordable housing with rents or purchase prices set with reference to a formula determined by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). Local authorities now enable affordable housing to be provided rather than build new housing themselves.

9.30a Key worker or 'intermediate' housing is a specific type of affordable housing that is supplied solely to those that provide an essential service to the community. There are many different classifications of people that could constitute key workers and many professions that could be considered essential to the quality of life in a community. If enough housing specifically for key workers is provided, the widening affordability gap experienced in this area could be lessened. Key workers are generally paid a salary that is too low to facilitate home ownership but are often assessed as not having the highest housing need due to their salary level. Intermediate rents are therefore sometimes set to aid the problem. Alternatively, shared ownership may be appropriate.

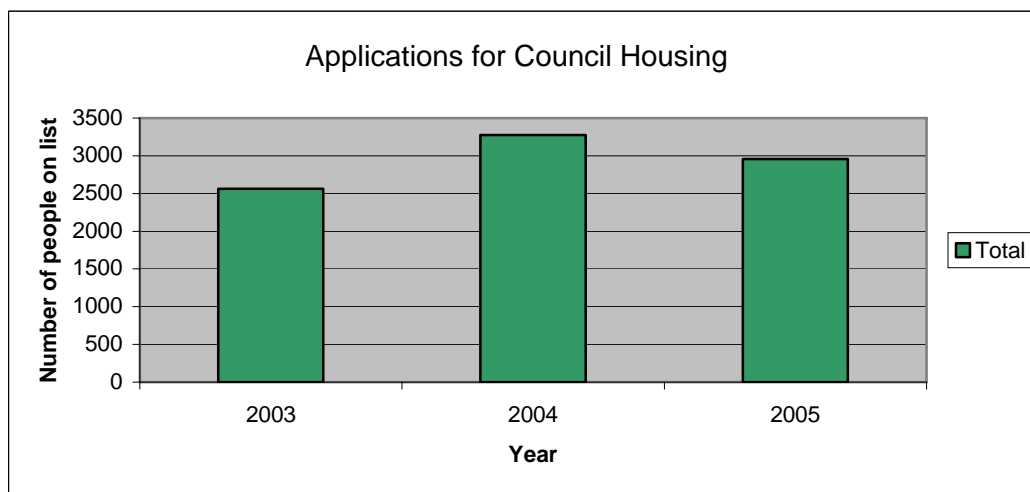
9.31a The affordability problems experienced in the district have been exacerbated by the loss of an average of 100 dwellings per year from the Council housing stock since April 1996 via the Right to Buy scheme. The Council cannot directly replace this housing, so it is vital that the private sector makes as much of a contribution as possible to the provision of affordable, and in some cases key worker, housing.

Meeting the need

9.32a The most recent housing need survey (HNS) was completed in 2003 by recognised consultants in this field, following the guidance given by DETR and ODPM. This indicates there is a need for 1,169 affordable homes per year in the district. Current housing stock is expected to meet the need of approximately 527 of these households, leaving a requirement for 642 new affordable homes to be provided every year. The total number of affordable dwellings built over the five year period from 1999/2000 to 2005 was 207, of which 161 were provided through the planning system. There is clearly a massive shortfall between supply and demand in the district.

9.33a The indications of the HNS are further proven by annual monitoring of need which has shown the following results:

Figure 9C

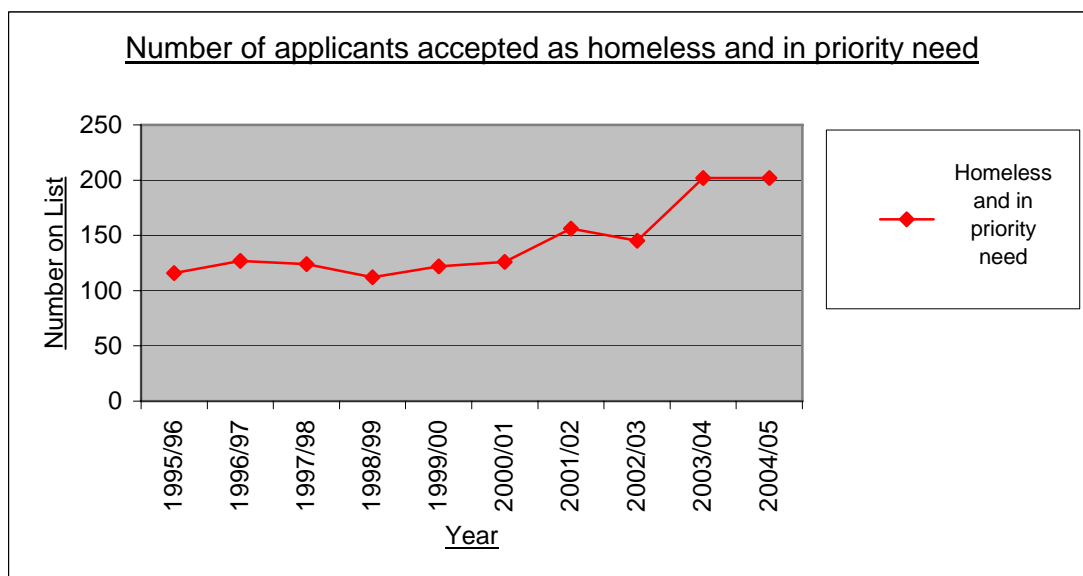


Source: Epping Forest District Council Housing Services

9.34a Figure 9C shows a generally increasing trend in the number of applications received by the Council for residential accommodation. The figures also reflect changes to working practices within the Council’s Housing Services. A full audit of the housing waiting list was undertaken at the beginning of 2005 which has resulted in a decrease in the number of people on the list.

9.35a Due to the introduction of the Homelessness Act 2002, which required the Council to significantly amend its Allocations Scheme, the number of applicants accepted as being homeless and in priority peaked during 2001/02, but has shown a general upward trend since 1998/99. This is shown below:

Figure 9D



Source: Epping Forest District Council Housing Services

9.36a The need for key worker housing within this district has been demonstrated by a survey undertaken as part of the 2003 HNS. This indicated the following proportions of public sector workers (as defined by the survey) who could not afford to owner-occupy at the cheapest access price in the District:

Figure 9E: Public Sector key worker housing

| Public sector employment | Percentage unable to afford owner-occupation |
|--------------------------|--|
| Public transport | 100 |
| Agricultural staff | 65 |
| Local authority staff | 64 |
| Health staff | 52 |
| Education staff | 48 |
| Fire service | 28 |
| Police | 11 |

Source: David Couttie Associates – Epping Forest District Housing Needs Survey (2003)

Questionnaires completed by key worker employers identified high property prices as a major barrier to the recruitment and retention of staff.

9.37a The 2003 HNS has also shown that there is a need for housing and facilities specifically designed to meet the needs of the elderly and those with mental health needs. No specific sites will be allocated at present, but the need for such facilities has been recognised. Where appropriate, i.e. where it is in accordance with other relevant development plan policies, the provision of this type of housing will be encouraged in the district.

9.38a Circular 6/98 states that local authorities should make clear their intention to negotiate for affordable housing (which may include an element of key worker housing as necessary) on suitable sites. This is addressed by policy H5A below. The inclusion of affordable housing within a development promotes the Government's ideal of creating mixed and balanced communities, and helps prevent the development of uniform areas as has previously occurred.

POLICY H5A - PROVISION FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

ON ALL SUITABLE DEVELOPMENT SITES THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK AN APPROPRIATE NUMBER AND TYPE OF AFFORDABLE DWELLINGS. SUITABILITY WILL BE BASED UPON:

- (i) THE OVERALL LEVEL, NATURE AND DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING NEED IN THE DISTRICT;**
- (ii) THE SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE;**
- (iii) THE TYPE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIRED AND THE TYPE OF DWELLINGS PROPOSED ON THE SITE;**
- (iv) THE DISPERSAL OF ANY AFFORDABLE HOUSING THROUGHOUT THE SITE;**

(v) **THE NATURE OF ANY ADJACENT HOUSING; AND**

(vi) **THE PROXIMITY OF THE SITE TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY TO FACILITIES.**

9.39a There is no defined list of the groups that can be classified as key workers. For the purposes of the HNS key workers in this area were agreed as agricultural and health workers, fire fighters, teachers, local authority staff, police officers and public transport workers. However, this is not an exhaustive list of all those that may be considered key workers in housing need within the district. The provision of key worker housing will also be dependent on the existence of other schemes (Government run or other), which aim to provide housing for key workers.

9.40a On sites where the provision of affordable housing is appropriate it is important that good standards of design and layout are met across all elements of the development. Government guidance states that affordable housing should not be easily distinguishable from open market housing through the design or position within the site. It is also desirable within large developments that the affordable housing element of the development is split into smaller groups and dispersed throughout the site, rather than being positioned in a large group. This practice helps to promote social inclusion, and create more mixed and balanced communities.

9.41a Policy H6A defines suitability in terms of site area or dwelling numbers. The needs of urban and rural areas differ, as set out in *Our Countryside: The Future - A Fair Deal for Rural England* (November 2000) (The Rural White Paper). It is therefore appropriate to set different thresholds for the provision of housing on suitable sites according to the needs and size of these areas.

Site thresholds

9.42a Circular 6/98, paragraph 10, sets out site thresholds at which affordable housing can be sought, via planning obligations and legal agreements, in settlements with populations of 3,000 or greater. Within this district, the higher thresholds of 1 hectare or 25 or more dwellings have previously been adopted. However, the Circular states that it may be appropriate for some authorities to adopt the lower site thresholds of 0.5 hectare or 15 dwellings. In such cases exceptional local circumstances must be demonstrated to justify the adoption of the lower thresholds. The figures in paragraph 9.32a show that the need within the district currently far outweighs the supply of affordable housing. The information concerning the property price to salary ratio (paragraph 9.4a) confirms the affordability problems experienced in the district, hence adoption of the lower threshold is justified to meet the needs of the urban community. These issues, combined with a lack of large housing development sites until land allocations are made in response to the East of England Plan, and the constraints imposed by the Metropolitan Green Belt, give sufficient justification for the adoption of this figure. Proposed changes to PPG3, which have been the subject of a consultation exercise, suggest local authorities could adopt lower thresholds for the provision of affordable housing.

9.43a In settlements with a population of 3,000 or less, Circular 6/98 states that it is appropriate for the local authority to set the affordable housing site threshold as dictated by an identified need. The Rural White Paper indicates that there is often a greater need for affordable housing in rural areas as a proportion of the total population than in urban areas. Whilst homelessness may not be as visible in rural areas compared to urban areas, it is usual to find a higher proportion of concealed households in rural areas. Rural areas often attract commuters, second home

owners and people in retirement, which results in inflated house prices that exclude many local people from home ownership in the area.

9.44a Policy GB16 of this plan allows for the provision of small-scale affordable housing schemes as an exception to normal planning policy i.e. in the Green Belt. Additionally, in settlements with populations of less than 3,000 people where an area is excluded from the Green Belt, the guidance given in the Rural White Paper will be followed. This document states: *“local authorities should negotiate an appropriate element of affordable housing and there is no reason why, in small villages if there is evidence of need and subject to financial viability, they should not seek to match every new market house with an affordable home”*. This threshold will be applied to all residential or mixed-use development (including conversions and changes of use, where there is a net increase in the number of units) in settlements with a population of less than 3,000 people (population size will be ascertained from the most recent Census information). It will be for the applicant to prove that a scheme would not be financially viable and that there is no housing need in a village to enable this requirement to be waived. Monitoring within Housing Services undertaken at the end of the 2002/03 financial year has shown that there is a need for approximately 150 homes within the settlements of the district with a population of less than 3,000. Total completions under the exceptions policy since 1996 have supplied just 11 units. It is therefore imperative that greater provision of affordable housing is made in rural areas.

POLICY H6A - SITE THRESHOLDS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- (i) IN SETTLEMENTS WHERE THE POPULATION IS GREATER THAN 3,000, PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING WILL BE EXPECTED IN ALL APPLICATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL OR MIXED USE (INCLUDING RESIDENTIAL) DEVELOPMENT, WHERE:**
 - (a) THE SITE IS 0.5 OF A HECTARE OR ABOVE; OR**
 - (b) 15 OR MORE DWELLINGS WILL BE PROVIDED.**

- (ii) IN SETTLEMENTS WITH A POPULATION OF 3,000 OR LESS, AND WHERE POLICY GB16 OF THIS PLAN DOES NOT APPLY, AFFORDABLE HOUSING WILL BE SOUGHT WHERE APPLICATIONS ARE MADE FOR:**
 - (a) TWO OR MORE DWELLINGS ON A GREENFIELD SITE, AND THE SITE IS 0.1HA OR LARGER; OR**
 - (b) THREE OR MORE DWELLINGS ON A PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED SITE, AND THE SITE IS 0.2HA OR LARGER.**

THIS DISTINCTION IS INTENDED TO RECOGNISE THE LIKELY DIFFERENCE IN SITE PURCHASE AND PREPARATION COSTS. THESE THRESHOLDS WILL APPLY UNLESS IT CAN BE PROVEN THAT VIABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT OR NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING JUSTIFY RELAXATION OF THE REQUIREMENT.

9.45a Government guidance recommends that local authorities should indicate targets for the provision of affordable housing on specific sites (based on evidence of need and site suitability). As it is not proposed to allocate any additional sites for residential development, it is therefore not possible to set any affordable housing targets for specific sites.

Level of Affordable Housing Provision

9.46a The 2003 Housing Needs Survey recommends that 40% of all suitable sites should be provided for affordable housing. The HNS has also assessed the need for key worker housing within the district and recommends that not more than 5% of the dwellings on suitable sites should be for key workers. Due to this low level of demand, and the Government's focus on other schemes such as the Key Worker Living loan scheme, key worker housing will not be a priority when considering the provision of affordable housing. The policy below sets out the requirements for the provision of affordable housing in the light of results of the Housing Needs Survey.

POLICY H7A - LEVELS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- (i) ON ALL SUITABLE DEVELOPMENT SITES IN SETTLEMENTS WITH A POPULATION OF 3,000 OR GREATER, THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK THE PROVISION OF AT LEAST 40% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF UNITS TO BE AFFORDABLE, BASED UPON SURVEYS OF HOUSING NEED.**
- (ii) WHERE THE POPULATION OF A SETTLEMENT IS LESS THAN 3,000, AND IN CONJUNCTION WITH POLICY H6A(ii) ABOVE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING WILL BE SOUGHT AS FOLLOWS:**
 - (a) 50% OF THE TOTAL OF NEW DWELLINGS ON A GREENFIELD SITE;**
 - (b) ON A PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED SITE, 33% WHERE AN APPLICATION IS MADE FOR THREE UNITS, AND 50% FOR APPLICATIONS OF FOUR OR MORE NEW DWELLINGS.**

AS WITH POLICY H6A(ii), THIS DISTINCTION IS INTENDED TO MAKE ALLOWANCE FOR THE LIKELY DIFFERENCE IN COSTS OF PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED AND GREENFIELD SITES. THE LEVELS WILL APPLY UNLESS IT CAN BE SHOWN THAT THEY ARE INAPPROPRIATE OR THAT THEY MAKE A SCHEME ECONOMICALLY UNFEASIBLE.

9.47a Consideration will be given to all forms of affordable housing. However, the 2003 HNS shows that the greatest demand is for social rented dwellings (i.e. rented housing provided by a local authority or a housing association). Although shared ownership can help meet the housing needs of a specific group of people on higher than average incomes, low cost market housing has not previously been used to meet identified affordable housing needs within this district due to the very high property prices in the area. Where it is proposed that low cost market housing will be provided to meet identified needs, the price of the discounted dwelling will need to take account of average incomes and the availability of mortgages. Within the demand for key worker/ intermediate housing it is expected there will be a range of different needs and requirements. A proportion of intermediate housing may be included as an element of the affordable housing provision to be made on a site. The number of such units will be agreed with the Council during negotiations. Housing need will be monitored and reviewed by the Council on a regular basis, and adjustments made to policy where necessary.

9.48a The Housing Corporation has made clear in its National Investment Policy 2004/5 and associated guidance that local authorities should not assume funding for affordable housing will be forthcoming, and that other funding sources should be

examined first. However, it is the Council's preferred option that affordable housing is provided on suitable sites in accordance with Policy H7A, with Housing Corporation funding, since receipt of grant funding enables the provision of affordable housing on suitable sites to be maximised. In its latest guidance, the Housing Corporation makes clear that it expects land to be provided free by developers, if grant funding is to be sought.

9.49a While the overall aim of the Council is to achieve successful housing developments on suitable sites, it is acknowledged that circumstances will differ from site to site. Account must therefore be taken of, amongst other things, the likely availability of Housing Corporation grant funding and the economics of site development. It will be for the applicant to justify to the Council's satisfaction that issues, such as the likely unavailability of grant funding within a reasonable period, will lead to a development becoming unviable with the provision of 40% affordable housing. In such instances the Council may accept a lower proportion of affordable housing. However, the Council will seek the same level of developer subsidy at least equivalent to the provision of 40% affordable housing. This approach aims to maximise the affordable housing provision from new developments whilst, in all cases, seeking to make the most effective use of the resources available to the Council and developers.

Retention of Affordable Housing in Perpetuity

9.50a For the provision of affordable housing to be effective, it is vital that it is occupied by those for whom it was intended and that it remains available for those in housing need. The following policy will therefore apply:

POLICY H8A - AVAILABILITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN PERPETUITY

NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING WILL BE REQUIRED TO BE SUBJECT TO:

- (i) IT BEING AVAILABLE ONLY TO THOSE HOUSEHOLDS WHO WOULD OTHERWISE NOT BE ABLE TO AFFORD TO RENT OR BUY A DWELLING OF SUFFICIENT SIZE ON THE OPEN MARKET IN THE DISTRICT; AND**
- (ii) SUITABLY SECURE ARRANGEMENTS TO ENSURE THAT ITS PROVISION IS SATISFACTORILY PHASED AS PART OF THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT AND THAT AGREEMENTS ARE IN PLACE TO ENSURE THE ACCOMMODATION CONTINUES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF SUCH HOUSEHOLDS BEYOND THE FIRST OCCUPIER.**

9.51a The phasing of affordable housing either throughout, or at a relatively early stage during construction, may be necessary to ensure it is built. In accordance with Circular 6/98, the Council will seek that a maximum of 75% of the dwellings for open market sale may be occupied prior to the signing of a legal agreement indicating the intention to transfer, or actual transfer of the affordable units, to an agreed RSL. This will be secured by a legal agreement and/or planning condition, as appropriate. The means by which the housing remains as affordable accommodation for successive occupiers will be, for example, by the involvement of a Housing Association or Village Trust, the use of covenants, and obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (see policy I1A). It might help applicants to come forward at an early stage with a prospective RSL which would have responsibility for ensuring the requirements are met.

9.52a There may be cases where a developer proposes that no RSL will be involved in the delivery of affordable housing and its subsequent management. In such cases it will be necessary for the developer to enter into a legal agreement with the Council to secure the availability of affordable housing beyond the first occupier. Issues such as rent levels will be negotiated between the Council and the developer, taking into account Government guidance on rent levels, should this situation arise.

9.53a Affordable housing will be expected on all suitable sites - it is not usual for a commuted sum to be acceptable in lieu of affordable housing provision. However, where it can be justified to the Council, as housing enabler, in planning terms that the provision of affordable housing is unsuitable on a site, a commuted sum may be accepted. The commuted sum should reflect the subsidy that a developer would have provided had the affordable housing been achieved on site.

Mobility Housing

9.54a There is a growing need for 'mobility housing' which is "general needs housing modified to a minor extent to make it accessible for most people with disabilities". This stems from the number of elderly people increasing, as people live longer, and a relatively high proportion of elderly people being disabled - their disability having developed in old age. Consequently it is necessary to cater increasingly for the disabled in new residential developments in order to ensure that:

- (a) the available housing stock matches the needs of the District's residents;
- (b) people are not obliged to leave their existing home because they become disabled; and
- (c) the disabled are as free as possible to integrate fully into society by having a range of suitable places in which to live.

9.55a There are three types of 'mobility housing':

- new housing - specifically designed for the disabled;
- adaptable housing - featuring greater floor area, wider door openings, downstairs toilet and washing facility, stairs capable of taking a lift etc;
- visitable housing - featuring an accessible route from car to house, a reasonably wide entrance and hall, and a toilet and at least one bedroom at entrance level.

9.56a The Government has issued specific planning guidance in PPG3 which states that:

- local planning authorities should work jointly with housing departments to meet the needs of specific groups including the disabled; and
- assessments of need should examine the need for both new dwellings specifically designed to meet the needs of the disabled and the adaptation of the existing housing stock.

9.57a The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has produced 'Lifetime Homes' standards which set out the measures necessary to provide housing which can better meet the changing needs of the population. These standards are closely aligned with Part M of the Building Regulations, but also incorporate some further measures which will enable better and easier adaptation of homes should it be necessary. Adherence to the 'Lifetime Homes' standards should not cause significant additional cost during

construction and it has been estimated that significant savings are made in the longer term.

POLICY H9A – LIFETIME HOMES

ON DEVELOPMENTS PROVIDING 10 OR MORE NEW HOMES THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO SECURE THAT NOT LESS THAN 10% ARE CONSTRUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LIFETIME HOMES STANDARDS OF THE JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION.

9.58a The Housing Needs Survey (2003) indicated that 17.9% of households contained someone with a disability, more than half of whom had difficulties of mobility. 61% of households who use a wheelchair live in dwellings that are not suitably adapted to their needs. The Policy will ensure that a proportion of new dwellings will be built to higher standards than provided by the Building Regulations alone to better meet the needs of residents with disabilities. Where specific needs based dwellings are being provided e.g. sheltered housing or for those with special needs, this requirement may be relaxed as other suitable alternative standards may apply.

9.59a Implementation of this standard will also allow ease of access and movement by people with mobility difficulties or those pushing a pram, for example. Housing which is both adaptable and visitable will then be provided. Some other requirements of the lifetime homes standard are:

- o Provision for a future stair lift;
- o Turning circles for wheelchairs in the future in ground floor living rooms;
- o Low window sills and sockets/light controls at convenient height;
- o Distance to any car parking space kept to a minimum, and actual space capable of being widened to accommodate wheelchair access.

9.60a Policy H9A will be applied to both open market and affordable homes. It will be for the applicant to demonstrate that it is not appropriate or economically viable to meet the 'Lifetime Homes' standard. However, it has been shown by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation that the costs associated with meeting these standards should be negligible.

Gypsies

9.61a Gypsies are defined as "persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin", and their travelling lifestyle must be for economic purposes rather than moving from place to place for the sake of it. Gypsies will have to demonstrate that they continue to enjoy a travelling lifestyle in order to come within such a definition. Epping Forest District, in common with many rural areas, has been a traditional location for gypsies to resort to for work as seasonal agricultural labourers.

9.62a There is one local authority owned and operated gypsy site in the District with a capacity of 16 pitches. Many other private sites have also been granted planning permission, usually on appeal, despite the Council's concern to uphold Green Belt objectives. Other gypsies have been allowed to reside where the family concerned has strong local connections and is not causing a nuisance.

9.63a Following the repeal of the Caravan Sites Act 1968 there is no longer a statutory duty on the local authority to provide accommodation on caravan sites for gypsies residing in, or resorting to, their area. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that applications for private gypsy sites will continue to be made. In determining such

applications the Council will have regard to both the policy which follows and the Code of Practice for the Treatment of Gypsies which has been agreed by the Council and Essex County Council.

9.64a National policy set out in Circular 1/94 Gypsy Sites and Planning states that gypsy sites are not among land uses which are appropriate in the Green Belt. Because of the built-up nature of the urban areas in the District, the Council cannot readily identify locations for additional gypsy sites. The most suitable approach to adopt must, therefore, be a reactive one in which the local authority will be willing to discuss the needs of individual gypsy families and the suitability of the site which they themselves have identified. The Council will have regard to the location, highways considerations, potential noise and disturbance from vehicles, and any proposed on-site business activities.

POLICY H10A - GYPSY CARAVAN SITES

IN DETERMINING PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR GYPSY CARAVAN SITES WITHIN THE GREEN BELT, THE COUNCIL WILL HAVE REGARD TO:

- (i) WHETHER THERE ARE ANY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WOULD JUSTIFY AN EXCEPTION TO THE GREEN BELT POLICIES OF RESTRAINT, AND;**
- (ii) THE IMPACT ON THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT AND THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE.**

9.65a Applications for gypsy caravan sites within the urban area (i.e. outside the Green Belt) will be considered in the light of other policies in the Plan, in particular Policy RP5A(i).

9.66a Applicants will need to demonstrate firm evidence that they comply with the legal definition of a gypsy on a continuing basis and either reside in or resort to the District or, exceptionally, other parts of Essex.

9.67a In order to be successful, applicants will also have to demonstrate that both touring caravans and any left on the site all year comply with the following locational criteria. The sites should:

- (a) be within reasonable distance of a settlement for access to schools, shops, etc;
- (b) not be in close proximity to residential properties;
- (c) have a minimum impact upon the appearance of the countryside;
- (d) have, or be capable of having, convenient and safe access to the main road network;
- (e) be capable of providing an acceptable living environment, and;
- (f) be in close proximity to an area frequented by gypsies.

9.68a Any permission will relate only to the stationing of a caravan and not to any employment activities. Applications for such activities will be considered in the context of their acceptability in accordance with all other development plan policies.

9.69a Policy H10A – previously H11 – has operated successfully during the life of the Plan and has been supported in appeal decisions. An assessment of gypsy/traveller housing needs will be undertaken in the light of the guidance in PPG3, leading to a review of policy H10A. While this guidance encourages individual local authorities to

carry out an assessment, the Council believes that a regional context is more appropriate, given the nature of the gypsy/ traveller lifestyle. The Council will therefore encourage the involvement of adjoining and other affected authorities in the assessment so that a more accurate picture of need in the District and surrounding region can be obtained.

Travelling Showpeople

9.70a Department of the Environment Circular 22/91 "Travelling Showpeople" expects this Plan to consider the needs of travelling showpeople, for what are called "winter quarters" in particular. These are the bases to which showpeople, most of whom are members of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain, return when summer fairs end.

9.71a These bases need to accommodate caravans, heavy touring vehicles and equipment, and to provide facilities for their maintenance and repair. The bases also allow children to receive uninterrupted education, and are places for older showmen and show-women to retire to. They have a different function from temporary fairgrounds, and raise awkward amenity issues and locational factors.

9.72a The District has three sites of note at Lakeview Caravan Park, Moreton; Warlies Park Farm, Waltham Abbey; and The Retreat, Thornwood - each of which plays a different role. Lakeview Caravan Park is closest to the full base described above, whilst Warlies Park Farm site is predominantly for the winter storage of equipment, and The Retreat is simply retirement accommodation. Each is subject to conditional planning control.

9.73a In the light of current Government guidance, and the current provision for the local needs of travelling showpeople the following policy will apply.

POLICY H11A - TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE

THE COUNCIL WILL NOT ALLOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANY FURTHER "WINTER QUARTERS" FOR TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE IN THE DISTRICT UNLESS THE APPLICANTS ARE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE, TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE COUNCIL, THAT:

- (i) THERE IS A DEMONSTRABLE LOCAL NEED FOR THIS FACILITY WHICH CANNOT BE MET ELSEWHERE; AND**
- (ii) THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT LEAD TO AN EXCESSIVE ADVERSE EFFECT UPON THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE GREEN BELT.**

Measures to Optimise Use

9.74a It is anticipated that the limited scope for new residential development will induce considerable pressures for change in the existing housing stock. In principle, this is to be welcomed as a means of reducing the mismatch between average dwelling size and average household size. The subdivision of large properties which are under-occupied or have become unmanageable is one way of adapting the existing stock to meet the demands of the rising number of smaller households.

9.75a Unfortunately, many old properties tend to be difficult to convert or have a limited ability to provide essential features such as off-street parking. The Council

will need to take such factors into account when determining individual development proposals. Where it is able to, the Council will usually support proposals to improve, modernise and repair old houses because it is clearly important to maintain the quality of the existing stock. Notwithstanding, regard will be given to the effect of the juxtaposition of living rooms and bedrooms upon the amenities of the occupiers of adjoining properties. Planning approval for such conversion will not be given unless the Council is satisfied that the occupiers of a dwelling (both existing and proposed) will enjoy a satisfactory level of amenity which is not likely to be affected unduly by noise or other disturbances.

9.76a Any such proposals will also need to comply with all other policies of this Plan.

9.77a In accordance with the principles of sustainable development, the Council will consider the change of use of residential units to allow home working and the formation of live-work units. This will promote more sustainable travel patterns and help to create more mixed communities.

Environmental Implications

9.78a The policies in this chapter will contribute to the achievement of the following aims of the Plan (see pages 24 and 25):

- (ii) to facilitate modern-day living requirements.
- (iii) to accommodate, where possible, the special needs of the disadvantaged.
- (iv) to meet the needs of disabled people who live, or work, in the District or who visit it.
- (vi) to ensure, as much as possible, that new housing meets the needs of residents.
- (vii) to retain the existing housing stock
- (xv) to provide sufficient land for new housing.
- (xx) to ensure that any new development does not have an unacceptable impact both in environmental terms and in the provision of local facilities.
- (xxi) to protect and, where possible, enhance the environmental qualities of existing residential areas.
- (xxxiv) to make the most efficient use of land and buildings wherever practicable.
- (xxxviii) to enable the continued implementation of the Council's Environmental Charter.

9.79a The policies do not have any significant impact in environmental terms (see Appendix 2). This is because they tend to be either site-specific (with sites generally determined by factors such as the Green Belt and the need to retain urban open spaces) or relate to the nature of the dwellings, the consequences of which are essentially social rather than environmental. The location of sites will, however, have implications for efficient transport systems but the extent to which this is the case varies according to the site.

Chapter 10 – Employment

Chapter 10 – Employment (Alterations)

(Replacement of Policy E4 and changes to paragraphs 10.52 to 10.55; new policy E12A with associated paragraphs; replacement of paragraphs 10.88 to 10.104 (inclusive) and Policy E13)

Protection Of Employment Uses

10.52a It is also important to retain those established employment uses which are outside the defined employment areas/ town centre commercial areas, provided they do not have a severe adverse effect on local amenity. The Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan (adopted 2001) sets out the amount of land that should be allocated for employment purposes. At present, the Council is on track to achieve this target, although there has been some concern about the cumulative loss of several sites that were in employment use. The following policy indicates how the Council will attempt to safeguard existing sites and buildings in employment use in order to meet these targets.

POLICY E4A – PROTECTION OF EMPLOYMENT SITES

SITES CURRENTLY OR LAST IN USE FOR EMPLOYMENT BUT OUTSIDE THE DEFINED EMPLOYMENT AREAS WILL BE SAFEGUARDED FROM REDEVELOPMENT OR CHANGE OF USE TO OTHER LAND-USES. HOUSING ON REDUNDANT EMPLOYMENT LAND WILL BE REGARDED FAVOURABLY BUT ANY CHANGES TO THIS OR OTHER LAND USES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE IT HAS BEEN SHOWN BY AN INDEPENDENT APPRAISAL THAT EITHER:

- (i) THE SITE IS PARTICULARLY POORLY LOCATED IN RELATION TO HOUSING OR ACCESS BY SUSTAINABLE MEANS; OR**
- (ii) THERE ARE MATERIAL CONFLICTS WITH ADJOINING LAND USES (E.G. BY REASON OF NOISE, DISTURBANCE, TRAFFIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND AMENITY ISSUES); OR**
- (iii) EXISTING PREMISES ARE UNSUITABLE IN RELATION TO THE OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF MODERN BUSINESS; OR**
- (iv) THERE IS A DEMONSTRABLE LACK OF MARKET DEMAND FOR EMPLOYMENT USE OVER A LONG PERIOD THAT IS LIKELY TO PERSIST DURING THE PLAN PERIOD;**

AND THERE ARE VERY SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT OR INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRAINTS, MAKING THE SITE UNSUITABLE OR UNECONOMIC TO REDEVELOP FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES.

10.53a Small employment sites within and close to rural settlements can make an important contribution to the local economy. They enable small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to develop, which can be vital for local economic success, and protect against loss of Green Belt elsewhere. In recent years, such sites have come under increasing pressure from proposals for residential development. The Council will identify and protect suitable rural sites as part of the Local Development Framework. Until that time, the further loss of appropriate sites will be resisted. Uses which have a severe adverse effect upon the amenity of the area are those which feature in the Council's current list of non-conforming uses (see para 10.106).

Suitable Alternative Uses

10.54a The Council may consider making an exception to this policy by granting planning permission for uses other than business, general industry and warehousing, where it can be clearly demonstrated that a site or building has been actively marketed for a reasonable period, at a reasonable price for the use concerned, and where no suitable development proposal has come forward, or is likely to do so in the foreseeable future. A reasonable period for a site or building to be actively marketed in its lawful use is considered to be at least one year. This will allow adequate time for interested parties to come forward. Where it is satisfactorily proven that there is no remaining need for employment use, alternative uses that provide a community benefit should be considered. This type of use will often provide some employment opportunities, which will bring further community benefits and more sustainable forms of development.

POLICY E4B – ALTERNATIVE USES FOR EMPLOYMENT SITES

WHERE IT CAN BE PROVEN THAT THERE IS NO FURTHER NEED FOR EMPLOYMENT USES ON A PARTICULAR SITE, THE COUNCIL WILL PERMIT ALTERNATIVE USES WHICH FULFIL OTHER COMMUNITY NEEDS AND WHICH SATISFY OTHER POLICIES OF THE PLAN. WHERE THERE IS AN IDENTIFIED NEED FOR A PARTICULAR FACILITY THE COUNCIL WILL HAVE TO BE SATISFIED THAT THE SITE IS UNSUITABLE FOR THAT USE PRIOR TO CONSIDERING THE SITE FOR OPEN MARKET HOUSING.

10.55a Community needs encompass a wide range of facilities e.g. a community or healthcare centre, elderly persons accommodation or even waste management facilities. Affordable housing may also be appropriate, particularly if it is in accordance with the most recent survey of housing need. This is not an exhaustive list but is intended as a guide of the type of facilities or uses that should be considered on former employment sites.

(Insertion after paragraph 10.87)

Farm Diversification

10.87a Government guidance on the countryside is contained in PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (August 2004). This recognises that farmers are diversifying into other economic activities to supplement their income, but stresses that any changes must be within the context of protecting the environment and character of the countryside. Paragraph 43 of PPG13: Transport (April 2001) states that it is important to promote adequate employment opportunities in rural areas to avoid the need for long distance out-commuting to urban areas.

10.87b Core policy CP8 of this plan encourages local economic diversity and makes provision, within the rural areas, for environmentally and economically sustainable activities. It is important that the rural economy of the district is able to develop in a way that safeguards and enhances rural communities. The planning system can help to provide a broad sustainable economic base for rural communities and ensure this is matched by balanced housing growth.

POLICY E12A – FARM DIVERSIFICATION

PROPOSALS FOR DIVERSIFICATION ON FARMS WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THE ACTIVITIES OR USES WILL:

- (i) NOT INVOLVE SIGNIFICANT OR IRREVERSIBLE LOSS OF THE BEST AND MOST VERSATILE AGRICULTURAL LAND; AND
- (ii) RE-USE OR ADAPT AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY GB8A; AND
- (iii) NOT UNDERMINE THE ROLE OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES, TOWN CENTRES OR VILLAGE SHOPS; AND
- (iv) NOT GENERATE TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS, PARTICULARLY OF HGVs, WHICH WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT THE CHARACTER OF THE RURAL AREA, HIGHWAY SAFETY AND THE CAPACITY OF THE RURAL ROAD NETWORK; AND
- (v) CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE HOW THE SCHEME WILL SUPPORT THE PRINCIPAL USE OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY OR HORTICULTURE.

TO MAINTAIN THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT THE COUNCIL MAY IMPOSE A CONDITION RESTRICTING ANY EXTERNAL STORAGE (INCLUDING THE STATIONING OF HGVS) IN RELATION TO THE ACTIVITIES.

10.87c When assessing applications, weight will be placed on the economic and social needs of the area and whether local jobs are created or safeguarded. Proposals could also discuss potential uses for other buildings on the holding, allowing early assessment of the possible cumulative impact of conversions of several buildings with a large aggregate floor area, and of individual large buildings.

(Replacement of paragraphs 10.88 to 10.104 (inclusive) with alterations and additions to Policy E13)

Lea Valley Glasshouse Industry

10.88a For the purposes of planning, horticulture is included in the definition of 'agriculture'. Horticultural glasshouses are therefore appropriate development in the Metropolitan Green Belt. Salads continue to be the main crop in the Lea Valley, with cucumbers being the most important in the District. Some tomatoes and lettuce are still grown and peppers may increase in the future. Some nurseries concentrate on bedding plants and ornamental flowers for baskets and tubs. Fruit production (mainly strawberries) has also increased in the last decade. Although the area of many crops has reduced significantly in the last ten years, overall production has been maintained because of advances in technology and improved marketing. (Information from Reading Agricultural Consultants (RAC) Report 2003 – see para 10.96a).

10.89a The major buyers (the multiple retailers) now effectively control the market and require a continuity and consistency of supply that smaller growers cannot individually guarantee. Some of the smaller nurseries therefore now operate via 'Producer Organisations' to deal with the retailers. The dominance of the major buyers, and competition from imports (traditionally the Netherlands but increasingly from Spain, Portugal and the Canaries), also mean that there is continuous downward pressure on prices. Consequently the current trend is for larger glasshouse units than were built previously in the Lea Valley, to achieve economies of scale.

10.90a London and its surrounding counties are obviously a major market for salad and food crops. In terms of minimising transport and energy costs, the Lea Valley is obviously a prime location for this major market and therefore has distinct benefits over imported goods and other significant UK locations for glasshouse horticulture (e.g. Humberside, Lincolnshire and even West Sussex). Over 75% of respondents to the Key Issues consultation for the Alterations believed that there were benefits in glasshouse crops being grown (a) closer to where they are sold and (b) in this country where the use of pesticides is more carefully controlled.

10.91a While some British growers have established their own production in Spain and Portugal (because of growing demand from the major retailers for year-round supplies), the RAC Report believes that there are significant environmental and economic problems occurring in these areas:

- Increasing labour costs from an initial low base, leading in some cases to civil unrest because of use of illegal immigrant workers;
- Severe pest and disease issues through overuse of increasingly ineffective pesticides and because of low technology which makes reliable and effective biological control difficult. The current EU review of pesticides will disadvantage Spanish growers if it leads to harmonisation of pesticide approvals and their use;
- Severe pressure on water supplies in Spain and the Canaries due to competition between agriculture and tourism for water;
- Spanish growers are currently being adversely affected by cheap imports from non-EU countries such as Morocco.

The long shelf-life varieties of tomatoes (which has allowed significant extension of the Spanish and Canary export seasons) are believed to have lower nutritional values than fresh UK produce. All these issues lead to the conclusion that there is a strong case for the retention, and even expansion, of the United Kingdom glasshouse industry, and for its location close to major markets such as the London area.

10.92a Policy 40 of the Local Plan for Roydon, Nazeing and Waltham Abbey (adopted 1989) limited any new glass to areas where the activity was already concentrated, by identifying specific areas where glasshouses would be permitted. Outside these areas glasshouses were not permitted. Policy E13 of the Epping Forest District Plan 1998 continued this approach of concentration, although it allowed expansion onto adjacent sites in particular circumstances. The intention behind this approach has been to minimise the landscape impact of an activity which national policy determines is appropriate development in the Green Belt, even although crops are not grown in the ground.

10.93a Fifteen such areas are identified in the District Local Plan – a total of nearly 245ha. Five are in Roydon parish – Old House Lane; Reeves Lane/Tylers Road ; Tylers Cross ; south side of Hamlet Hill ; and Netherhall Road/Hamlet Hill. Two are in Nazeing parish – Sedge Green/Nursery Road (the northern part of which is in Roydon); and Hoe Lane. In Waltham Abbey the sites are (in the north) Galleyhill Road; Pick Hill (2 sites) and Breach Barns. To the south, they are Avey Lane; Mott Street and Sewardstone Road (2 sites). In some areas glasshouse horticulture is thriving and has indeed spread onto adjoining land. In other cases, there is very little current horticultural activity with little apparent sign of it returning in the foreseeable future. A separate consultant's study has estimated that about 37ha in the designated sites are undeveloped but readily available for glass and 48ha are occupied by uses other than horticulture.

10.94a There are many reasons for the disparity of the outcomes. Just because land is within a designated 'glasshouse area' does not automatically mean that it is either available or suitable for glasshouse use. Factors such as land ownership or condition, land speculation, slope, area, shape, vehicular accessibility, proximity to utilities (particularly gas) and nurseries under the same management or ownership, and even the presence of overhead electricity pylons (a common feature of the Lea Valley), can all affect the likelihood of land being used for glasshouse horticulture. In at least one case, permission has been granted for new glasshouses but the applicant has not implemented the decision, because the length of his lease on the land made the project economically unsound. In another case, permission was granted on appeal for another use on the grounds that this would have lesser impact on the character of the area. In another example a Certificate of Lawful Development has been issued for use as a builders yard, so it is extremely unlikely that this site will ever be used for glasshouse horticulture.

10.95a Two planning appeal decisions, one in 1999 and the second in 2001, questioned some aspects of the approach in the District Local Plan and encouraged a review of policy and land allocations. In the first appeal the main problem was lack of available land within a particular designated area. With the second appeal (for a different site) the Inspector commented that '...the original and underlying intention of Policy E13 (of the 1998 Plan) has to some extent been overtaken by the transformation that has taken place in the glasshouse industry This is apparent from the extensive areas of new as well as rebuilding of glasshousing that has and is still taking place. Consequently I accept that the boundaries of those areas subject to Policy E13 may not be as relevant today as they were when the LP was adopted. ...Certainly it would be unsatisfactory for all concerned to continue to make ad hoc decisions through the appeal process in an area that I believe is extremely sensitive to this form of development.'

10.96a Partly as a consequence of the comments within these appeal decisions the Council, in 2002, commissioned Reading Agricultural Consultants (RAC) to report on the future viability of the glasshouse industry as a whole and of the Lea Valley in particular, as a basis for reviewing Local Plan policy. The study encompasses financial, land use planning (including dereliction), production and marketing, labour, capital investment, energy and environmental issues. It also includes a schedule and brief analysis of planning decisions in the District between 1991 and 2002. Some results have already been outlined in paras 10.88a to 91a above.

10.97a The area of glasshouses in the Lea Valley declined from 130ha to 93ha between 1988 and 2001, but most of this was outside the District (Enfield, Hoddesdon and Cheshunt lost 28ha while the three District parishes in the Lea Valley lost only 9ha). The total figure in the District stabilised between 1996 and 2001 at 74 or 75ha, the major part of this (59ha) being in Roydon and Nazeing. The study concludes that the glasshouse industry requires a rebuilding rate of approximately 4 to 5% of floorspace annually to maintain the current area of production. This equates to around 3.8ha per annum in the District section of the Lea Valley. Between 1991 to 2002, permission was granted for 49ha of new or replacement glass in the District section of the Lea Valley (i.e. not just the designated areas). This is slightly over half of the area actually applied for (92ha), but averaging at just under 4ha per annum, it almost equates with the study's suggested replacement rate.

10.98a In more detail, 80% of glasshouse applications were permitted between 1991 and 2002 – the success rate falling with the size of unit applied for. 36.3ha of new glass were permitted within or adjoining the designated areas; 12.7ha were permitted

elsewhere within the Lea Valley and 1.5ha elsewhere in the District. There is possibly a small amount of double counting with these figures because of duplicate or repeat applications. These figures indicate very strongly that glasshouses are concentrated in the Lea Valley and that most of the demand for expansion has occurred in, or adjacent to, the designated areas. The main locations of expansion away from the designated sites and their adjacent areas were Paynes Lane, Nazeing and Stubbins Nursery, Fisher's Green, near Waltham Abbey.

10.99a In the same period (i.e. 1991 to 2002) 14.8ha were refused within or adjoining the designated areas. Most of these refusals occurred before 1998 and concerned land which was adjacent to the designated areas – the then current policy from the 1989 Plan restricted glasshouses to these areas only. The policy was changed in 1998 to allow development on land adjacent to the designated areas. Other reasons for refusal included highway capacity and safety, and detrimental impact on the character of Hoe Lane in Nazeing. Between 1998 and early 2005, there have been four significant refusals (two of which led to the appeals discussed in para 10.95a above) in or adjacent to the designated areas. Of the two other refusals, one was at Sedge Green where the site was within the Lee Valley Regional Park, and the other was an 'adjacent' site in Hoe Lane where there was concern about unused land within the designated area, traffic safety and impact on the adjoining Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Area. This nursery subsequently received planning permission for a similar-sized scheme in a less prominent location in Hoe Lane.

10.100a The equivalent figures (i.e. refusals for new glasshouses between 1991 and 2002) for the rest of the Lea Valley and the District are 27ha and 0.1ha respectively. Double counting is probably significant for the Lea Valley total as an application for 11ha in the Nazeing Common area was refused in successive years.

10.101a Local councils, societies and residents have concerns about the existing glasshouse industry, let alone any expansion. Traffic is the main cause of concern – the number and size of HGVs being considered totally inappropriate for narrow, winding rural lanes and roads. Safety of some of these routes and junctions, and congestion in the Nazeing area, have been frequently mentioned. Times of operation also cause disturbance as some activities appear to continue around the clock. The influence of the multiple retailers is apparent here – if they demand delivery of goods at a particular time, producers must comply or face losing their main source of income. There are also concerns about (i) packhouses and some nurseries mainly dealing with imported, rather than home-grown produce; (ii) landscape impact; (iii) dereliction leading to pressure for housing or other inappropriate development; (iv) gradual change to other inappropriate uses – e.g. garden centres (which, as retail outlets, are not only inappropriate in the Green Belt, but can also be inconsistent with the aim of revitalising town centres) or other inappropriate activities, with consequent impact on traffic flows; (v) lack of enforcement action by the Council on a range of issues; and (vi) why more land is being proposed for designation when some of the existing areas are not fully utilised and some glasshouses are apparently abandoned or non-operational.

10.102a Planning policies, and their implementation, have somehow got to find a balance between meeting the reasonable demands of an appropriate Green Belt activity and addressing or satisfying the valid concerns and expectations of the local community. It has to be accepted, however, that there is no ideal solution. Quite apart from the perceived disbenefits of glasshouse expansion, and the various planning issues and problems that are raised, there is obviously a finite limit to just how much glasshouse development the Lea Valley can absorb. The requirements of the present-day industry, and of the supermarket chains, are significantly different

from those of even ten years ago, and the need for ever larger units to achieve economies of scale is a particular problem, given the nature of the local landscape, field pattern and highway network. Changes in glasshouse design and technology also mean that the height of new buildings is increasing, and this can result in developments with a greater visual impact.

10.103a The situation is made more complex by the existence of the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority whose statutory remit is to ‘... improve, preserve and manage... the park as a place for... leisure, recreation (and) sport... for the provision of nature reserves and for the provision and enjoyment of entertainments of any kind.’ Within this context the Authority views some glasshouse expansion as a threat to its main purpose and functions, and as a threat to the visual character of the Park. From a grower’s point of view, the Park is located on the best land – i.e. the mainly flat areas in the centre of the Lea Valley, and this means that any glasshouse expansion is broadly limited to the eastern side of the valley which gradually and increasingly slopes up to the Epping Forest and Epping Long Green ridges.

10.104a The Council believes that a continuation of the designated area approach, obviously in combination with other Local Plan policies to protect e.g. landscape character and sites of wildlife importance, is the most appropriate and practical way of controlling the glasshouse industry for the foreseeable future. This does not ignore the problems outlined in paras 10.94a and 10.101a above, or the other concerns expressed about the industry generally. Growers have also expressed doubts that this approach will bring forward sites of a sufficient size to accommodate the likely future requirements of the industry. The policy has been successful at containing the glasshouses within the specified areas – thereby achieving the broader strategic aim of minimising impact upon the district’s countryside and avoiding (i) a dispersed spread of activity and (ii) more widespread dereliction. Designation also gives certainty to both applicants and the local community.

10.104b (i) In concluding that the designated area approach remains the best strategy, the Council is particularly concerned to ensure that the selected areas genuinely contribute to glasshouse use. In addition to addressing the projections for future glasshouse demand (see para 10.104c below) the Council is also proposing a rationalisation of the existing designated areas, taking into account current use and condition and foreseeable use. The Alterations Proposals Map therefore contains the following designations (1) land to be ‘de-designated’; (2) land which can be expected to be de-designated the next time glasshouse planning policy is reviewed (unless in the meantime positive interest is shown in its use for glasshouse horticulture) ; (3) land to be added to the designated areas as a recognition of current use for glasshouses ; and (4) new land allocations to meet the demand which has been identified by the RAC Report. The following figure summarises these proposed changes:

Figure 10A: Glasshouse Designation Proposals

| Designation Proposal | Number of Sites | Total Area (ha) |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Immediate de-designation | 4 | 14.30 |
| Potential de-designation | 5 | 30.14 |
| Extension to existing E13A areas | 5 | 18.82 |
| New designations of E13A areas | 5 | 81.62 (of which 11.79 is already almost complete) |

10.104b (ii) Areas of immediate de-designation are where no glasshouses are present, or change of use has occurred, or where there is no sign of horticultural activity. Areas for potential de-designation are where activity appears to be moribund. Glasshouses may still be present but are little used. Significant changes to other land uses have not (yet) occurred. The purpose of allocating these sites as 'potential de-designation' is to give an early warning of the Council's intentions.

Provision for new and replacement glasshouses

10.104c Following (i) an analysis of demand for new and replacement glass in the period 1991 to 2002, and (ii) discussions with growers about likely demand over the next ten years, the RAC study presented 3 options for possible glasshouse expansion in the Lea Valley. The highest figure is for 6.5 ha/annum new glass and 1ha/annum replacement glass. The lowest equivalent figures are for 3.5 and 0.5ha respectively. The most 'plausible' demand is between these two which the RAC estimates at 5 and 1ha respectively. So, over the next ten years, provision should be made for 50ha of new glass to meet the expected needs of the industry. The area of land actually needed would, of course, have to be greater to allow for necessary infrastructure.

10.104d The need for this provision has to be considered in the context of the 37ha land potentially available in the existing designated sites (see para 10.93a above). It is accepted that parts of this are in very small parcels, unsuitable for anything but minor extensions to existing nurseries, but there are some locations where quite significant expansion could be achieved within the existing designated areas. On the understanding that only part of this 37ha can contribute to the identified need described in paragraph 10.104c, the Council has examined a large number of sites in the Lea Valley which could potentially be used for glasshouses. Issues which have been taken into account include:

- landscape impact, including the protection of the character of Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Area;
- avoidance of identified wildlife sites and of high quality agricultural land;
- protection of the Lee Valley Regional Park and other recreational assets;
- flood risk;
- accessibility for workers, particularly from economically disadvantaged areas;
- condition, shape and slope/contours; and
- proximity to roads and utilities, especially gas.

Two sites have been selected to allow for further expansion to meet the projected needs of the RAC report. These are land (a) between Sedge Green and Hoe Lane, Nazeing (25.7ha); and (b) north of Parklands, Waltham Abbey (33.8ha). Both areas adjoin established sites of glasshouse activity and therefore accord with the strategic aim of restricting expansion to areas already containing glasshouse development. In the case of (a) the Council will expect (i) the provision of a significant landscaping screen along the northern boundary to reduce landscape impact, and (ii) the inclusion of traffic management measures to concentrate access on Sedge Green and reduce HGV movements in Hoe Lane. Effective landscaping schemes would also be required for (ii), particularly to screen and soften the view northwards from the Parklands estate. Both sites are Grade 3 agricultural land and sites of wildlife importance are not affected. These two sites plus the land potentially available in the designated areas total 96.5ha and the Council believes this will be adequate to meet the projected demand for 50ha new glass plus associated infrastructure.

10.104e The following policy does not apply to the sites proposed for de-designation.

POLICY E13A - NEW AND REPLACEMENT GLASSHOUSES

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR NEW AND REPLACEMENT HORTICULTURAL GLASSHOUSES WITHIN AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR THIS PURPOSE ON THE ALTERATIONS PROPOSALS MAP. GLASSHOUSES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED OUTSIDE THE AREAS SUBJECT TO THIS POLICY UNLESS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IS EITHER:

- (i) A REPLACEMENT OF, OR A SMALL-SCALE EXTENSION TO, A GLASSHOUSE OR NURSERY OUTSIDE THE AREAS IDENTIFIED ON THE ALTERATIONS PROPOSALS MAP; OR**
- (ii) NECESSARY FOR THE MODEST EXPANSION OF A GLASSHOUSE OR EXISTING HORTICULTURAL UNDERTAKING ON A SITE AT THE EDGE OF AN AREA IDENTIFIED ON THE ALTERATIONS PROPOSALS MAP WHICH IS UNABLE TO EXPAND BECAUSE ALL THE AVAILABLE LAND IN THAT DESIGNATED AREA IS OCCUPIED BY VIABLE GLASSHOUSE UNDERTAKINGS, AND WHERE THERE IS NO SUITABLE LAND (INCLUDING REDUNDANT GLASSHOUSE LAND) IN THIS OR THE OTHER GLASSHOUSE AREAS IDENTIFIED ON THE ALTERATIONS PROPOSALS MAP;**

AND IN ALL CASES THE PROPOSAL WILL NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE OPEN CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE.

10.104f The Council will consider the use of legal agreements to achieve junction improvements or other traffic management measures to improve road safety. Growers and nursery owners will also be encouraged to co-operate with each other to improve, or provide shared, access to sites and to reduce HGV traffic on more unsuitable routes. Any proposal for new or replacement glasshouses will need to demonstrate that access, egress and turning for articulated vehicles are adequate for the intended use and that highway safety is maintained in accordance with other policies of the Plan.

10.104g The Council may also consider the use of compulsory purchase powers where land ownership is causing an unreasonable obstacle to glasshouse development within the E13A areas.

10.104h Better landscaping of sites than hitherto will be required. Public consultation has shown that this is desirable, and the need will be greater because of the demand for larger areas of new glass, and because of the increased height of new units which is being driven by improvements in technology.

10.104i Modern glasshouse units can be constructed to fairly exacting environmental standards to reduce energy costs. Much of the newer development in the Lea Valley has incorporated these improvements and the Council intends that all new glasshouses will be designed to satisfy the requirements of policy CP4 and other relevant policies in the interests of achieving sustainable development. Issues of particular importance for the locality include water efficiency in general and, more specifically, water collection from roofs for use in irrigation, recycling irrigation water run-off, buffering reservoirs to reduce rainwater run-off and other sustainable drainage systems as appropriate.

10.104j Polytunnels are used in horticulture and are therefore appropriate development within the Green Belt. Although more temporary in nature than glasshouses, they can also have a significant impact on the openness of the countryside if they cover extensive areas of land. When or if applications for polytunnels are received, the Council will consider these in terms of their potential impact on the openness, character and appearance of the Green Belt.

10.104k The above policy is intended to continue the strategy of containment and therefore favours glasshouse development over other uses of land or building. This, of course, does not prevent the submission of planning applications for different uses of land within the E13A areas. The Council wishes to ensure that the policy of containment will be successful, with the long-term aim of minimising landscape impacts on the wider countryside. The policy should therefore be seen as an additional constraint on use of land in the Green Belt inasmuch as the Council will try and ensure that proposals for alternative uses within the E13A areas are encouraged to locate outside the areas or are refused if they could potentially threaten the vitality or viability of the Lea Valley glasshouse industry. With this reasoning, the Council hopes that the following policy will prevent the recurrence of the situation where permission was granted (on appeal) for open storage in a glasshouse area.

POLICY E13B – PROTECTION OF GLASSHOUSE AREAS

THE COUNCIL WILL REFUSE ANY APPLICATION THAT IT CONSIDERS IS LIKELY TO:

- (i) UNDERMINE ITS POLICY APPROACH OF CONCENTRATING GLASSHOUSES IN CLUSTERS TO MINIMISE DAMAGE TO VISUAL AMENITY AND LOSS OF THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT; AND/OR**
- (ii) HARM THE FUTURE VITALITY AND/OR VIABILITY OF THE LEA VALLEY GLASSHOUSE INDUSTRY.**

10.104l Where appropriate in implementing the above policies, the Council will consult the Lea Valley Growers Association and seek other expert advice.

Dereliction

10.104m Dereliction was a particular problem of the industry in the 1980s, and this was one of the reasons for introducing the designated areas, because it encouraged redevelopment within them. Derelict or unused glasshouses still exist, so the problem is not entirely resolved even although it is greatly reduced. There is public concern that 'hope value' (i.e. eventually receiving planning permission for housing or another financially beneficial use) encourages dereliction and certainly restricts if not threatens the vitality and viability of the industry. The Council will continue to resist all such proposals and will adhere to the guidance in PPG2 which states: '... Development (should not be) allowed merely because the land has become derelict.' (para 2.6).

POLICY E13C – PREVENTION OF DERELICTION OF NEW GLASSHOUSE SITES

WHEN GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION FOR NEW, REPLACEMENT, OR EXTENSIONS TO, GLASSHOUSES OR OTHER BUILDINGS INCLUDING PACKHOUSES, AND ANY ANCILLARY ACTIVITIES OR USES, THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE THAT THESE SITES ARE FULLY RETURNED TO A CONDITION

APPROPRIATE FOR THEIR PREVIOUS USE WHEN OR IF THE LAND IS NO LONGER USED FOR GLASSHOUSE HORTICULTURE. UNDER-USED OR DERELICT GLASSHOUSES AND OTHER BUILDINGS INCLUDING PACKHOUSES WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED SUITABLE SITES FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF NON-AGRICULTURAL USES, AT LEAST UNTIL A FUTURE REVIEW OF THE PLAN.

10.104n For these new sites, the Council will require that, at such time as the use for glasshouse horticulture ceases, (a) the glasshouses, packhouses and other buildings and their concrete bases shall be dismantled, broken up and fully removed from the site, and (b) where appropriate, broken glass contamination of the soil is rectified and the land returned to a condition appropriate to its previous use. A legal agreement is likely to be required to secure this, although an index-linked performance bond may also be necessary to ensure this happens. When granting planning permission for new glasshouses, where the grower is moving due to the unsuitability of the existing site, the Council may use discontinuance orders to ensure the removal of buildings on the vacated site where this is considered appropriate to encourage a new use of land.

Packhouses

10.104o The RAC report identified three packhouses in the Lea Valley and one in St Albans which also services this locality. These handle most of the salad produce from the area, but also deal with produce from the rest of the UK and abroad. The three packhouses are sited within E13A areas. They are complemented by a number of smaller packing sheds which are affiliated to individual, or small groups of, nurseries. These tend to deal mainly with locally grown produce. The RAC report anticipates that further expansion of packhouse facilities is likely, mainly because of the increasingly specialist requirements of the major retailers.

10.104p Packhouses tend to locate on nursery sites for a number of reasons: convenience in terms of proximity to glasshouses and better communication between production and marketing staff; credibility with supermarket buyers who are concerned to ensure isolation from sources of industrial pollution; cheaper land than industrial estates; and workforce flexibility (i.e. can be employed in packing or working in the nurseries).

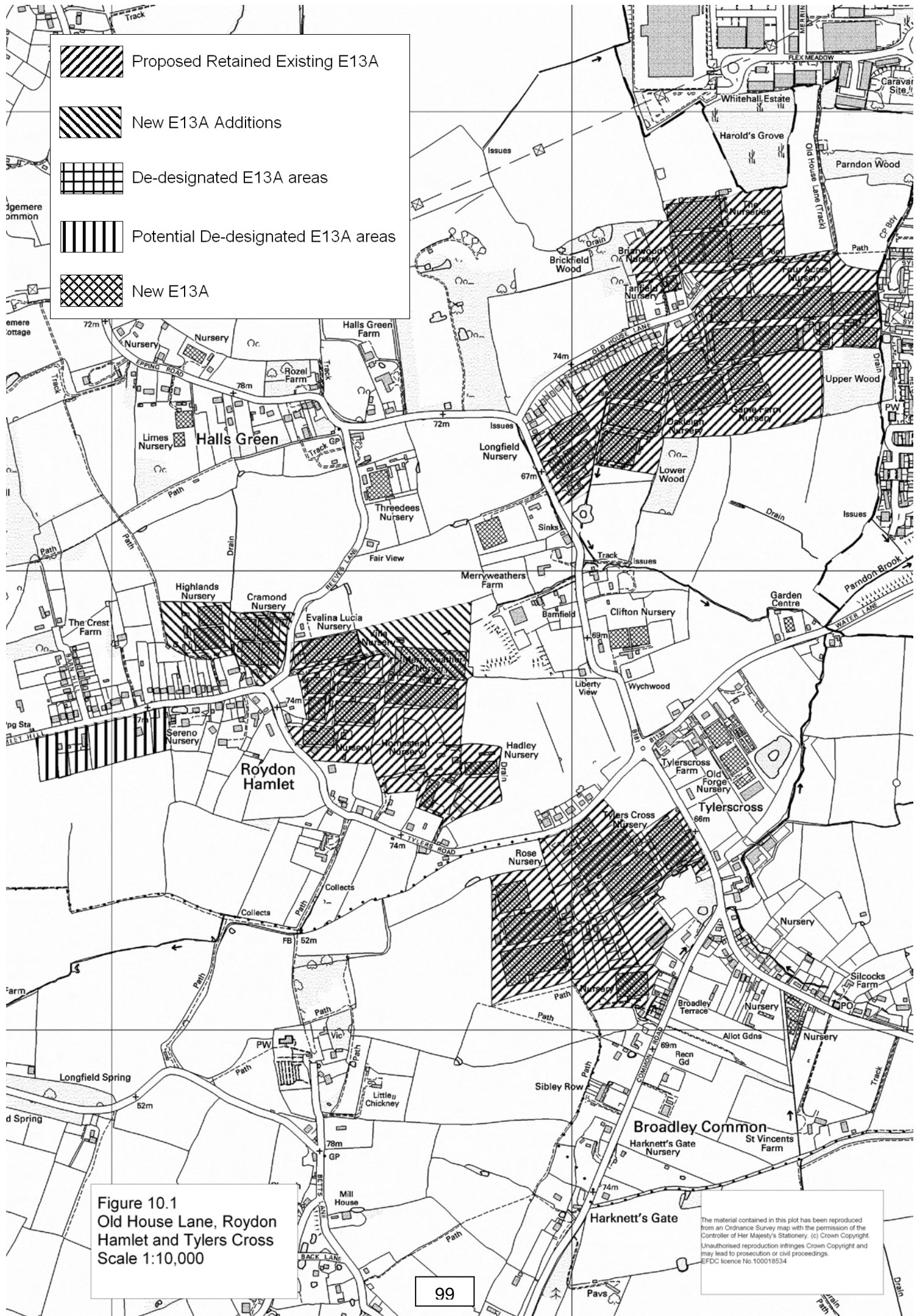
10.104q The Council considers that the nature and scale of activity in packhouses is industrial and commercial and not agricultural and therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Packhouses are also much more permanent structures than glasshouses and can probably be modified for other industrial or commercial uses. Ideally they should therefore not be located in the Green Belt, despite the reasons listed in para 10.104p. Applications for new packhouses in the Green Belt will therefore need to demonstrate very special circumstances, which could include e.g. securing the viability of a nursery or group of nurseries, or that the packhouse is an integral component of a glasshouse proposal. Conditions may be imposed on any permission limiting the proportion of imported produce that may be handled, and the Council may require regular reports, suitably audited, from the user as to the amount of imported produce which is being handled and packaged.

Seasonal worker accommodation

10.104r By virtue of the Caravan Sites Act 1960 and the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 1995 planning permission is granted for seasonal use of agricultural land as a caravan site for agricultural workers. The important points are

that the accommodation should be seasonal, and be occupied by people employed on land in the same ownership and involved in the seasonal activities. The purpose of the legislation is to enable farmers to respond to seasonal variations in labour demands, relating to the planting, growing and harvesting periods, and to be able to provide accommodation without needing to apply for planning permission. Seasonal workers are an important component of the glasshouse industry. There is an increasing reliance on recruiting workers from abroad – i.e. not having existing local accommodation.

10.104s Technological advances in glasshouse activities (e.g. supplementary lighting systems and the use of combined heat and power) have enabled the horticultural growing period to be extended into the winter months. (Experience has shown that some seasonal caravans are now being occupied from February to November.) The nature of modern horticultural businesses in the Lea Valley, with multi-cropping and rolling planting programmes resulting in overlapping crop cycles, means that most growers would find it difficult to claim the GPDO exemption rights. As stated in para 5.87a, the Council will only grant planning permission for temporary caravan or mobile home accommodation when very special circumstances exist. If a dwelling is considered permanent, because of length of occupation, regard shall be given to other policies in the Plan, particularly policy GB17A.





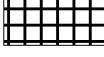

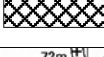
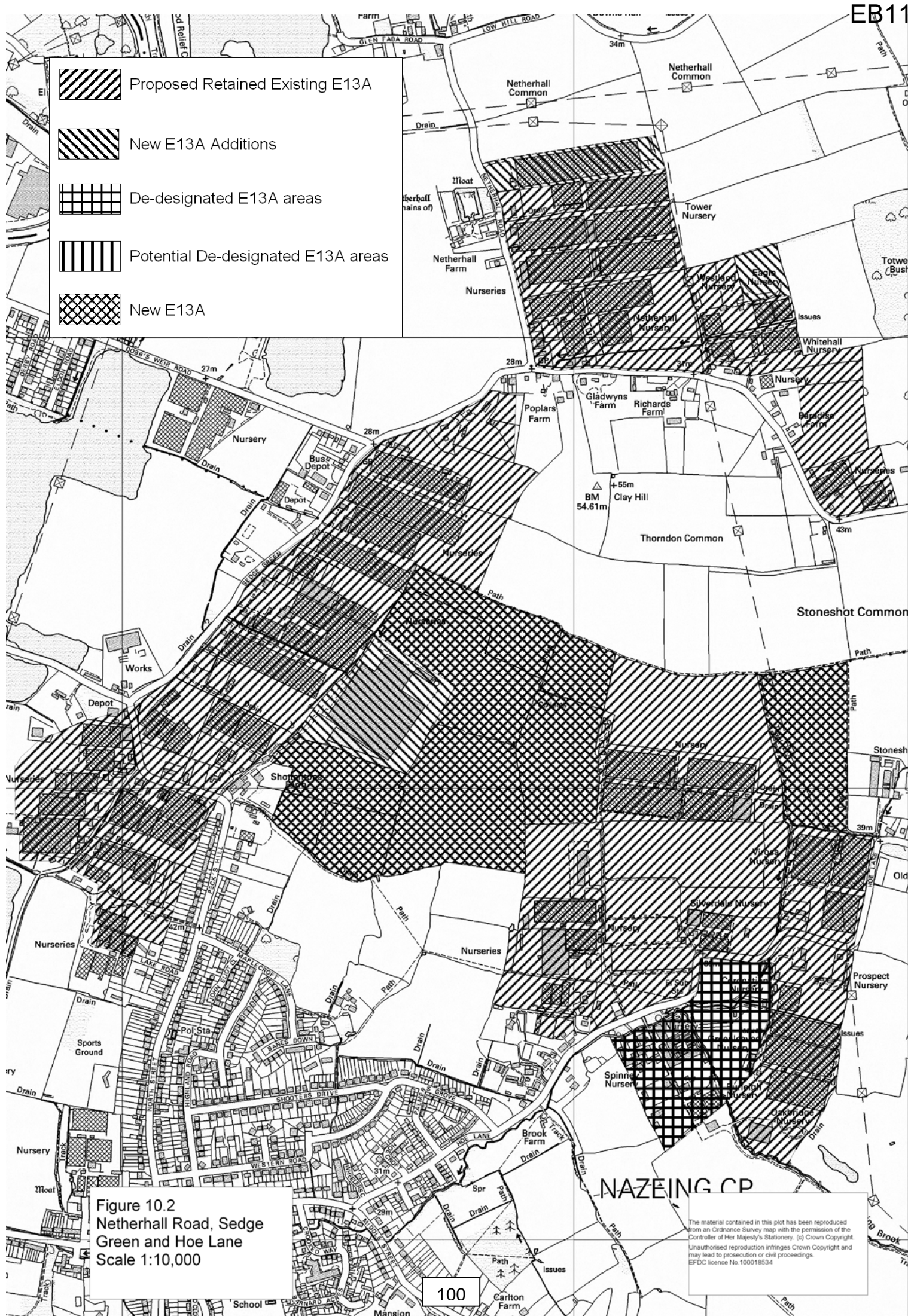
-  Proposed Retained Existing E13A
-  New E13A Additions
-  De-designated E13A areas
-  Potential De-designated E13A areas
-  New E13A

Figure 10.1
 Old House Lane, Roydon
 Hamlet and Tylers Cross
 Scale 1:10,000

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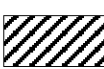

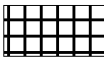


-  Proposed Retained Existing E13A
-  New E13A Additions
-  De-designated E13A areas
-  Potential De-designated E13A areas
-  New E13A

Figure 10.2
 Netherhall Road, Sedge
 Green and Hoe Lane
 Scale 1:10,000

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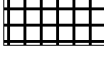

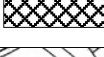
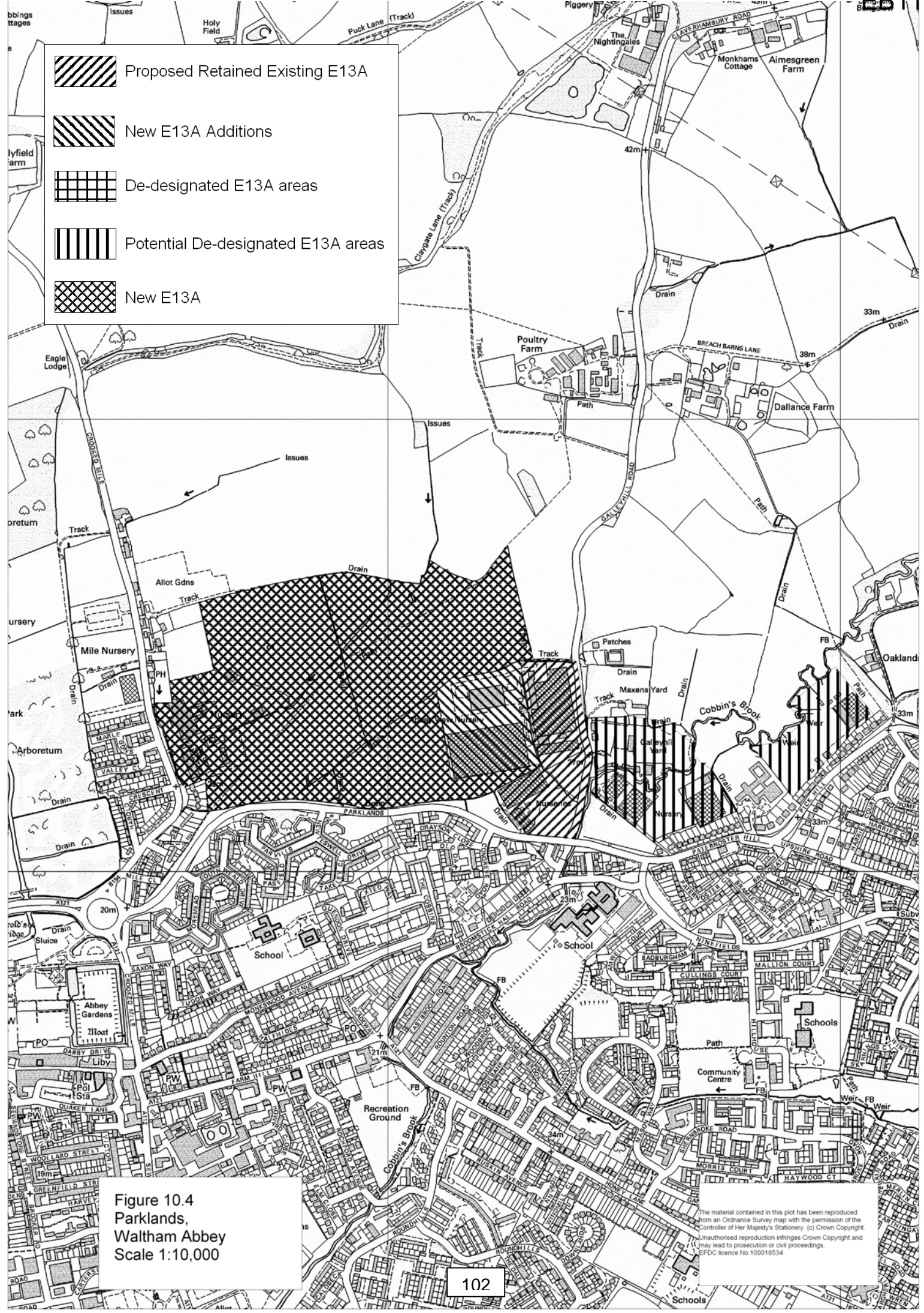
-  Proposed Retained Existing E13A
-  New E13A Additions
-  De-designated E13A areas
-  Potential De-designated E13A areas
-  New E13A

Figure 10.3
Paynes Lane
Scale 1:10,000

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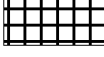

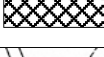
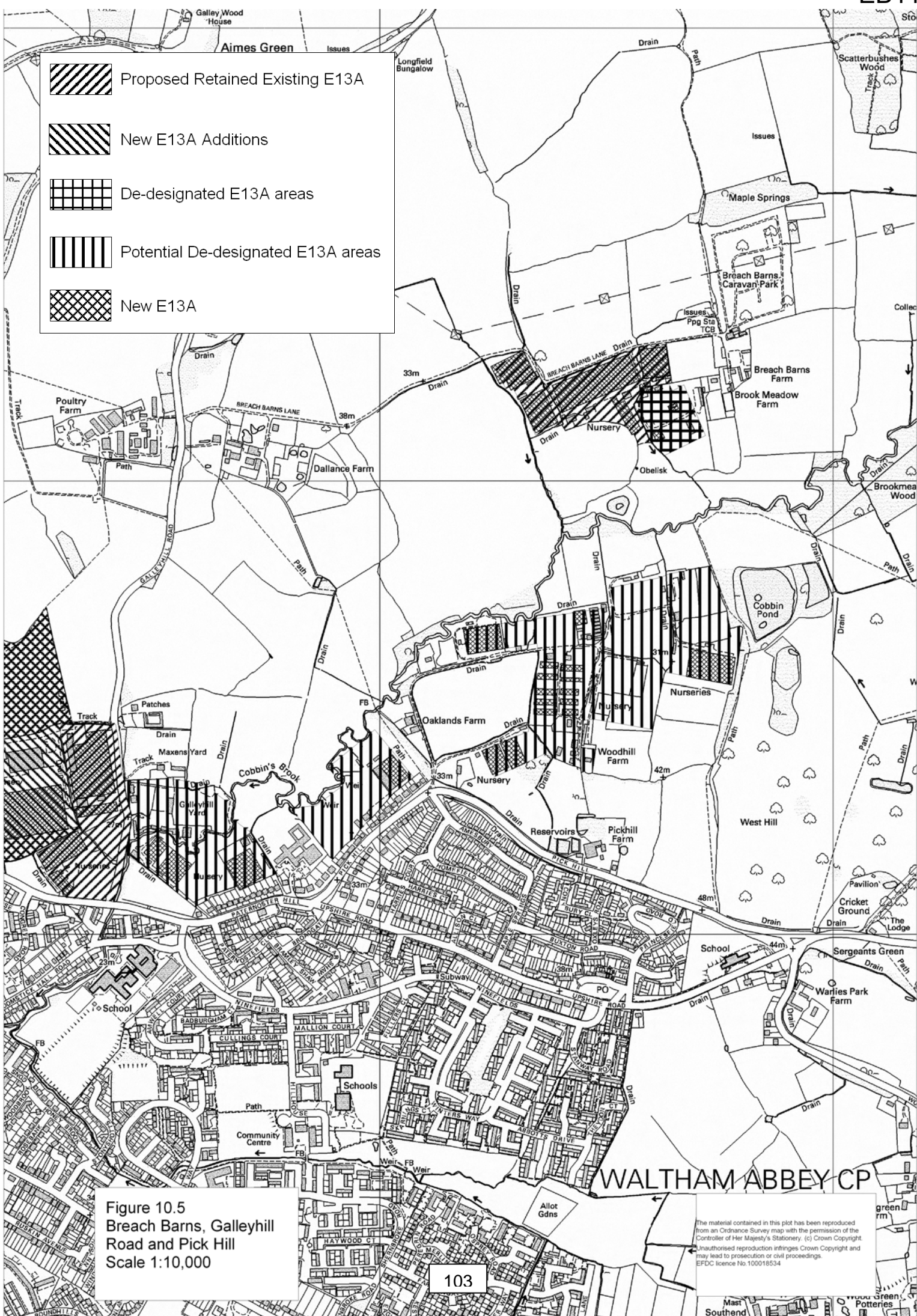
-  Proposed Retained Existing E13A
-  New E13A Additions
-  De-designated E13A areas
-  Potential De-designated E13A areas
-  New E13A

Figure 10.4
Parklands,
Waltham Abbey
Scale 1:10,000

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| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| | Proposed Retained Existing E13A |
| | New E13A Additions |
| | De-designated E13A areas |
| | Potential De-designated E13A areas |
| | New E13A |

Figure 10.5
 Breach Barns, Galleyhill
 Road and Pick Hill
 Scale 1:10,000

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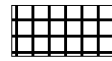


-  Proposed Retained Existing E13A
-  New E13A Additions
-  De-designated E13A areas
-  Potential De-designated E13A areas
-  New E13A

Figure 10.6
Sewardstone
Scale 1:10,000

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Chapter 11 - Town Centres

Chapter 11 - Town Centres (Replacement Chapter)

11.1a Aims

- To safeguard and strengthen the role of town centres as safe and accessible places to shop, work and enjoy;
- To recognise the important contribution that town centres have in meeting the objectives of promoting more sustainable patterns of development by reducing the need to travel for those who live and work in the district;
- To acknowledge the relationship between a town centre containing a diverse mix of uses and the local economic, social and environmental benefits that can be gained;
- To sustain and enhance Loughton High Road and The Broadway, Waltham Abbey, Epping, Chipping Ongar and Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill as the main focal points for retailing and associated uses within Epping Forest District;
- To safeguard and encourage a range of local shopping facilities outside these town centres to meet the essential needs (and, where possible, the desirable needs) of residents throughout the district;
- To encourage conservation-led regeneration in Chipping Ongar and Waltham Abbey town centres.

Government Guidance

11.2a PPS6 (Planning for Town Centres) emphasises the Government's objective of promoting vital and viable town centres. Development should be focused in existing centres in order to strengthen or regenerate them. Planning authorities should:

- actively promote and manage change in town centres;
- define a network and hierarchy of centres, each one performing its appropriate role to meet the needs of its catchment;
- adopt a pro-active, plan-led approach to planning for town centres.

Transport, land assembly, crime prevention, planning and design issues should be addressed by area action plans, compulsory purchase orders and town centre strategies.

11.3a Also relevant are sections of Government guidance on transportation (PPG13) and housing (PPG3). These complement PPS6 in that: -

- PPG13 states the key objective should be to ensure that jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services are primarily sited at the most accessible locations in the local area; and
- PPG3 states that local authorities should promote additional housing in town centres within the context of their overall strategy for each centre, taking into account the existing balance of uses in the centre. Priority should be given to employment generating uses such as shopping, offices and leisure especially at ground level but opportunities to add housing on upper storeys should be taken.

County Policy

11.4a A key role of the Replacement Structure Plan is to provide a clear strategy for town centres and retail development in Essex and Southend-on-Sea. It sets out a

retail hierarchy to assist in indicating where investment in new retail development will be promoted and existing provision enhanced. The hierarchy includes sub-regional, principal, smaller, district and local centres. The Structure Plan also:

- promotes existing town centres as the primary locations for new retail, leisure, entertainment, cultural and other appropriate development; and
- encourages access to and within shopping areas by alternative modes of transport to the private car.

Town Centre Hierarchy

11.5a This district includes three principal centres (Epping, Loughton High Road and Waltham Abbey). The nearest sub-regional centres are Harlow and Chelmsford. Shopping habits are also influenced by centres in neighbouring authorities such as Ilford and Romford. Additionally larger centres further afield such as the West End of London and major shopping centres such as Bluewater, Brent Cross and Lakeside also affect shopping patterns.

11.6a Principal centres within this district therefore need to safeguard their character and enhance their role because of competitive pressure from these larger shopping centres.

POLICY TC1 - TOWN CENTRE HIERARCHY

APPLICATIONS WITHIN TOWN CENTRES FOR RETAIL AND OTHER APPROPRIATE USES, INCLUDING EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING STORES, WILL BE DETERMINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HIERARCHY WHICH EXISTS IN THE DISTRICT:

- (i) **PRINCIPAL:**
 - **EPPING;**
 - **LOUGHTON HIGH ROAD;**
 - **WALTHAM ABBEY**
- (ii) **SMALLER:**
 - **LOUGHTON BROADWAY;**
 - **CHIPPING ONGAR**
- (iii) **DISTRICT:**
 - **BUCKHURST HILL - QUEENS ROAD (EAST)**
- (iv) **LOCAL:**
 - **ABRIDGE**
 - **BUCKHURST HILL – LOUGHTON WAY, LOWER QUEENS ROAD, QUEENS ROAD WEST, STATION WAY**
 - **CHIGWELL - BROOK PARADE, LIMES FARM, MANOR ROAD**
 - **COOPERSALE - PARKLANDS**
 - **CHIPPING ONGAR – LOWER HIGH STREET, ST PETERS AVENUE, FYFIELD ROAD**
 - **EPPING – LINDSEY STREET**
 - **LOUGHTON – BORDERS LANE, GOLDINGS HILL/LOWER ROAD, PYRLES LANE, RODING ROAD/VALLEY HILL**

- **NAZEING – NAZEINGBURY PARADE**
- **NORTH WEALD – HIGH ROAD**
- **THEYDON BOIS – COPPICE ROW/FOREST DRIVE**
- **WALTHAM ABBEY – HIGHBRIDGE RETAIL PARK,
NINEFIELDS, ROUNDHILLS, UPSHIRE
ROAD**

THE COUNCIL WILL, IN PRINCIPLE, PERMIT PROPOSALS WHICH SHOULD SUSTAIN OR IMPROVE THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF ANY OF THE CENTRES, AND WHICH WILL EITHER MAINTAIN OR NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THEIR POSITION IN THE ABOVE HIERARCHY. LARGER-SCALE DEVELOPMENT IS THEREFORE ONLY APPROPRIATE IN THE PRINCIPAL CENTRES. PROPOSALS FOR RETAIL AND OTHER TOWN CENTRE USES ON EDGE-OF-CENTRE OR OUT-OF-CENTRE SITES WILL BE ASSESSED IN TERMS OF (i) WHETHER THEY ADVERSELY AFFECT THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF EXISTING CENTRES WITHIN THE DISTRICT; AND (ii) ALL OTHER PLAN POLICIES.

11.7a Any proposal that could be deemed to impact on the town centre hierarchy will be assessed in accordance with this policy. The Council will only grant planning permission where it can be demonstrated that the development, individually or collectively with other retail or town centre development, will not harm, to a significant degree, the vitality and viability of a principal town centre, smaller town centre, district centre or local centre. Conditions may be attached to any planning permission limiting: (a) the types of goods sold; (b) the amount of floorspace for each type of goods; and (c) the ability to increase floorspace through permitted development rights. A Retail Impact Assessment may be required in particular cases. This would be expected to deal with all relevant issues as set out in Chapter 3 of PPS6, but the scope will be altered to include other matters as may be considered relevant.

11.8a It is important to continue to monitor the effectiveness of the hierarchy of centres. Through this monitoring the Council will seek to ensure that it continues to reflect the reality on the ground. In addition to an assessment of the health and potential of the principal, smaller and district centres set out in paragraphs 11.12a – 11.41a of this chapter, it is intended that the relevant Town Centre Partnerships will produce visions to assist in informing future development decisions for the respective centres.

Town Centre Development: The Sequential Approach

11.9a A key aim of this chapter is to promote policies and procedures which will enable town centres to safeguard and strengthen their mix of uses and the focus that they provide for the community.

11.10a To achieve this aim, the sequential test shall apply to all proposals for retail development and other town centre uses (such as leisure and employment) in the principal, smaller, district and local centres. These will be concentrated in existing centres in accordance with Structure Plan policy TCR1 and Local Plan policy TC2.

POLICY TC2 - SEQUENTIAL APPROACH

THE COUNCIL WILL GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR RETAIL AND OTHER TOWN CENTRE USES WHERE THESE ARE APPROPRIATE TO THE FUNCTION OF THE PARTICULAR CENTRE AS IDENTIFIED IN THE HIERARCHY

IN POLICY TC1. WHERE A CLEARLY DEFINED NEED FOR RETAIL OR OTHER TOWN CENTRE USES HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED, BUT NO SUITABLE SITES OR BUILDINGS, INCLUDING SITES SUITABLE FOR CONVERSION , ARE EITHER COMMITTED OR LIKELY TO BECOME AVAILABLE WITHIN A REALISTIC PERIOD OF TIME WITHIN THE PRINCIPAL TOWN CENTRES, CONSIDERATION MAY BE GIVEN TO SUITABLE SITES IN OTHER CENTRES, IN THE FOLLOWING PREFERENTIAL ORDER:

- (i) AN EDGE-OF-CENTRE LOCATION OF ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL TOWN CENTRES;**
- (ii) A SMALLER TOWN CENTRE OR DISTRICT CENTRE LOCATION;**
- (iii) AN EDGE-OF-CENTRE LOCATION OF A SMALLER TOWN CENTRE OR DISTRICT CENTRE.**

THIS SEQUENTIAL APPROACH WILL ALSO BE ADOPTED FOR THE SMALLER, DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES SUBJECT TO THE PROPOSAL BEING APPROPRIATE FOR THE CHARACTER AND FUNCTION OF THESE CENTRES. ONLY IF THESE LOCATIONS HAVE BEEN REJECTED WILL OUT- OF- CENTRE SITES BE CONSIDERED. SUCH PROPOSALS WILL ALSO HAVE TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THIS PLAN.

11.11a Need will be assessed in accordance with national policy and based upon local catchment areas. Where need has been demonstrated but the only suitable site is outside the local catchment area, the site may still not be considered appropriate for development, e.g. because access to the site from the local catchment area is predominantly by use of the private car.

Existing Centres

11.12a The main centres of the district each have their own distinct characteristics, opportunities for growth and problems.

11.13a Since the adoption of the last local plan, the District and County Councils have conducted monitoring work to assess the effectiveness of existing policies. From the findings of this work, it is possible make the following assessment of the health and potential for the principal, smaller and district centres:

Loughton High Road

11.14a Loughton High Road is a linear town centre. It has a number of 'high street' chains, which are complemented by several independent retailers, (particularly ladies' fashion boutiques), and three large supermarkets.

11.15a Loughton also contains a wide range of other uses – banks and building societies, a wide variety of office-based businesses, a monthly farmers' market, and good community facilities including a library, information centre and redeveloped leisure centre. Loughton has a vibrant evening economy with restaurants and a range of 'chain' and independent food and drink outlets, although some of these have limited evening open hours.

11.16a Public transport access to the town centre is good, although there are issues with the quantity and location of parking facilities for car drivers. Loughton station, on the Central Line, and the bus station operate as a public transport interchange. This

is an important gateway to the town centre, a role that has been enhanced with the redevelopment of the station forecourt and the new Sainsbury's store.

11.17a The County Council has shown that Loughton has enjoyed the second lowest vacancy rate in the Structure Plan area. Recent monitoring suggests vacancy in Loughton has consistently remained below 6% in both the primary and secondary frontage since 2000. In July 2003 vacancy in the town centre was 2%.

11.18a The enhancement of Old Station Road is effectively the first phase of the Loughton Town Centre Enhancement Scheme. This scheme has been designed in close consultation with the local community and was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in September 1999. The enhancement scheme has been reviewed in the light of the Sainsbury's and station forecourt development. The revised scheme for the High Road was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the Council on 15 March 2004.

11.19a Once complete, the enhancement scheme will improve the environmental quality of Loughton town centre. These improvements, together with the development of the Lambs Garage site, and a review of controlled parking within the centre, should provide a platform for Loughton to maintain and enhance its role as a principal town centre in the retail hierarchy.

11.20a One particular issue is facilities within the town centre for young people. Loughton town centre is a natural meeting place for young people, especially since the redevelopment of the leisure centre. A Community and Youth Centre on the site of the former United Reformed Church site in Borders Lane is due to open in July 2006. Young people will continue to gather in the town centre and it is therefore appropriate that facilities aimed at providing information and advice for them should be allowed within the town centre.

Epping

11.21a The centre is anchored by a Tesco supermarket to the southwest and district council offices to the northwest of High Street.

11.22a The town centre has a range of both 'chain' and independent retailers and has maintained a good number of food shops including a greengrocer, butcher and two bakeries, although a third bakery and fishmonger both closed down in 2005. The street market held every Monday is an important component of the vitality of the town centre. There is significant other employment with the main District Council offices located at the north end of the High Street. Smaller offices above shops and in Hemnall Street and Bakers Lane add to the variety of the centre.

11.23a Epping also contains a number of restaurants, cafes, takeaways and public houses, a hotel and small nightclub. These create an interesting mix and buoyant evening economy. The town centre has community facilities including a library, community hall, leisure centre and combined adult education and youth facility.

11.24a The Central Line station is ten minutes' walk from the town centre, although the bus service could be improved. Monitoring work shows that vacancy rates within the town centre remained below 5% between March 1999 and July 2003. This allows for natural change and is well below the national figure of 11%.

11.25a There is some potential, subject to a detailed study of parking provision in Epping, for new development in the eastern car park on Bakers Lane. The town

centre boundary has been revised to incorporate this site. Any proposal would be required to add to the vitality or viability of the town centre. As the physical capacity for new commercial development is restricted in Epping town centre, a residential proposal would not be suitable, although a mixed use development could be considered. Any development on that site would require traffic management measures to overcome the access problems, and the provision of replacement car parking.

11.26a Epping continues to maintain the qualities that make it a vibrant market town. The policies within this plan aim to maintain and enhance these qualities, enabling Epping to continue in the retail hierarchy as a principal town centre and a focus for commercial activity in the town.

Waltham Abbey

11.27a Waltham Abbey is an historic town centre, focused around Market Square and the pedestrianised Sun Street. Adjacent to the town centre is the Abbey Church and grounds with access to parts of the Lee Valley Regional Park (the latter has coach parking facilities) – both popular draws for visitors to the town.

11.28a There was limited food retail floorspace in Waltham Abbey until a Tesco superstore on Sewardstone Road opened in 2006. This supermarket could change the traditional focus away from Market Square. The town centre boundary has therefore been amended to take account of this change. Existing shops are complemented by the twice weekly market on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The town centre also includes a number of community facilities including places of worship and assembly, a young peoples' information centre and a library. The district museum, tea shops, gift shops, a large number of public houses, restaurants and a tourist information centre all complement the main visitor attractions for the town. Wherever possible these facilities should be safeguarded and enhanced to retain a vibrant town centre attractive to local residents and tourists alike. In August 2003 vacancy in the town centre was 3.3%.

11.29a The revision of the town centre boundary will mean that the Brooker Road industrial area will effectively become an edge of town centre location. It is important that retail uses are not allowed to spread within the industrial area. This will help to safeguard the role and traditional focus of Market Square and Sun Street for shopping in the town. It will also mean that a more sustainable balance of shops, employment and housing can be maintained in Waltham Abbey.

11.30a The core of this historic market town is a conservation area. In the recent past, the District Council has successfully encouraged the traditional repair of a number of historic buildings and public spaces through conservation area grant schemes, most recently the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS). The District Council will continue to pursue similar schemes, subject to the availability of resources.

11.30b There is one edge of centre shopping area known as Highbridge Retail Park. Any applications for further similar developments will have to comply with policies TC1 and TC2, to ensure they do not impact adversely on existing centres.

Loughton Broadway

11.31a Loughton Broadway is a smaller centre than Loughton High Road, but it has a range of traditional shops including a butcher and greengrocer, with the main food retailer being a small Sainsbury's supermarket. A weekly market is held along the main parade of shops on a Thursday which adds to the mix and vitality of the centre.

11.32a The centre is less than a five minute walk from Debden station and is served by a number of bus routes and the recent development of a cycle lane, which should eventually provide access to The Broadway. Also close to the centre are Langston Road and Oakwood Hill business and industrial sites, which accommodate some of the major employers within the district, and Epping Forest College which has 6000 full and part time students. The Broadway therefore serves a large local population.

11.33a The centre also includes a public house, food outlets, and satellite council offices. A library is nearby. Monitoring has identified that vacancy in The Broadway has fluctuated in recent years from as high as 10% to as low as 2% in the primary shopping frontage. The evening economy in The Broadway is limited and this is not helped by the amount of solid shutters used on many of the shops which make the area appear less accessible and appealing to visitors.

11.34a The main parade of shops forms part of the original 1958 housing development and is a typical example of the architecture from that time. Visually, it has changed little over the last 48 years and there is potential for the parade to be recognised for its design quality in the future. This could possibly form part of any enhancement of Loughton Broadway. A feasibility study exploring an enhancement scheme for the area was conducted in 1998. The final report was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. In 2005 the scheme was reviewed with slightly revised proposals being agreed by the Council in February 2006 along with the required capital funding. Works on the off street car parking areas are due to commence in the late summer of 2006 with the substantive works to The Broadway being undertaken during 2007. This is effectively phase 1 of proposals for The Broadway with considerations to be given at a later date to a wider regeneration scheme.

Chipping Ongar

11.35a Chipping Ongar is a linear town centre that follows the gentle curve of the high street. It has a distinctive market town appearance and over 70 listed buildings. The major part of the designated conservation area is within the town centre boundary.

11.36a The main food store in the town is a medium sized Sainsbury's. This is complemented by a number of independent food shops and a Tesco Express, which forms part of the petrol station. The centre includes a number of other shops, cafes, restaurants, banks and similar services, and a library incorporating an information centre. All these plus a weekly market on a Wednesday make Ongar an attractive place to visit. The town centre has a limited but regular bus service and has an adequate amount of car parking.

11.37a There are commercial activities within the town centre, including premises above shops and in small workshops. These make an important contribution to the vitality of the town centre by bringing people into the town to work and on business. Chipping Ongar remains a focal point for the surrounding rural area.

11.38a The town centre has experienced fluctuations in the number of vacant units. In the centre outside the primary frontage, vacancy rates have been as high as 13% and as low as 4% in recent years. In June 2004 vacancy rates in the town centre were 11%. These figures are higher than the other centres of the district and suggest that Chipping Ongar may be experiencing some problems with vitality and viability.

Buckhurst Hill

11.39a The district centre of Buckhurst Hill comprises two areas at each end of Queens Road. The larger area is at the eastern end and is a short walk from Buckhurst Hill station. The smaller part of the district centre is at the western end and comprises just under 40 units.

11.40a The eastern area is anchored by Waitrose, which is the main food store in the centre. Over the two areas, there is a range of shops and services, including fashion boutiques, hair and beauty salons, financial and professional services, and numerous restaurants and bars. Above the shops is a mix of residential and office space. Presently overall vacancy within the town centre is below 3%.

11.41a The larger area of the centre recently underwent an enhancement scheme, which was intended to create a better quality of environment and sense of place for people within the centre. It is important that future development respects the enhancement scheme and does not undermine its aims.

Main Town Centres: Their Function

11.42a While the principal, smaller and district centres should continue to offer a range of services and facilities, it is important for their long term vitality and viability that their main function continues to be retailing.

POLICY TC3 - TOWN CENTRE FUNCTION

IN THE PRINCIPAL, SMALLER AND DISTRICT CENTRES THE COUNCIL WILL:

- (i) PERMIT NEW RETAIL AND OTHER TOWN CENTRES USES THAT MAKE THE CENTRES ATTRACTIVE AND USEFUL PLACES TO SHOP, WORK AND VISIT THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND EVENING; AND**
- (ii) PERMIT RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS BUT NOT AT GROUND FLOOR LEVEL; AND**
- (iii) REFUSE PROPOSALS THAT WOULD PREJUDICE THE POTENTIAL OF UPPER FLOORS AS LIVING OR BUSINESS ACCOMMODATION; AND**
- (iv) REFUSE PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD RESULT IN STRETCHES OF 'DEAD' DAYTIME FRONTAGE.**

THE COUNCIL WILL REFUSE ANY PROPOSAL THAT COULD HAVE A DETRIMENTAL IMPACT UPON THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF THESE CENTRES.

11.43a In accordance with PPG13, the Council's aim is to ensure that all proposals for retail, employment, leisure facilities and other services are primarily sited at the

most accessible locations in the district - e.g. the town centres. Although the importance of housing as a town centre function is recognised, it should not be at the expense of other uses especially at ground floor level. Part 3: Class F of the General Permitted Development Order (1995) allows for some change of use of upper floors of shops between office and residential use without the need for planning permission. Where planning permission is required, the upper floors of shops that have been vacant for at least two years, and where it is demonstrated that they would be unlikely to be occupied in the foreseeable future, may be considered as suitable for conversion to residential use. The development of other sites within the town centres for residential use will be resisted where it is felt that this could impact upon the future vitality and viability of a centre by, for example, reducing the mix of facilities and employment opportunities.

11.44a The Council promotes vibrant and interesting town centres. Food and drink outlets can add to the range of uses offered within town centres, but they should not undermine the daytime economy and vitality of centres. Proposals that could create dead frontage during the daytime will therefore be resisted. This will include restaurants, bistros and takeaways that only open for limited hours in the evening. Where appropriate, the Council may secure a legal agreement requiring new food and drink outlets to remain open for adequate periods during the daytime.

Non-retail Frontage

11.45a PPS6 urges local authorities to encourage diversification of town centre uses. This is because different but complementary uses can widen the range and quality of activities, thereby making town centres more attractive to local residents, shoppers and visitors and hence contributing to their vitality and viability.

11.46a This section deals with the provision for 'non-retail' commercial uses in town centres. 'Non-retail' uses can undermine the retail function by:

- reducing the amount of retail floorspace;
- attracting fewer people than shops; and
- attracting people to the centre for only that one purpose.

11.47a There are five types of non-retail uses usually located in town centres:

- (a) Class A2 (financial and professional services). They comprise banks, building societies, estate agents' offices, betting shops;
- (b) Class A3 – restaurants and cafes (although internet cafes are included in class A1);
- (c) Class A4 – drinking establishments, including public houses and wine bars;
- (d) Class A5 - hot food takeaways; and
- (e) all other non-retail uses such as community facilities, hotels, launderettes and places of worship.

11.48a These five types complement and enhance the function of, and are therefore appropriate in, a town centre. But in order to ensure that they establish to optimum effect, it is necessary to control their extent and location whilst also allowing sufficient scope for their presence in order both to cater for market demand and diversify the function of centres.

11.49a Within each town centre the Council will seek to ensure that the uses in the key frontage reflect the need to offer a retail experience. 'Key retail frontage' is

defined as the minimum amount of frontage that the local planning authority considers needs to be maintained to ensure that the town centre retains its position in the hierarchy. Key frontages, as delineated on the Alterations Proposals Map, have at least 70% retail uses and have no more than two adjoining non-retail uses anywhere in their length.

POLICY TC4 - NON-RETAIL FRONTAGE

THE COUNCIL WILL GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR NEW NON-RETAIL USES AT GROUND FLOOR LEVEL WITHIN KEY RETAIL FRONTAGE (AS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP) PROVIDED IT WOULD NOT RESULT IN:

- (i) NON RETAIL FRONTAGE EXCEEDING 30%; AND**
- (ii) MORE THAN TWO ADJACENT NON-RETAIL USES, REGARDLESS OF SHOP FRONTAGE WIDTH**

11.50a Retail function will be safeguarded in each town centre by ensuring at least 70% of the ground floor key retail frontage (measured in linear metres) must be kept in retail use. The Council will refuse planning permission for any applications that would result in the 30% non-retail limit being exceeded.

11.51a In calculating the total retail frontage, the frontages of doorways, alleyways, archways and rear access to upper storeys will be included, as they contribute to activity at ground floor level. Regarding criterion (ii), an adjacent use includes properties that are separated by an alleyway, rear access, doorway or archway, but does not include properties separated by a public road.

11.52a Within areas not defined as key frontage in principal, smaller and district centres, development proposals, including those for change of use, will be assessed in accordance with other policies of this plan, and in particular policies TC1 and TC3.

11.53a Where new uses are permitted at ground floor level in town centres, in accordance with policy TC4, it is important that they contribute to the vitality of the street scene. This can usually be achieved through a window display although it is not always necessary (e.g. restaurants). The following policy will therefore apply: -

POLICY TC5 - WINDOW DISPLAYS

THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE DEVELOPMENTS AT GROUND FLOOR LEVEL IN TOWN CENTRES (IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP) TO INCORPORATE A WINDOW DISPLAY OR GENERAL APPEARANCE WHICH SERVES TO MAINTAIN OR, WHERE APPROPRIATE, ENHANCE THE RETAIL CHARACTER OR VITALITY OF THE CENTRE.

11.54a This policy will apply to all uses except dwellings. It will therefore apply to new shop units, some of which (particularly supermarkets) have a very drab appearance, often totally lacking interest or life.

11.55a A window display is an important element of the shop front facades, and therefore reference should also be made to policy DBE12 in particular and relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Local Centres, Corner Shops and Village Shops

11.56a In addition to the principal, smaller and district centres, the Council considers it important that a network of local shopping facilities is provided throughout the district. Local centres, corner shops and village shops serve a useful function in meeting shopping needs. They are particularly important in terms of reducing car journeys, providing a convenient service for those who are less mobile (especially elderly and disabled people, and families with small children), and act as an important social hub for rural communities. Ideally, every village ought to have at least one shop that provides for essential local needs.

11.57a The Council has limited influence over the type of goods that a particular shop sells but can prevent the change to a different class of use and hence resist the loss of a shopping unit. The following policy will therefore be used to protect the existing shopping facilities for the benefit of local residents.

POLICY TC6 - LOCAL CENTRES AND CORNER AND VILLAGE SHOPS

THE COUNCIL WILL NOT GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE CHANGE OF USE TO ANY NON-RETAIL USE OF SHOP PREMISES WHICH ARE IN THE LOCAL CENTRES IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, CORNER SHOPS AND VILLAGE SHOPS UNLESS IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT:

- (i) THERE IS NO MARKET DEMAND FOR A RETAIL USE; OR**
- (ii) THE SERVICE PROVIDED IS TO BE CONTINUED IN ANOTHER LOCATION IN THE VILLAGE OR LOCALITY; OR**
- (iii) THE NEW USE WOULD MEET AN IDENTIFIED COMMUNITY NEED.**

11.58a Where it has been demonstrated that there is no market demand for a shop, and the Council considers that the shopping facility provides a focus for the local community, then policy CF12 must also be referred to.

11.59a Where a service use (e.g. a doctors' surgery which is in accordance with Policy CF2) is proposed, the Council will expect evidence of local need or other exceptional circumstances (such as the premises having been vacant and on the market for retail use at an appropriate price, and with no takers for a long period) to be submitted in support of the application before it may be considered acceptable.

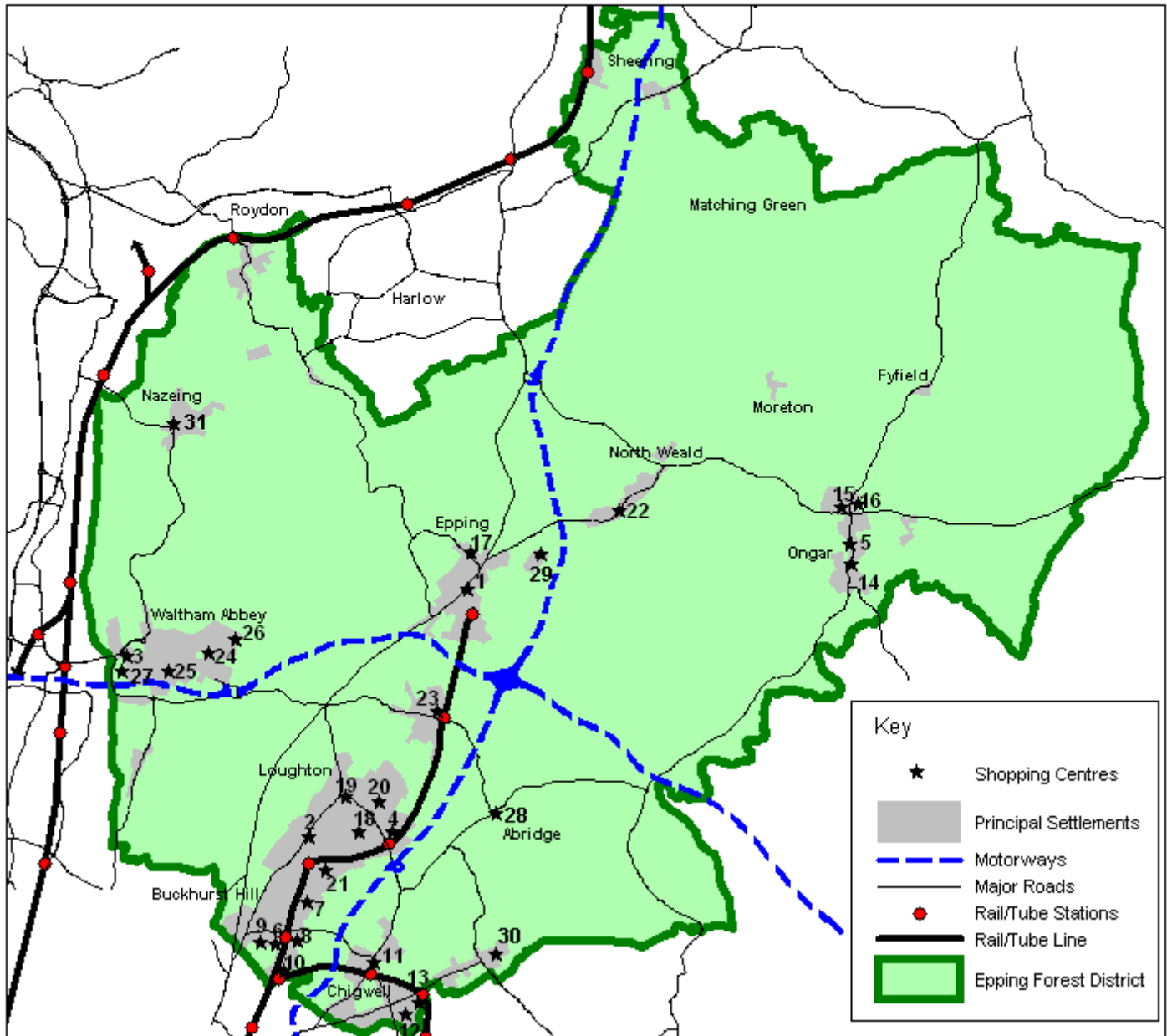
11.60a A permanent shop performs a more complete role for the local community than alternatives such as a mobile shop. The Council will therefore encourage the establishment of village shops in appropriate circumstances, particularly in a village where a shop or similar facility has previously been lost.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

**Figure 11
Shopping Centres in Epping Forest District**

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Principal Centres

1. Epping
2. Loughton High Road
3. Waltham Abbey

Smaller Centres

4. Loughton Broadway

5. Chipping Ongar

District Centres

6. Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill

Local Centres

Buckhurst Hill:

7. Loughton Way; 8. Lower Queens Road
9. Queens Road West; 10. Station Way

Chigwell:

11. Brook Parade; 12. Limes Farm; 13. Manor Road

Chipping Ongar:

14. Lower High Street; 15. St Peter's Avenue

16. Fyfield Road

Epping:

17. Lindsey Street

Loughton:

18. Borders Lane; 19. Goldings Hill/Lower Road
20. Pyrles Lane; 21. Roding Road/Valley Hill

North Weald:

22. High Road

Theydon Bois:

23. Coppice Row/Forest Drive

Waltham Abbey:

24. Ninefields; 25. Roundhills
26. Upshire Road; 27. Highbridge Retail Park

Others:

28. Abridge; 29. Coopersale; 30. Chigwell Row
31. Nazeing

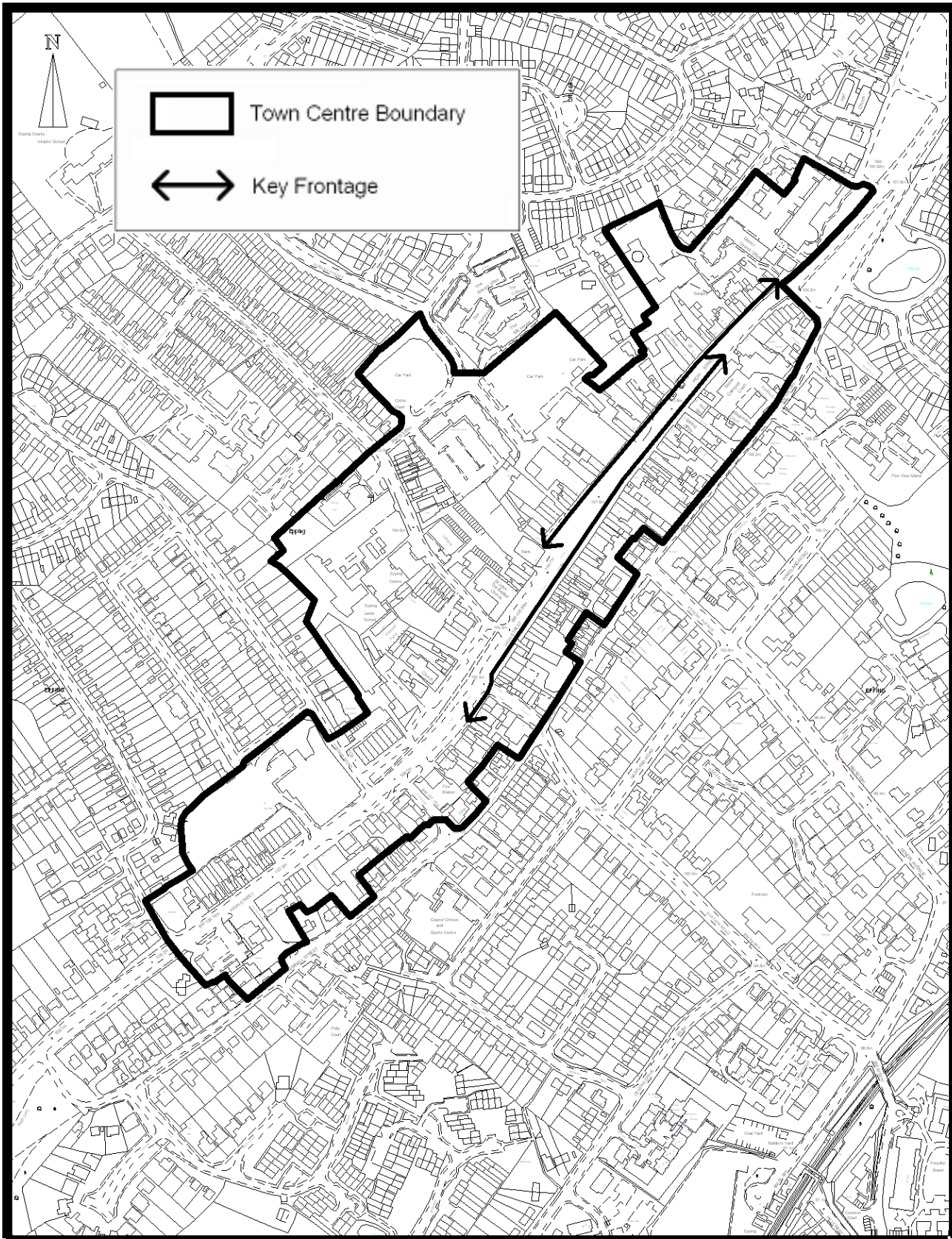


Figure 11.1
Epping Town Centre
Scale 1:5,000

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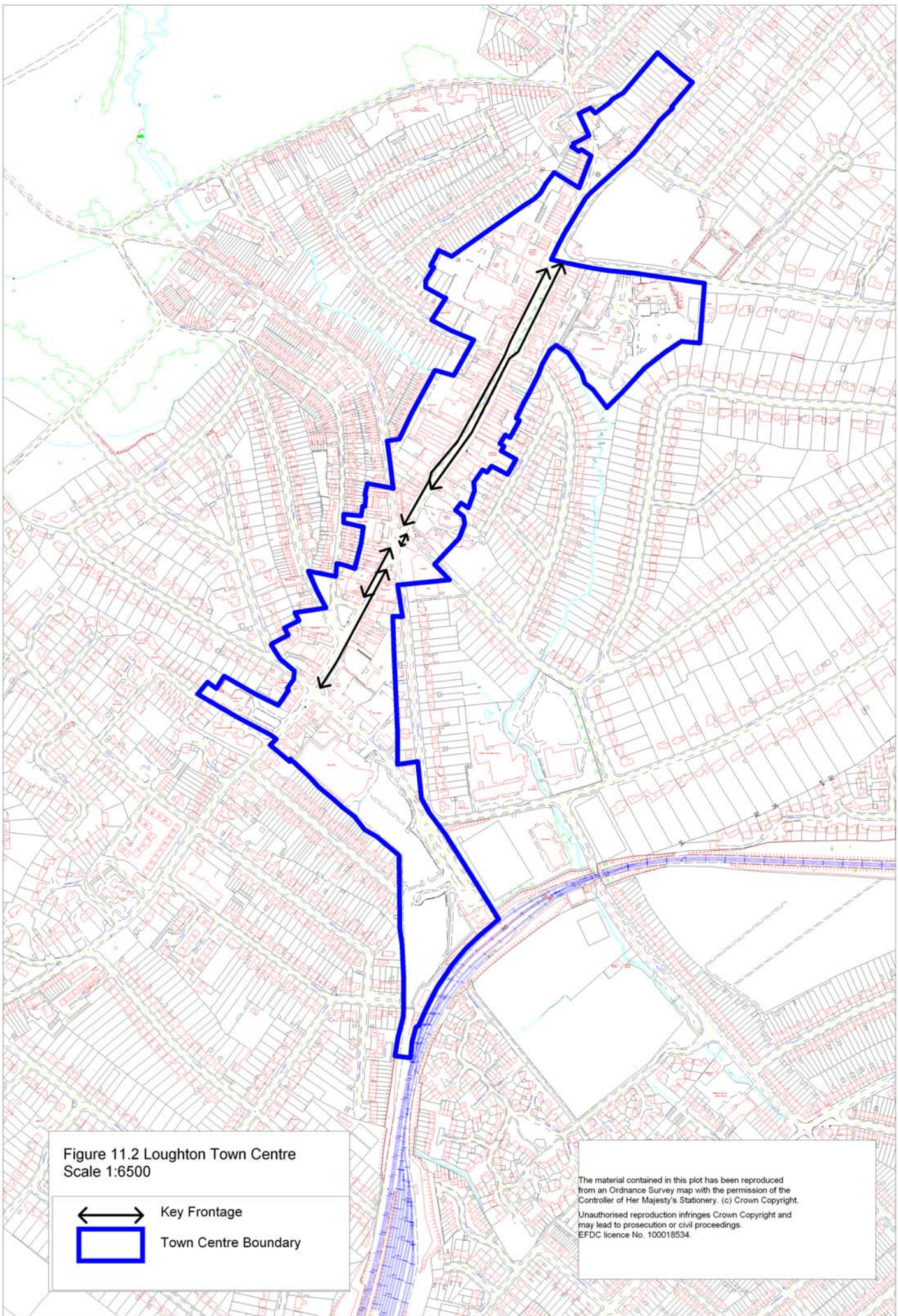
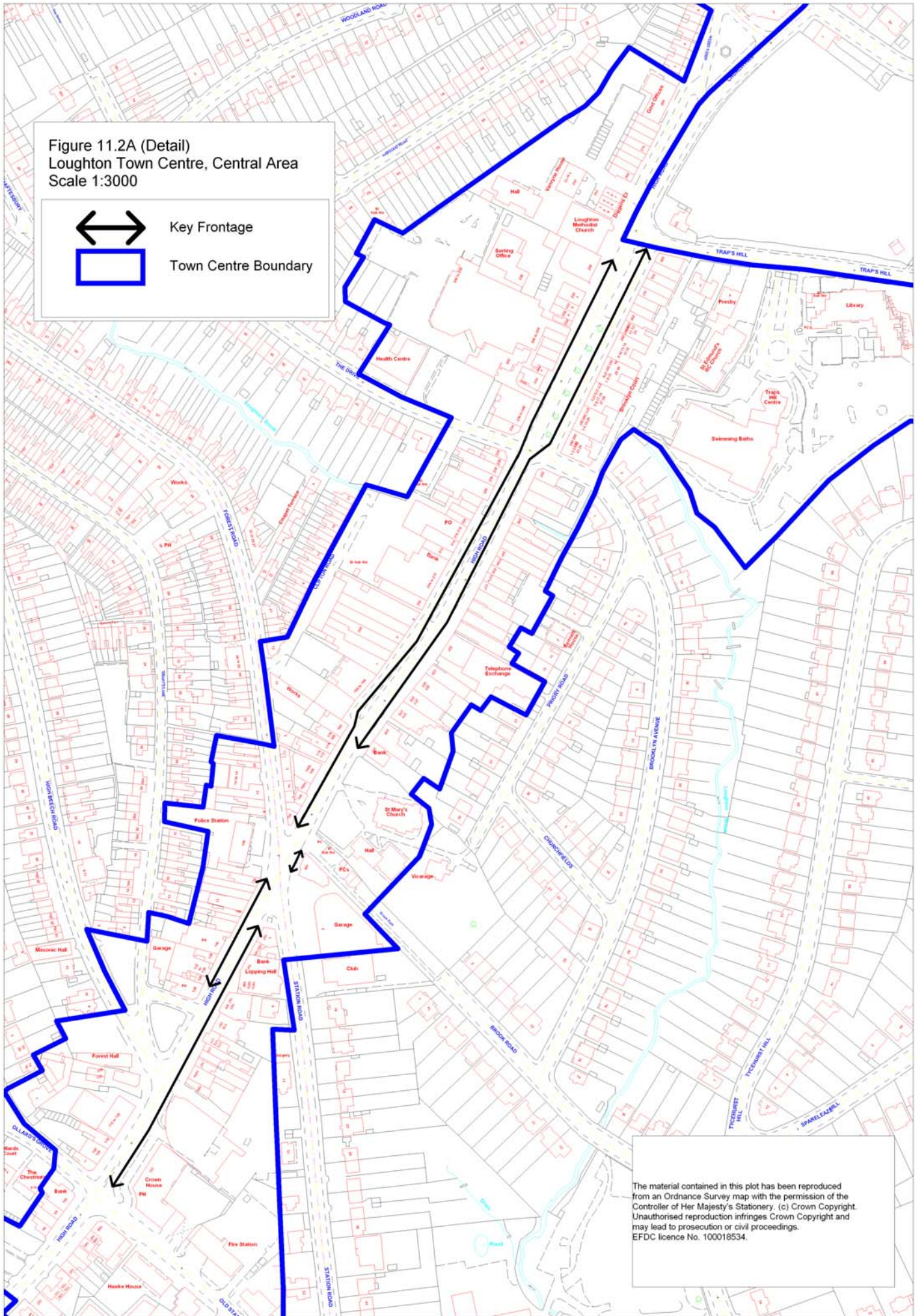


Figure 11.2 Loughton Town Centre
Scale 1:6500

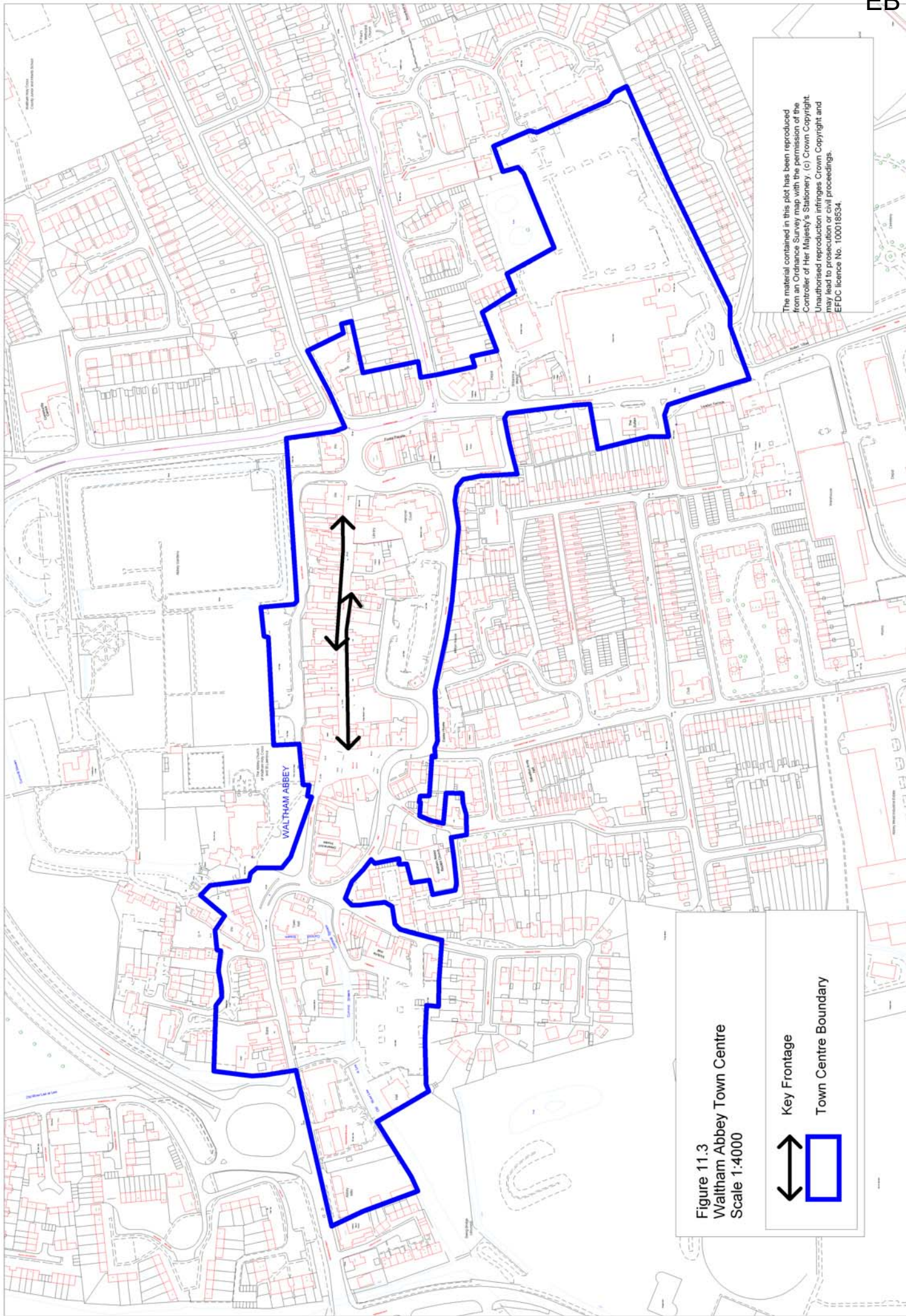
-  Key Frontage
-  Town Centre Boundary

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Figure 11.2A (Detail)
Loughton Town Centre, Central Area
Scale 1:3000



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Figure 11.3
Waltham Abbey Town Centre
Scale 1:4000

Key Frontage
Town Centre Boundary

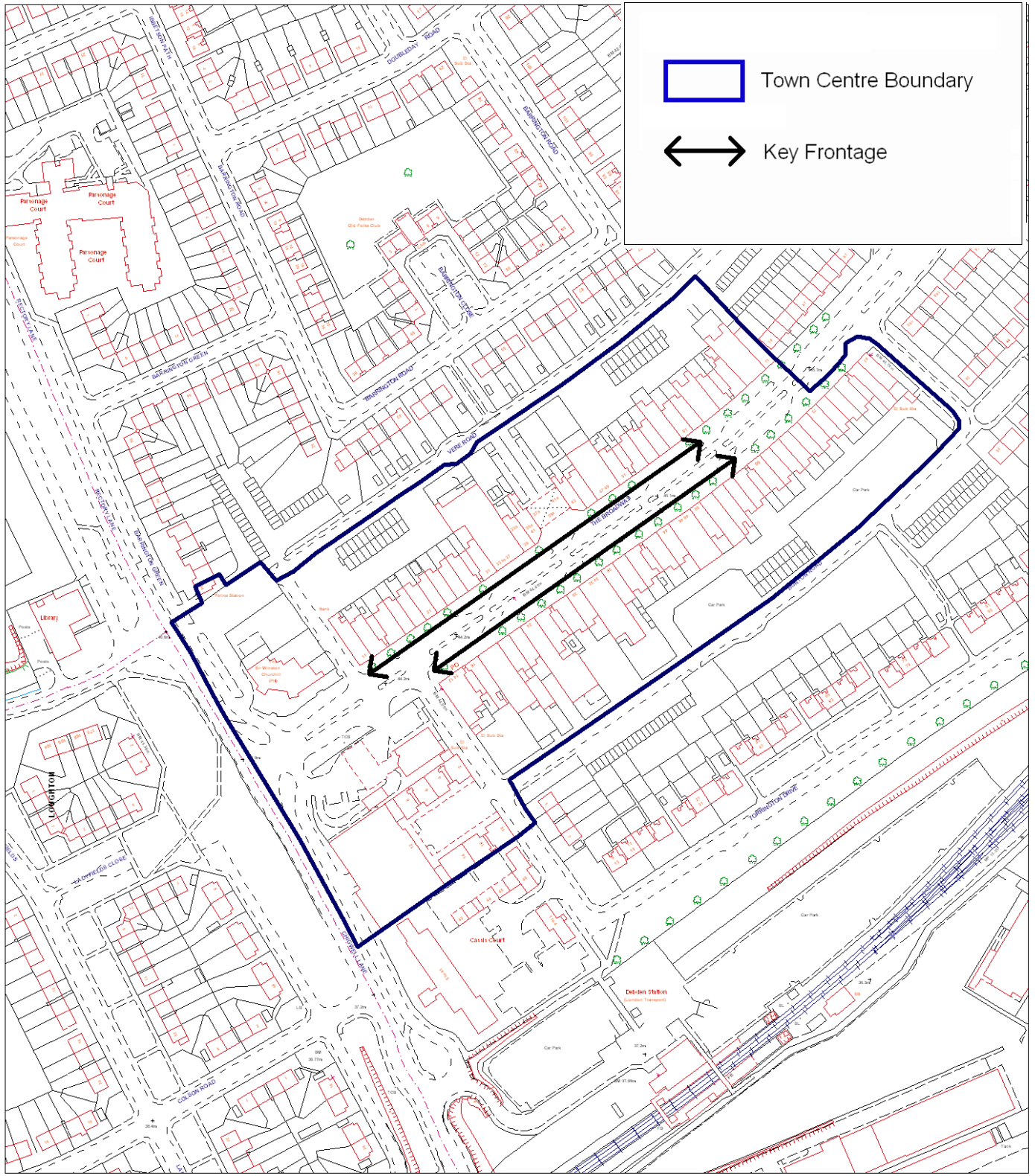


Figure 11.4
Loughton: Broadway Town Centre
Scale 1:2500

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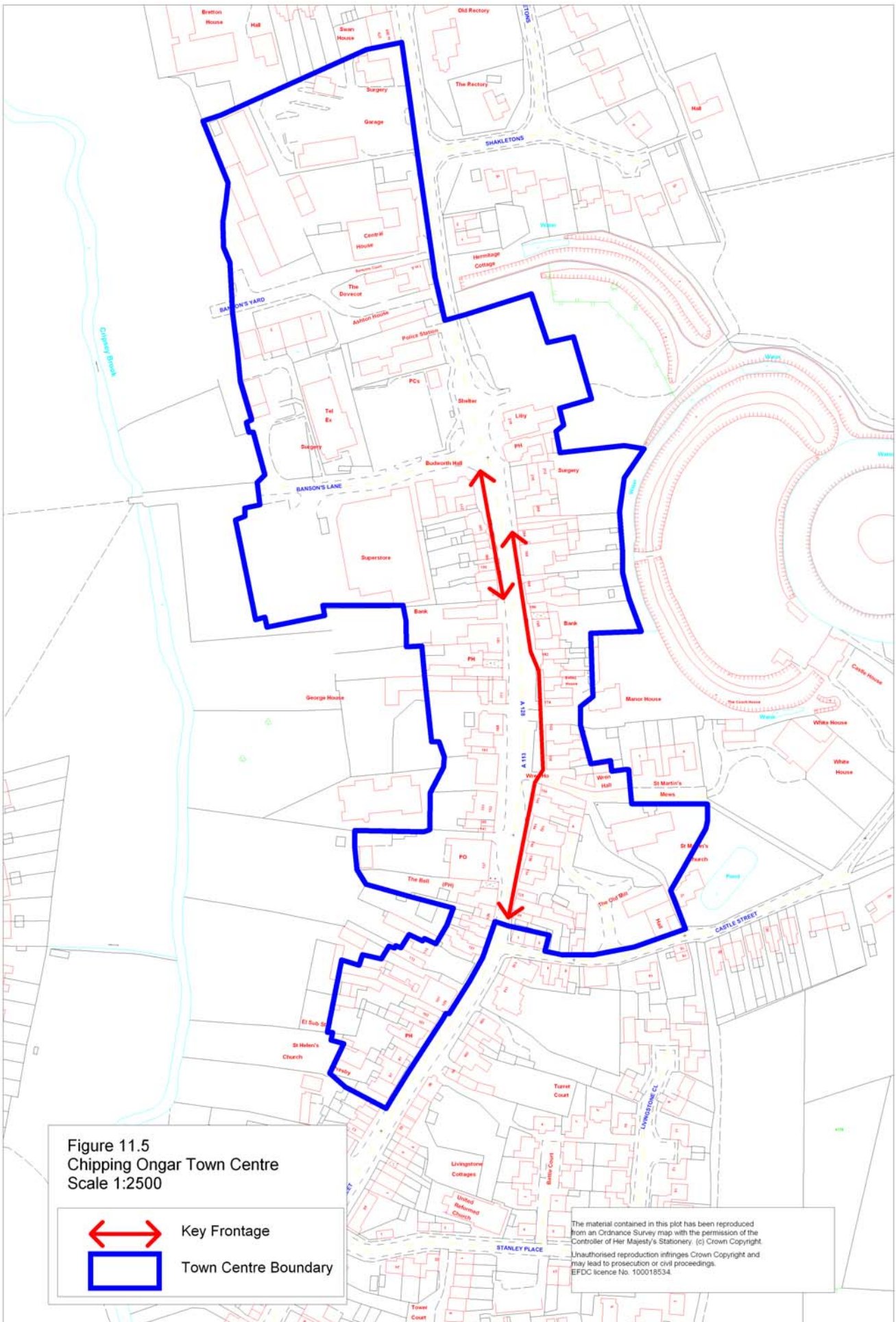


Figure 11.5
 Chipping Ongar Town Centre
 Scale 1:2500

 Key Frontage
 Town Centre Boundary

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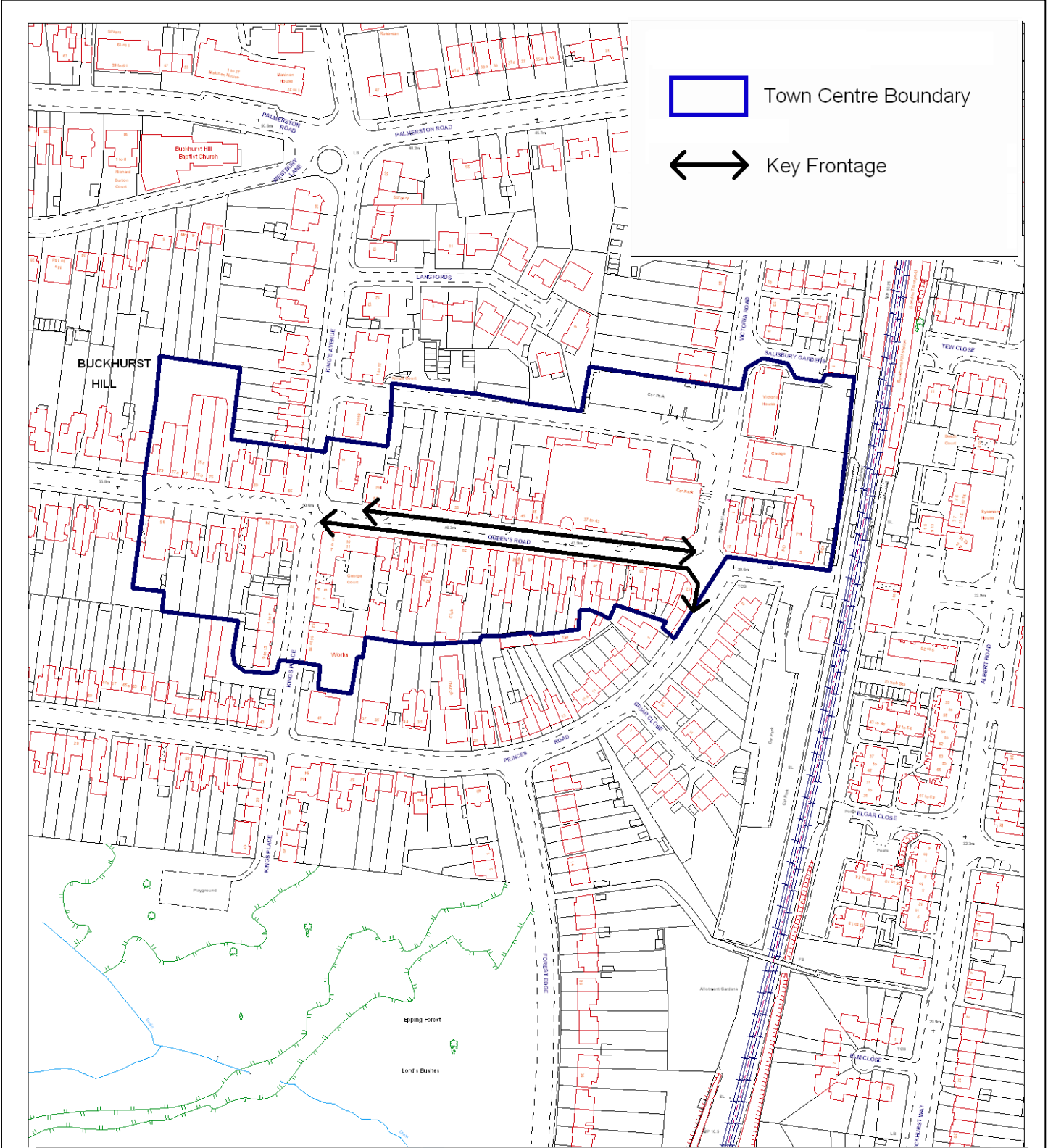


Figure 11.6
Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill
Scale 1:2500

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Figure 11.7
Loughton Way, Buckhurst Hill
Scale 1:1250

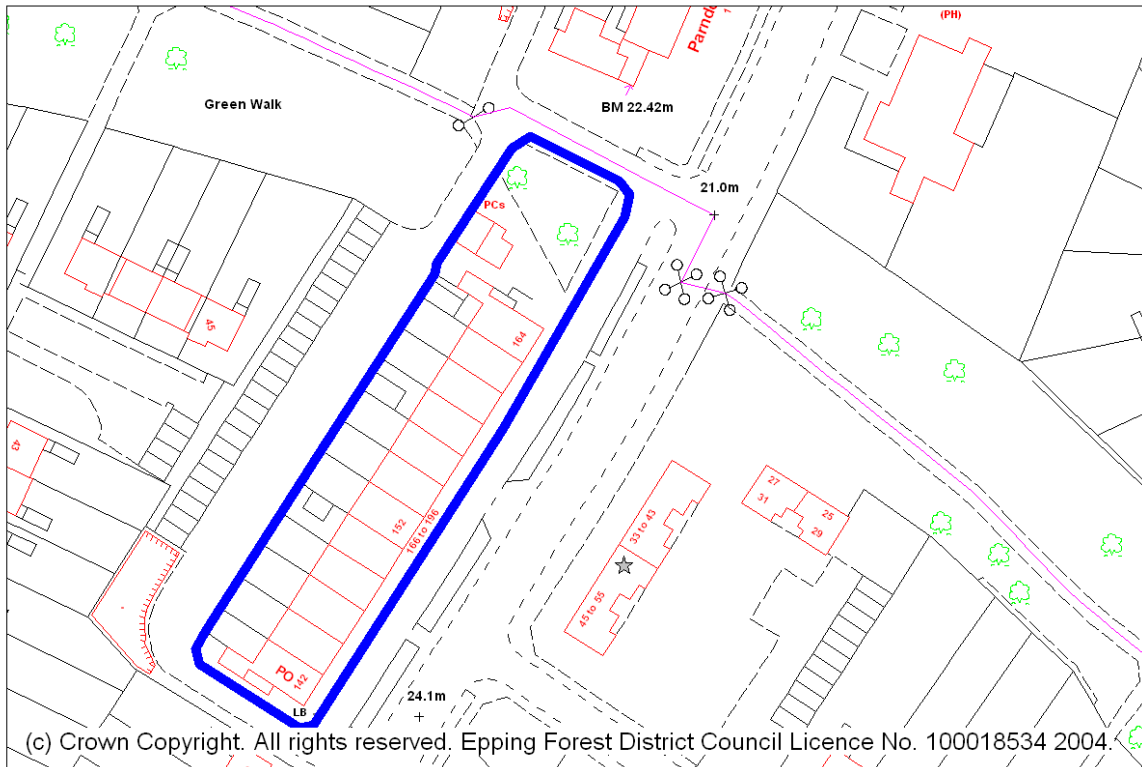


Figure 11.8
Lower Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill
Scale 1:1250

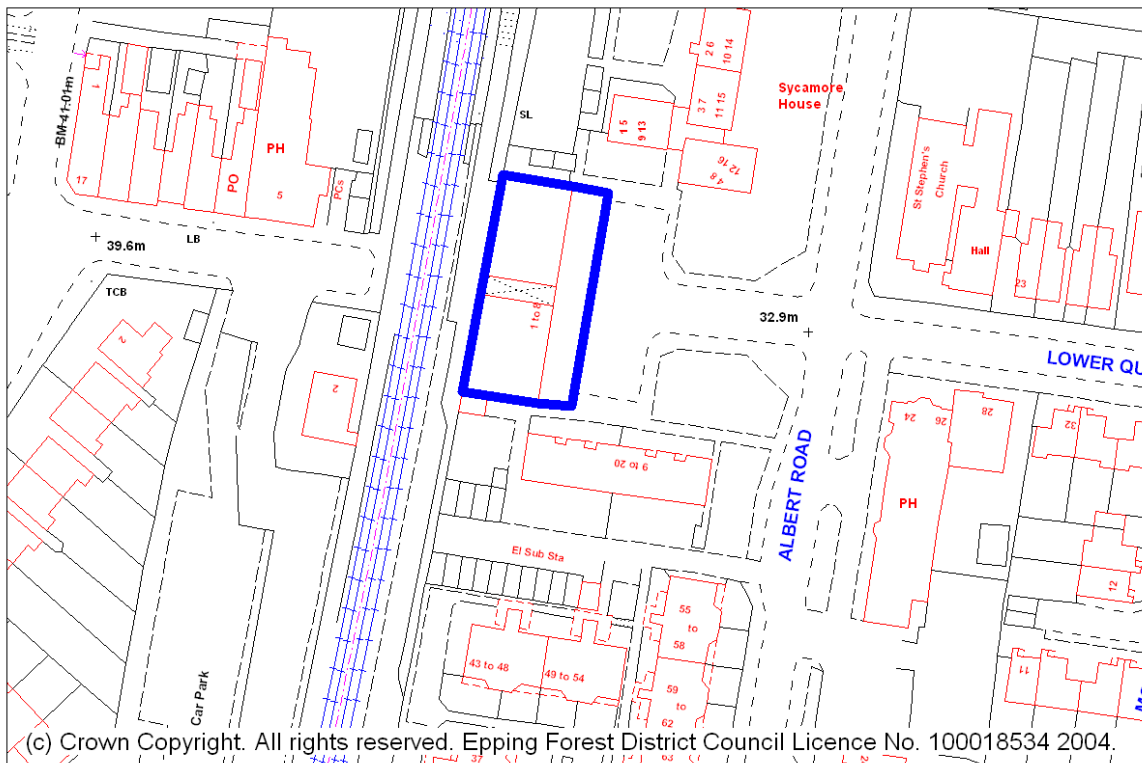
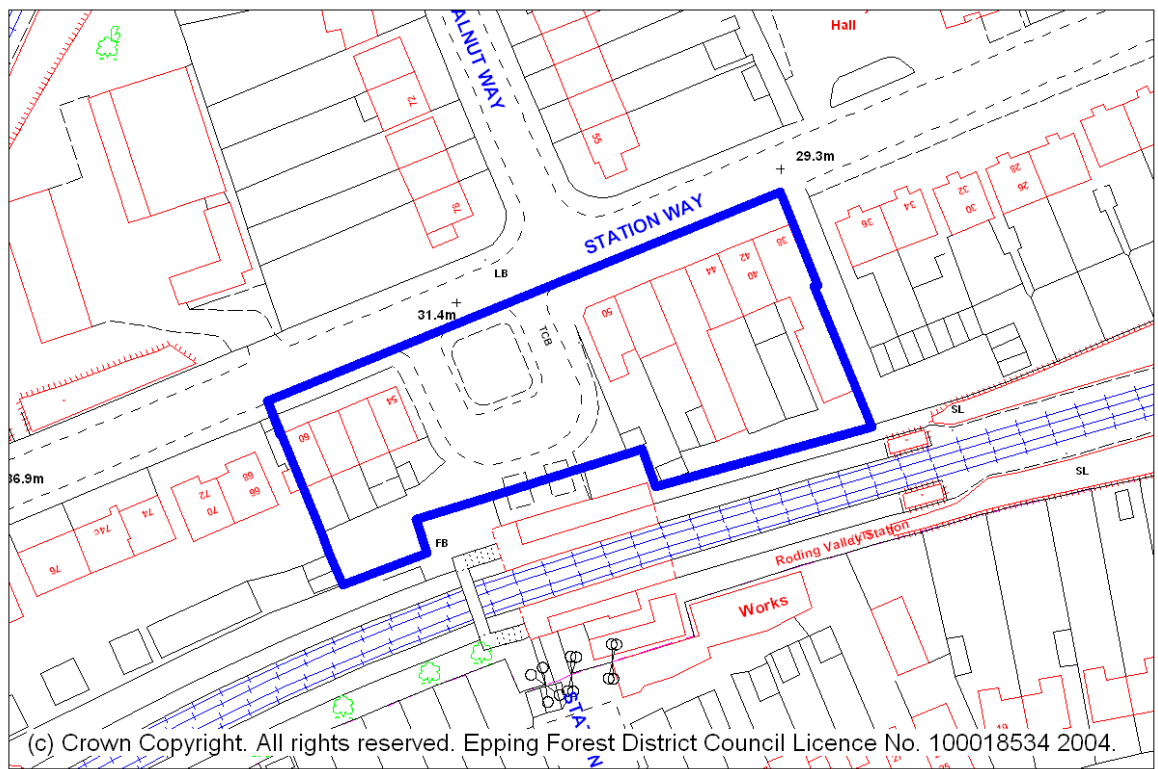


Figure 11.9
Queens Road West, Buckhurst Hill
Scale 1:1250



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Figure 11.10
Station Way, Buckhurst Hill
Scale 1:1250



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Figure 11.11
Brook Parade, Chigwell
Scale 1:2500

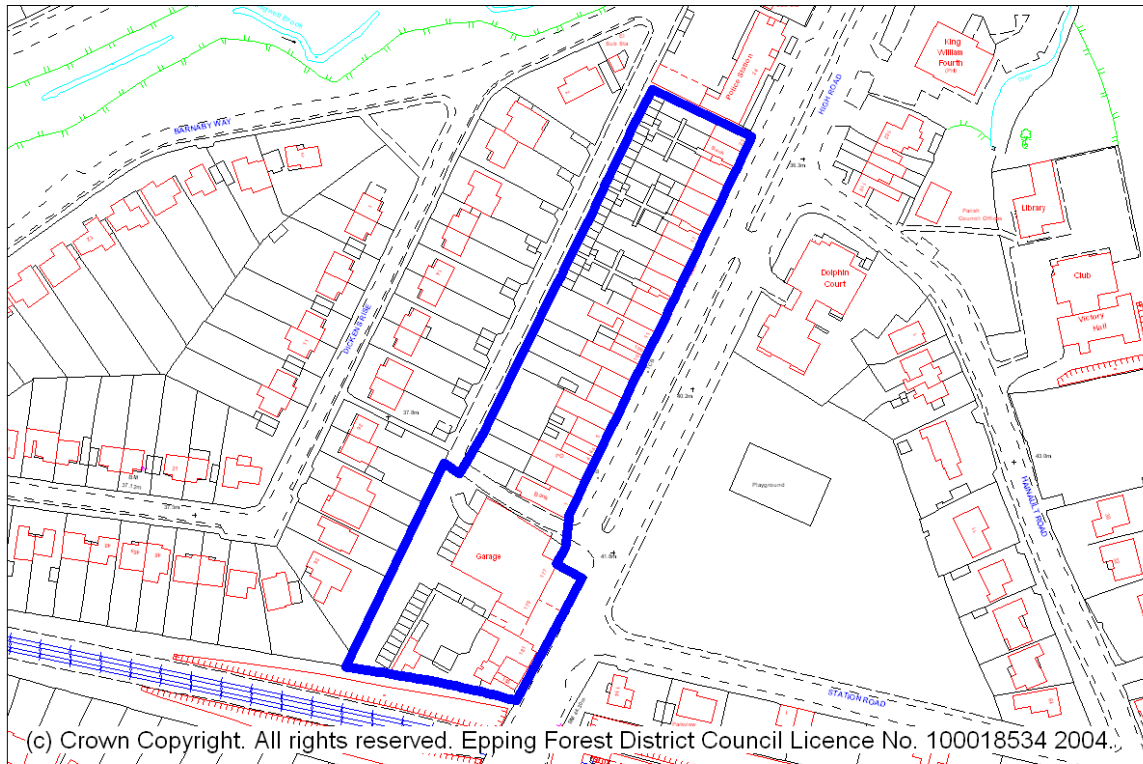


Figure 11.12
Limes Farm, Chigwell
Scale 1:1250

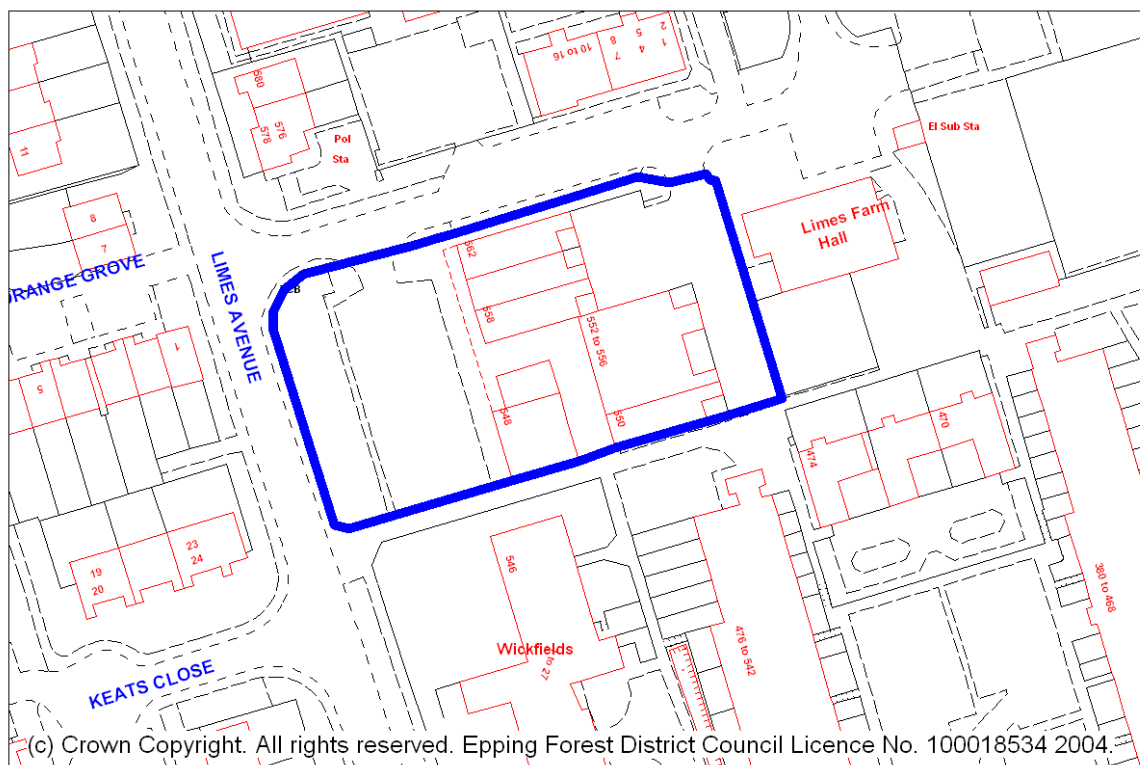


Figure 11.13
Manor Road, Chigwell
Scale 1:1250

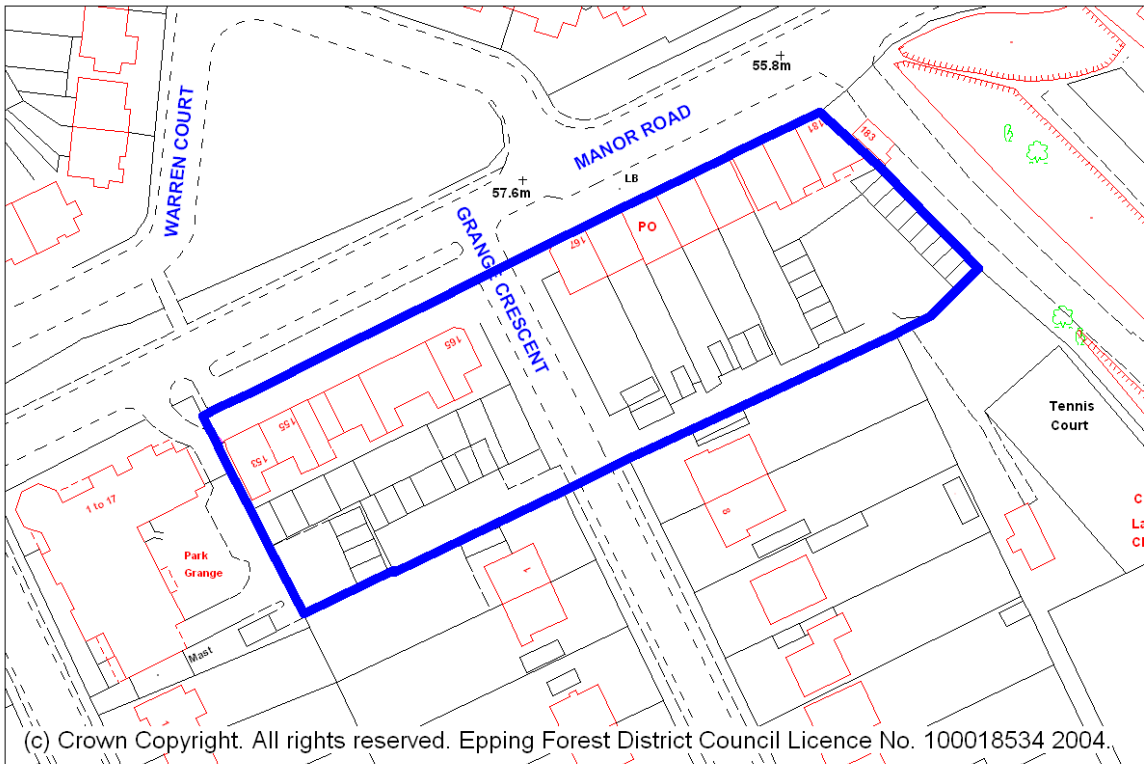


Figure 11.14
Lower High Street, Chipping Ongar
Scale 1:1250

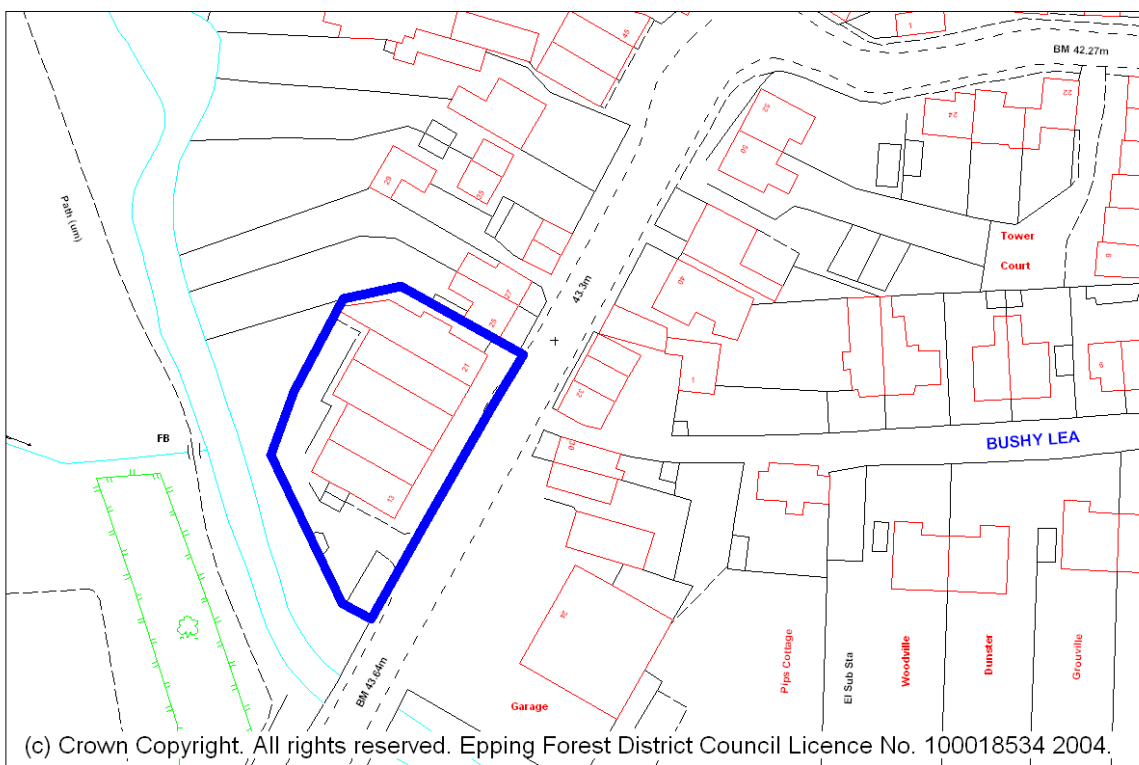


Figure 11.15
St Peter's Avenue, Chipping Ongar
Scale 1:1250

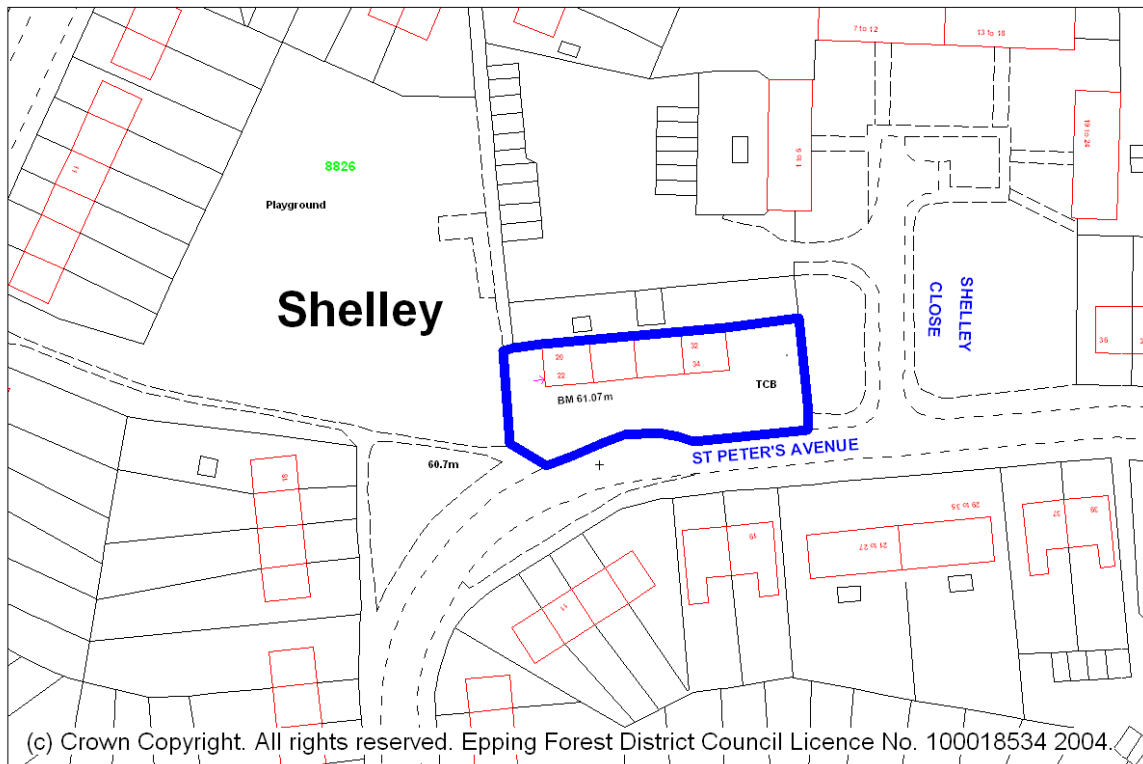


Figure 11.16
Fyfield Road, Chipping Ongar
Scale 1:1250

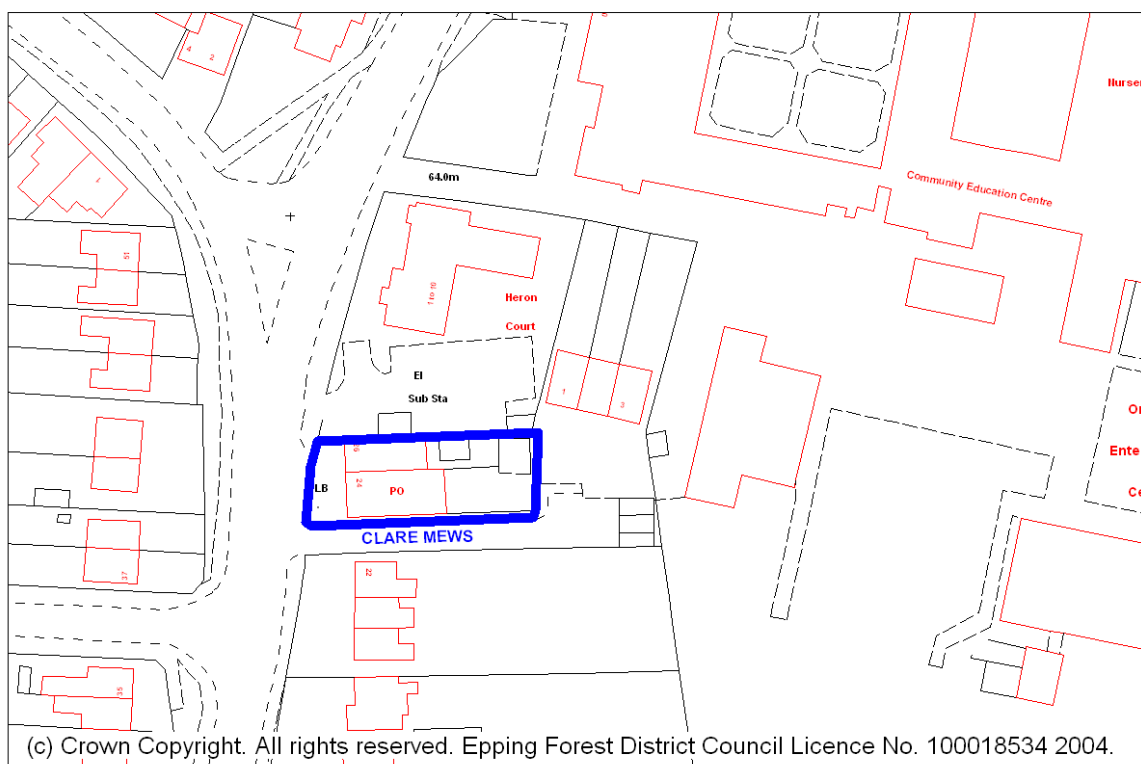


Figure 11.17
Lindsey Street, Epping
Scale 1:1250

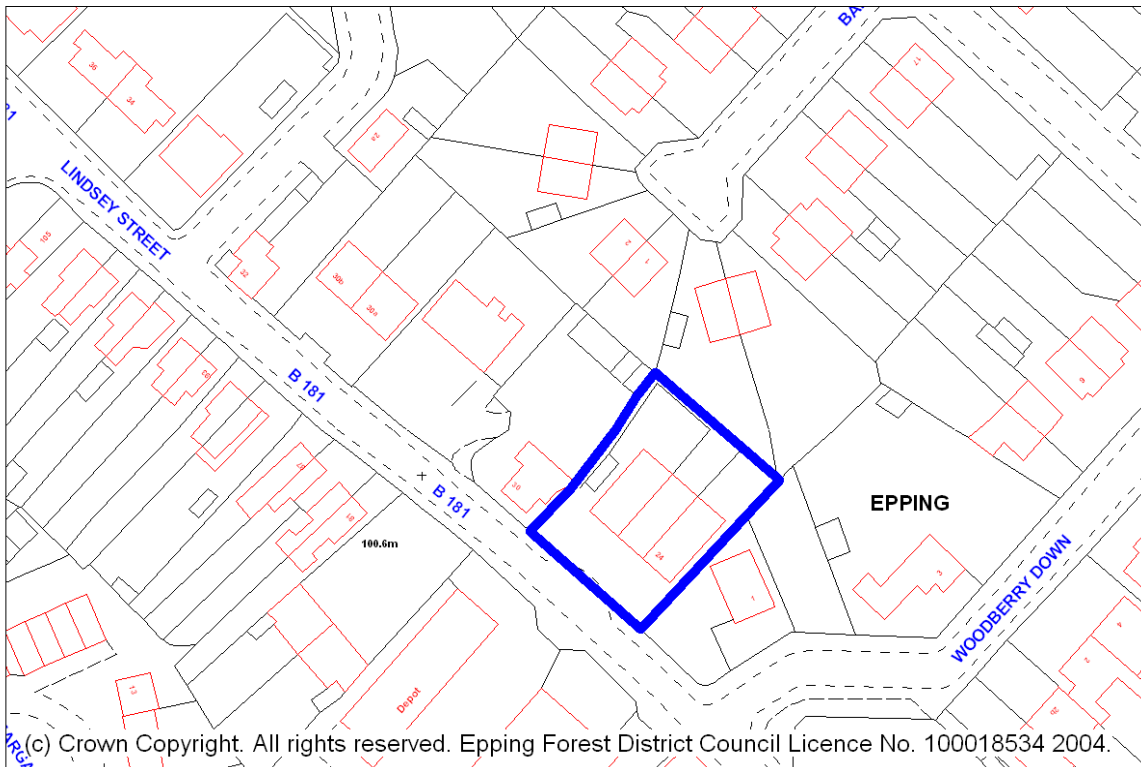


Figure 11.18
Borders Lane, Loughton
Scale 1:1250

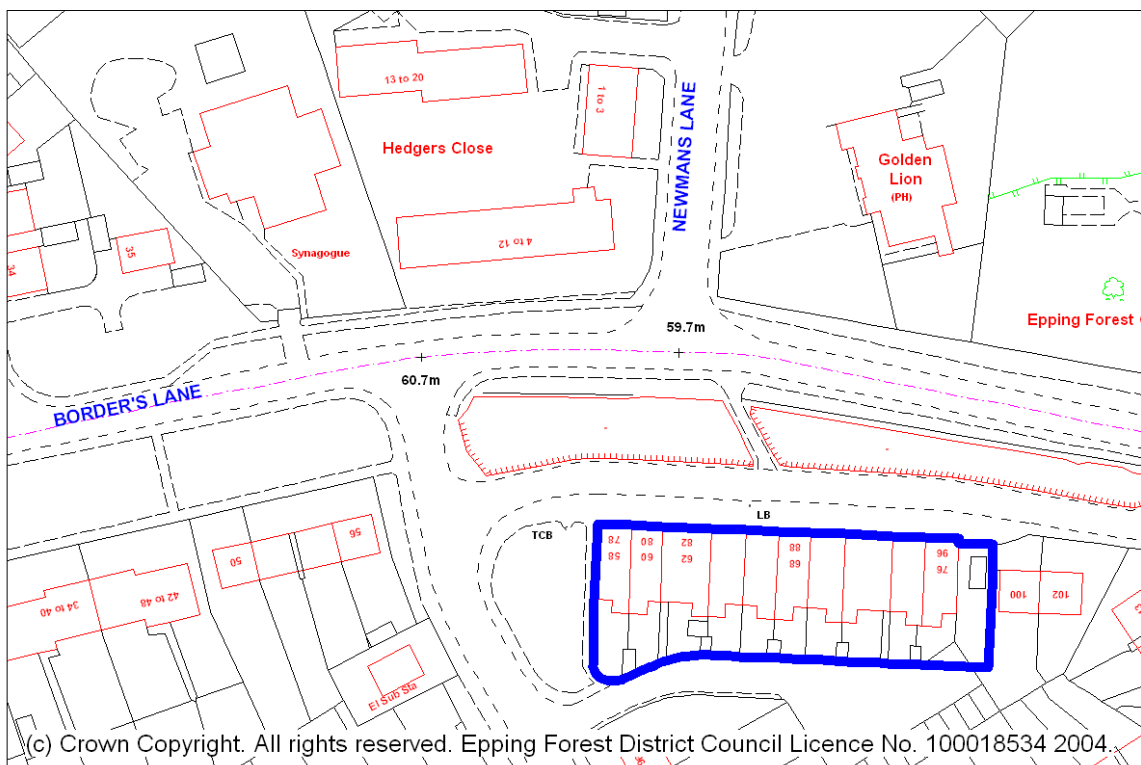


Figure 11.19
Goldings Hill/Lower Road, Loughton
Scale 1:2500

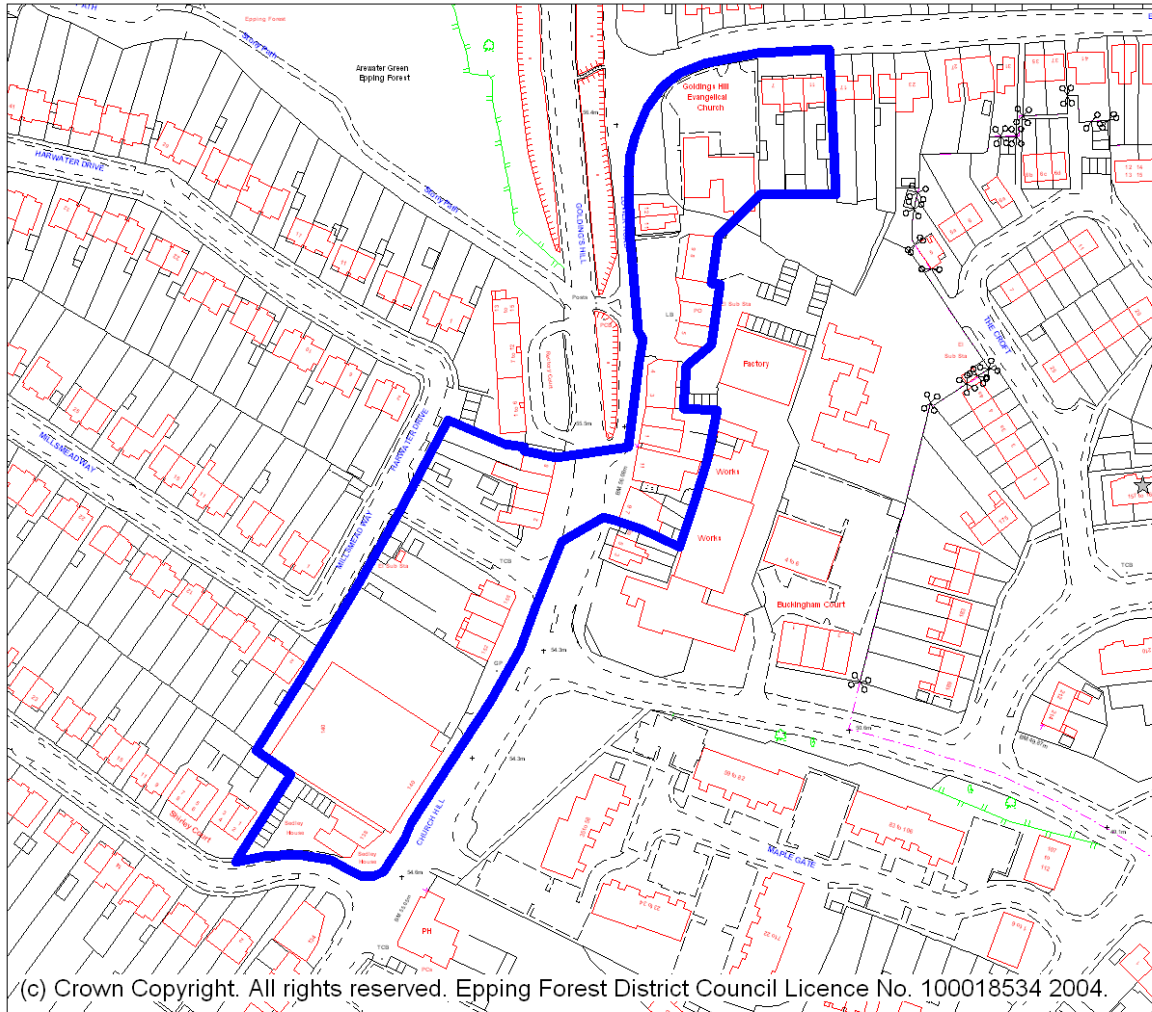


Figure 11.20
Pyrles Lane, Loughton
Scale 1:1250

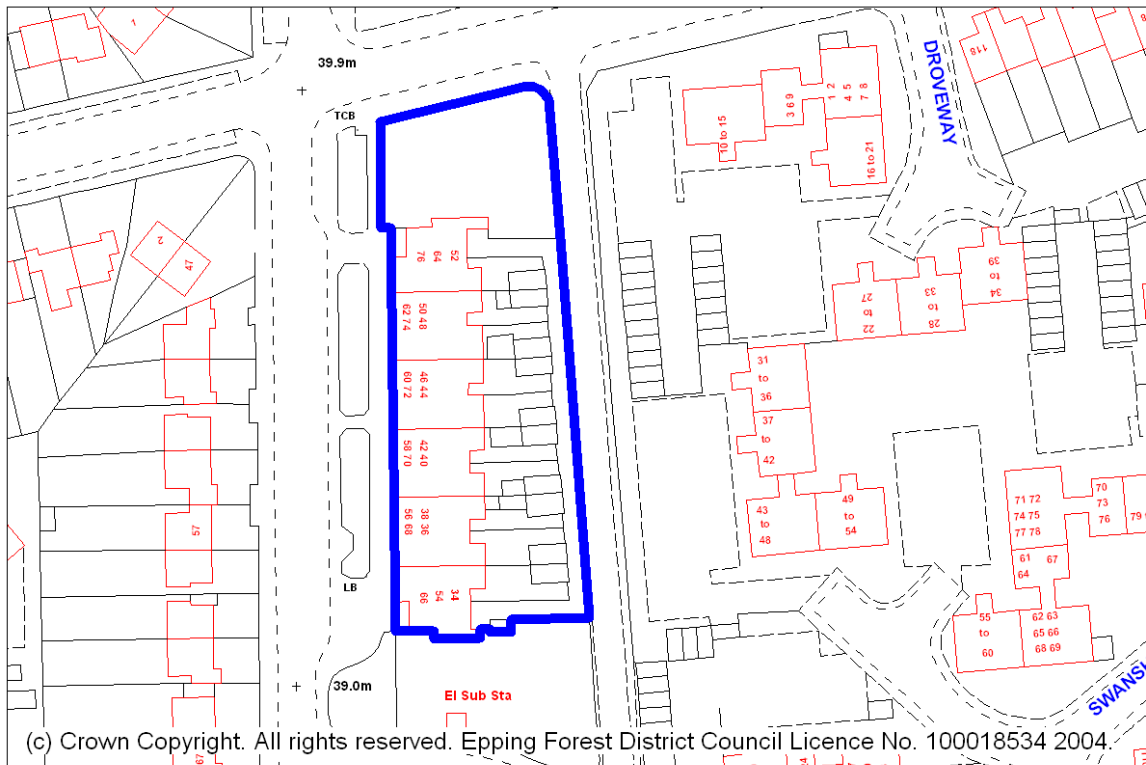


Figure 11.21
Roding Road/Valley Hill, Loughton
Scale 1:1250

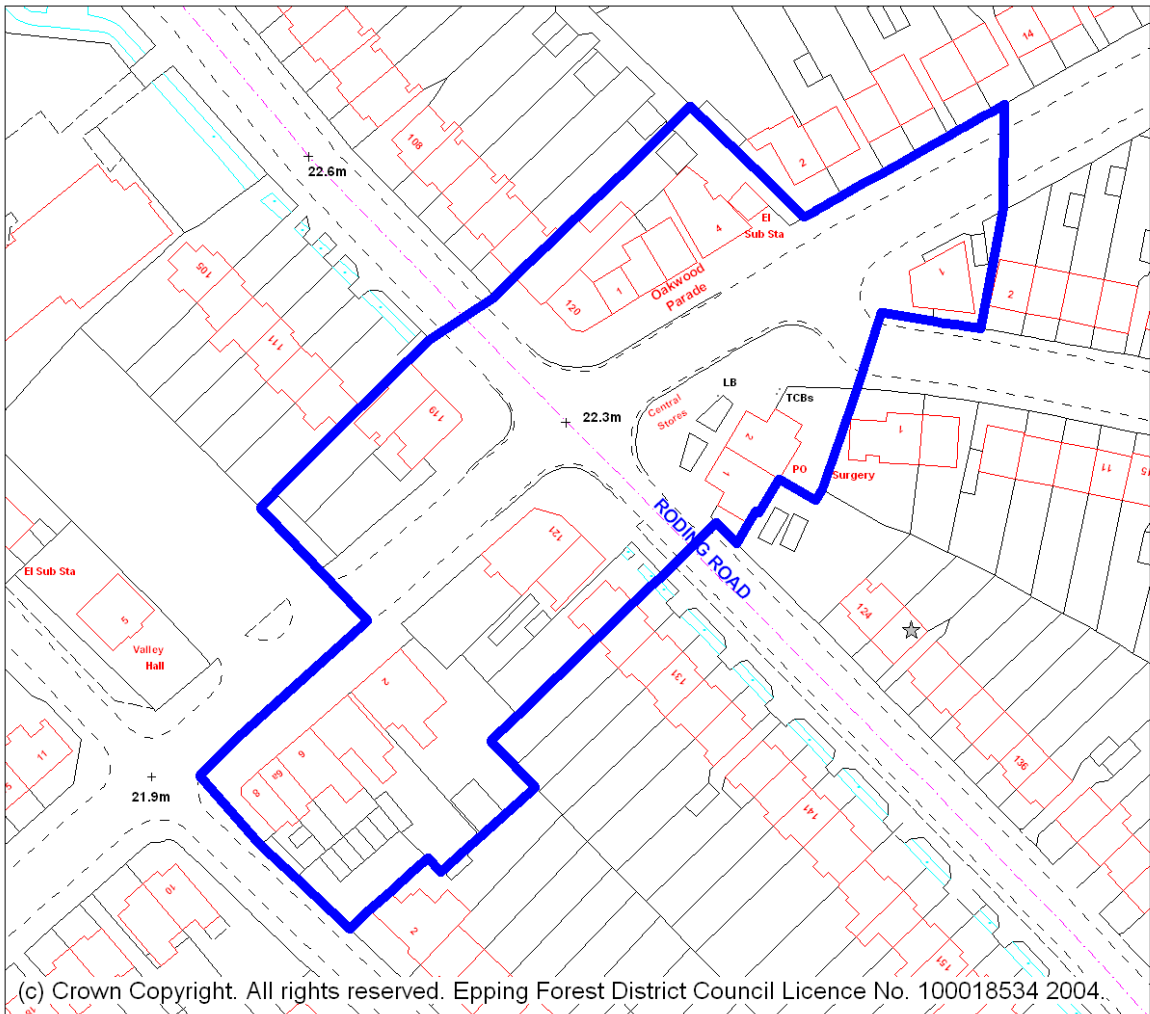


Figure 11.22
High Road, North Weald
Scale 1:2500

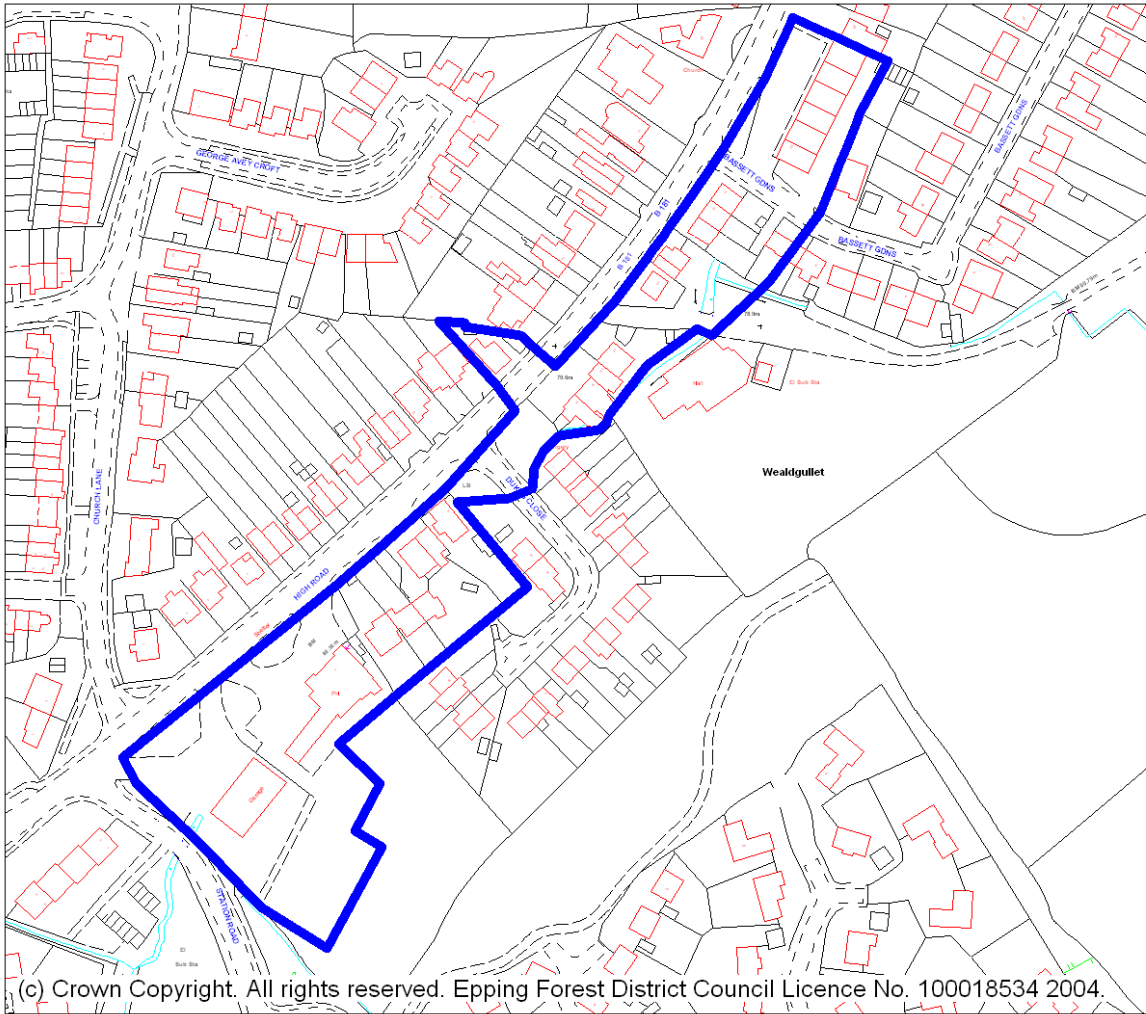


Figure 11.23
Coppice Row/Forest Drive, Theydon Bois
Scale 1:2500

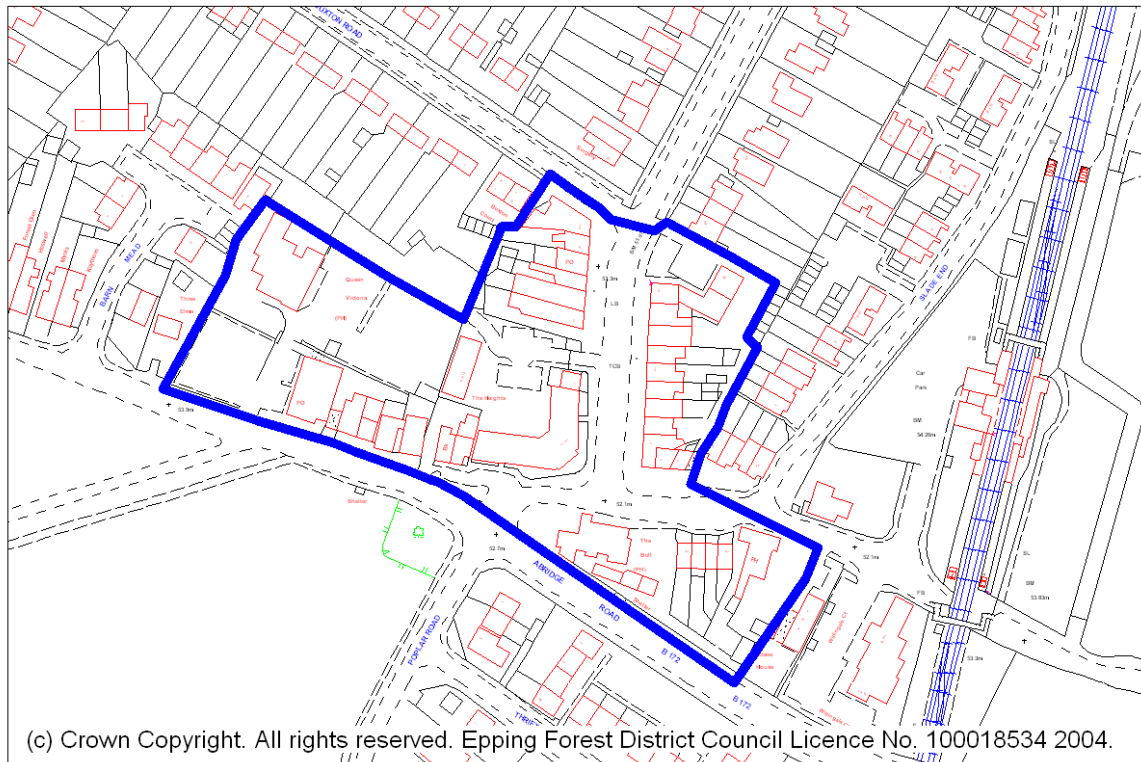


Figure 11.24
Ninefields, Waltham Abbey
Scale 1:1250

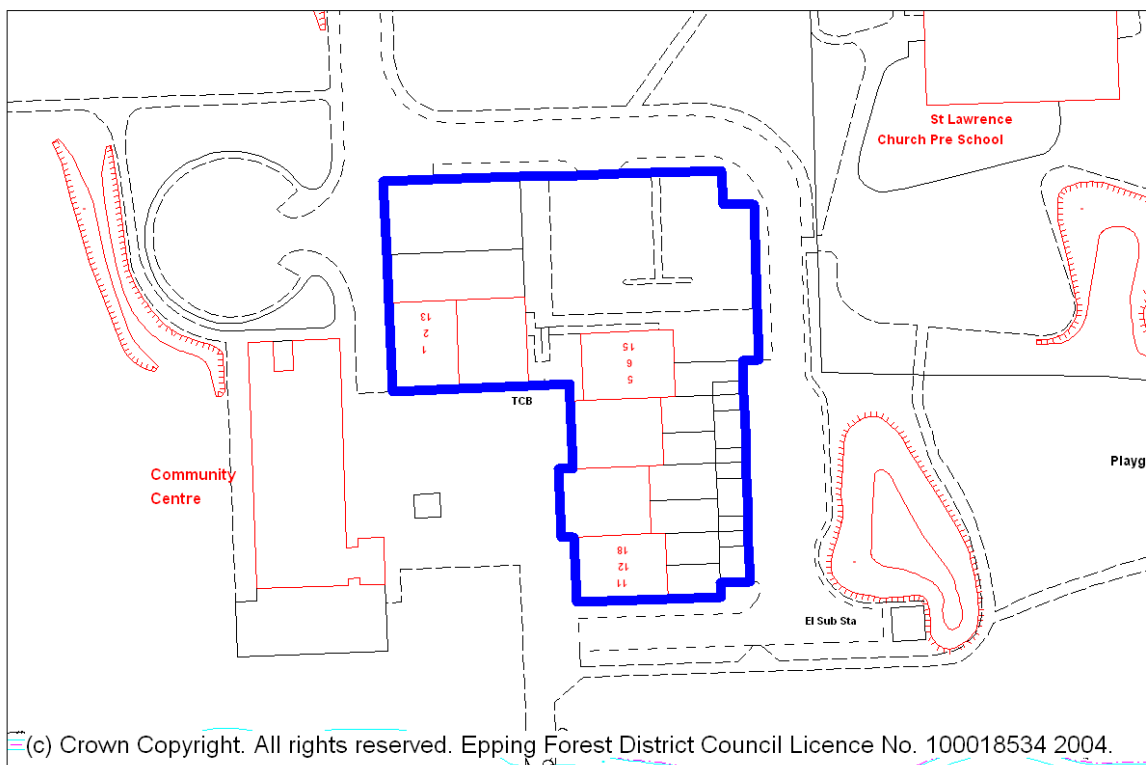


Figure 11.25
Roundhills, Waltham Abbey
Scale 1:1250

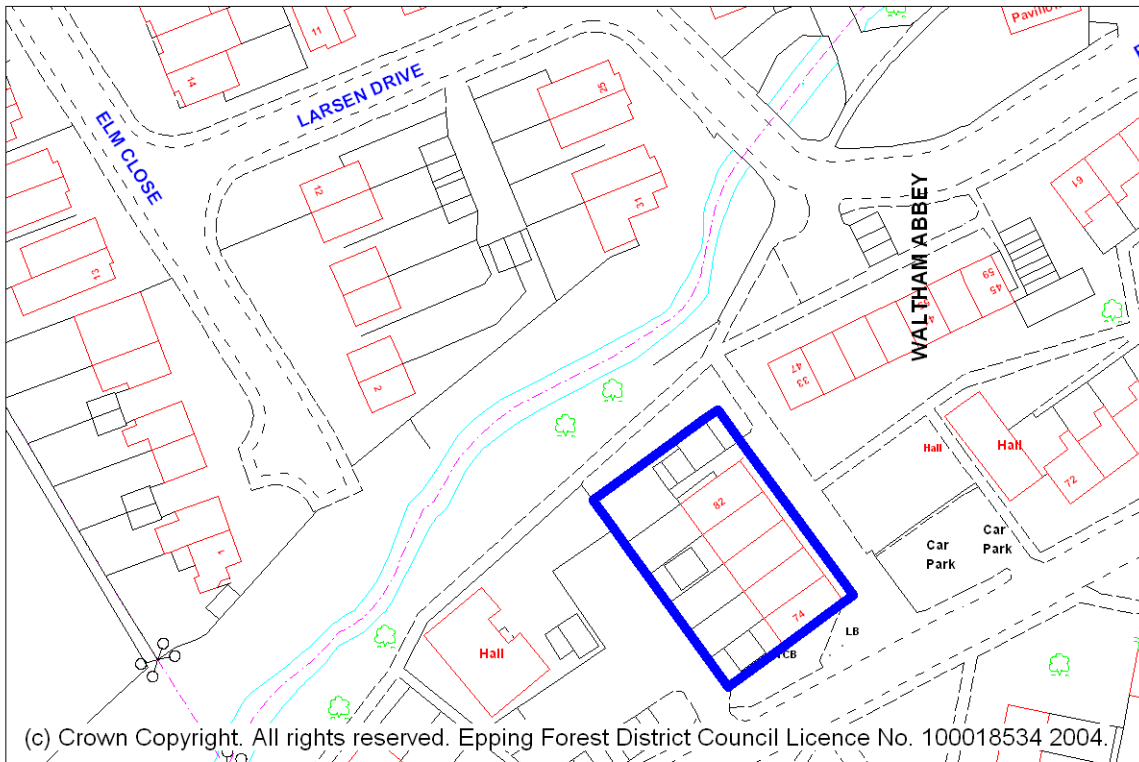


Figure 11.26
Upshire Road, Waltham Abbey
Scale 1:1250

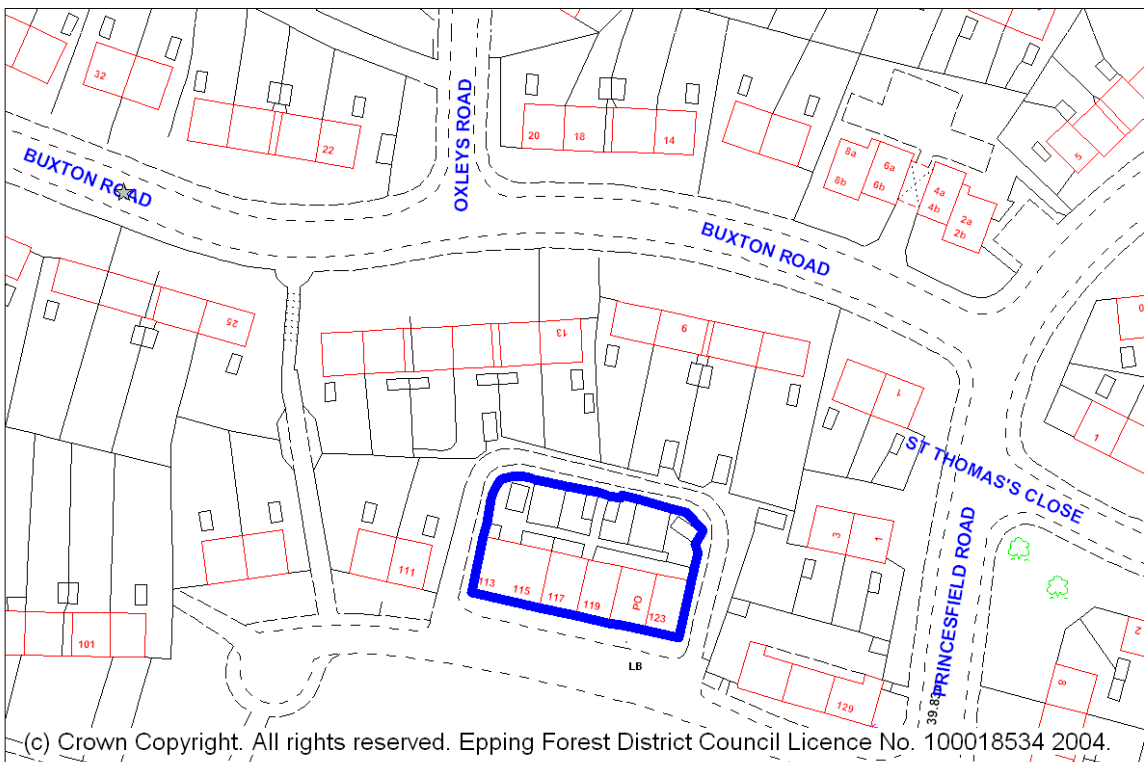


Figure 11.27
Highbridge Retail Park, Waltham Abbey
Scale 1:2500

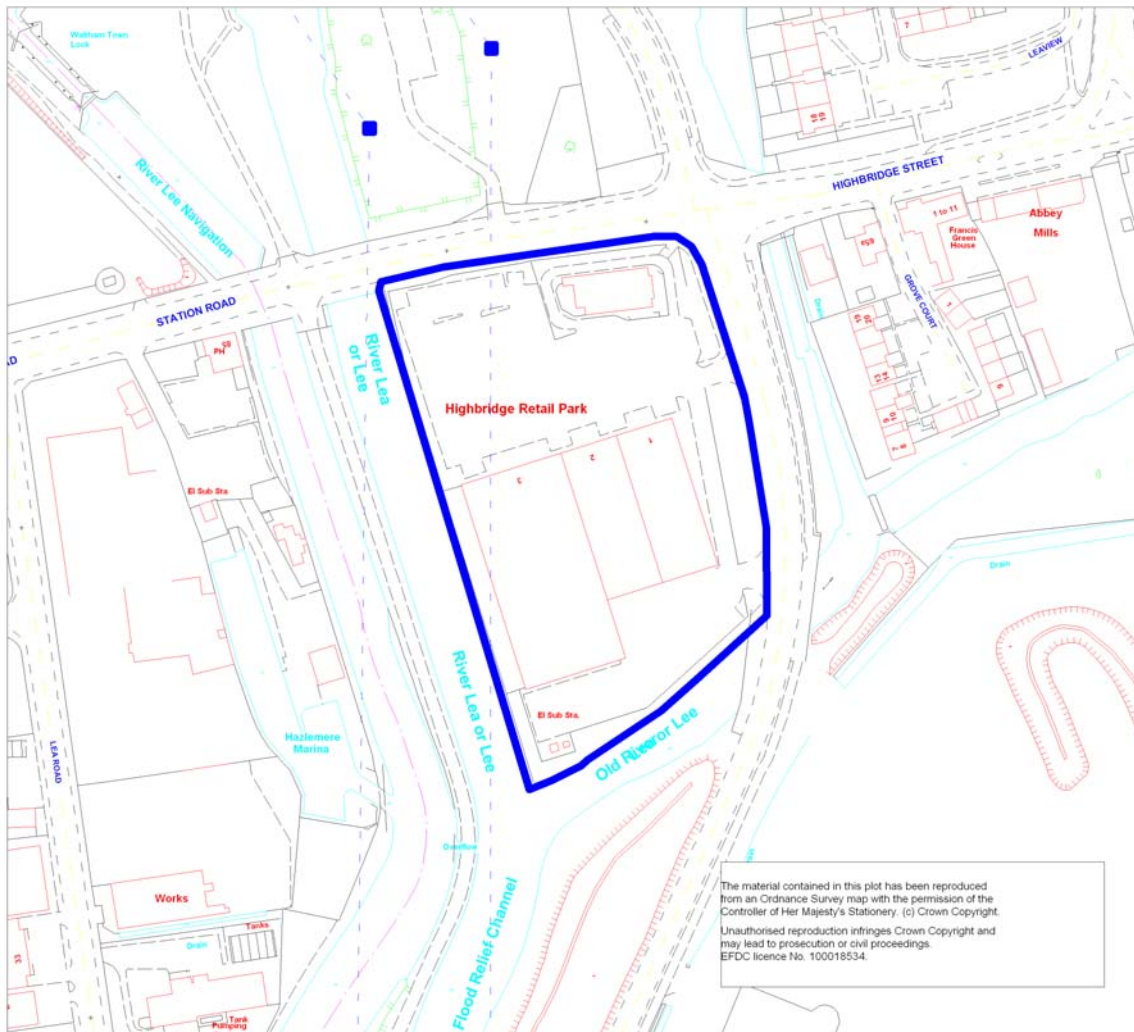


Figure 11.28
Market Place, Abridge
Scale 1:1250

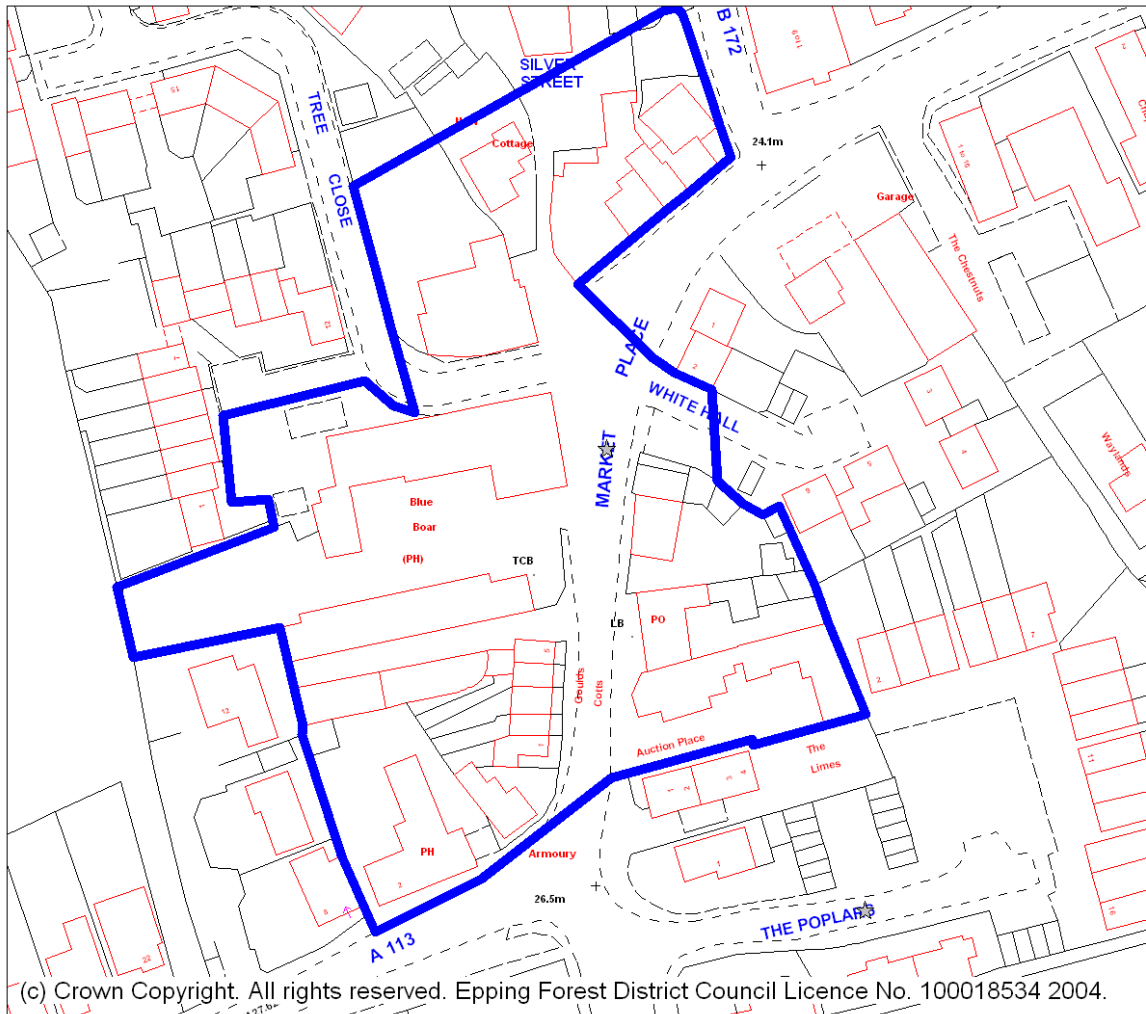


Figure 11.29
Parklands, Coopersale
Scale 1:1250

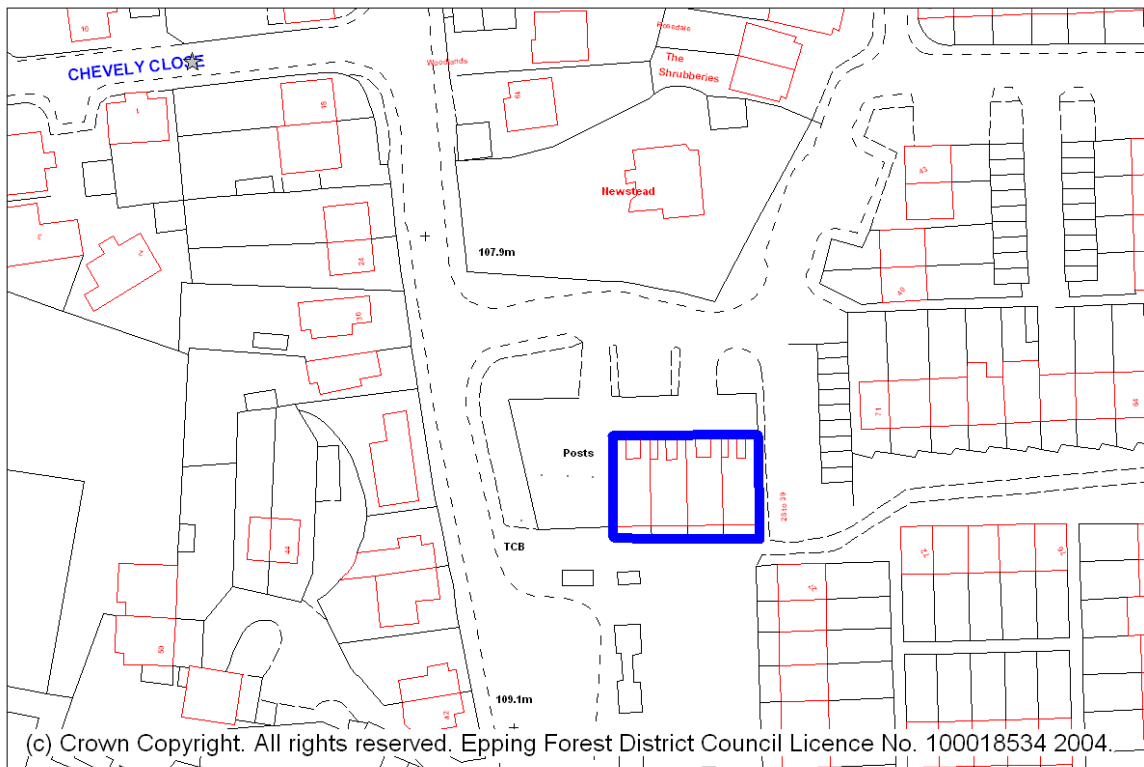


Figure 11.30
Lambourne Road, Chigwell Row
Scale 1:1250

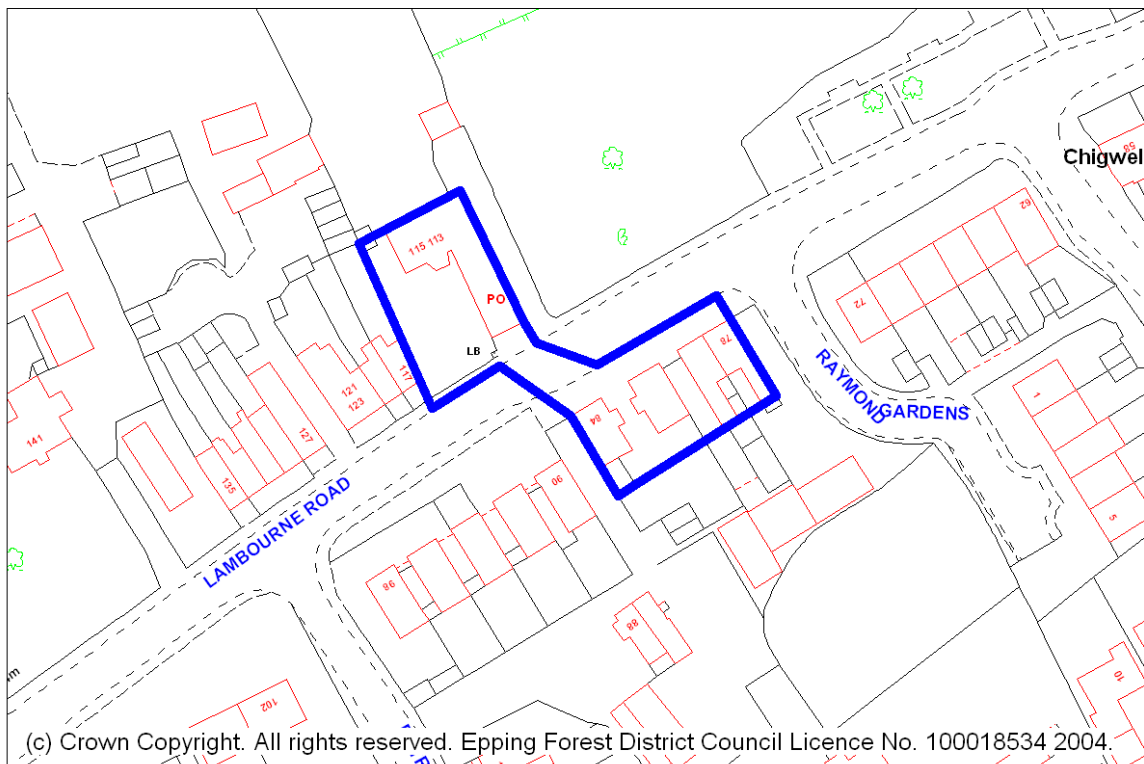
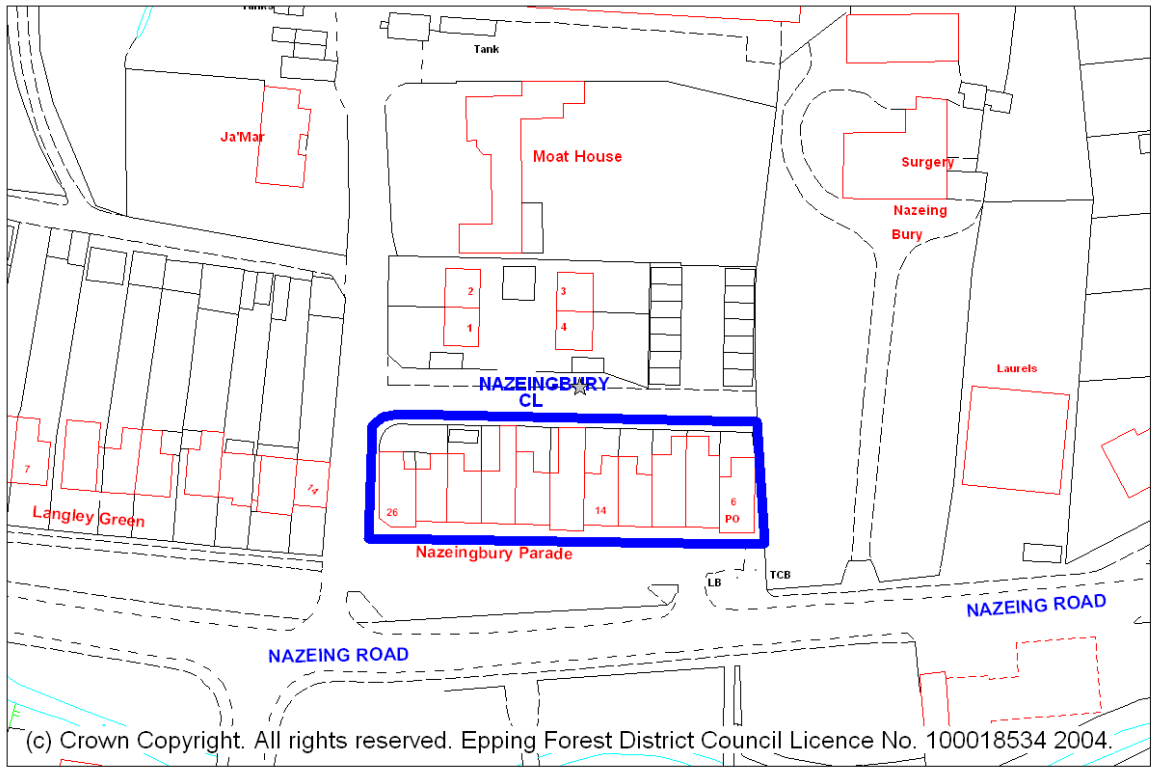


Figure 11.31
Nazeingbury Parade, Nazeing
Scale 1:1250



Chapter 12 - Recreation, Sport and Tourism

Chapter 12 - Recreation, Sport and Tourism (Alterations)

(Changes to policy RST10 with a new paragraph 12.55a)

12.55 There is a well-established chalet estate at Roydon and its continuance would be acceptable provided that the chalets continue in recreational use and do not become permanent dwellings. The following policy will therefore apply:

POLICY RST10A - ROYDON LODGE CHALET ESTATE

WITHIN THE CHALET ESTATE AT ROYDON LODGE THE COUNCIL WILL: -

- (i) ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF LEISURE CHALETS; AND**
- (ii) ALLOW THE STATIONING OF CARAVANS AND MOBILE HOMES;
AND**
- (iii) ALLOW LIMITED EXTENSIONS TO LONG-ESTABLISHED CHALETS
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR LEISURE FUNCTION AND ADOPTED
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE; AND**
- (iv) REQUIRE THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS OF ANY
NEW OR EXTENDED CHALETS, CARAVANS AND MOBILE HOMES
TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ADOPTED SUPPLEMENTARY
PLANNING GUIDANCE; AND**
- (v) RESTRICT THE USE OF ALL CHALETS, CARAVANS AND MOBILE
HOMES TO WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS DURING THE MONTHS OF
APRIL TO OCTOBER INCLUSIVE.**

12.55a Supplementary Planning Guidance for Roydon Chalet Estate was adopted in September 2003. As the site is in the flood plain of the River Stort, policies U2A and U3A will also apply, including the need for Flood Risk Assessments. Prospective applicants are advised to contact the Environment Agency.

Chapter 13 - Retention of Community Facilities

Chapter 13 - Retention of Community Facilities

13.71a Community facilities provide a wide range of leisure, health, social, and cultural services for all residents of the district. They are often essential for modern living, provide important focal points for the local community and are frequently critical for the less advantaged or mobile in society. Loss of any one of them can impoverish a locality and threaten the vitality and even the viability of a community, especially in rural areas. Economic pressures, changes in shopping habits and centralisation of some services mean that some facilities are under almost constant threat of closure or re-location. Their loss is particularly felt in areas poorly served by public transport and increases the need for car journeys to towns and larger villages. For these reasons the Council believes it is important to address the retention of community facilities in the local plan. However it is recognised that there may be situations where development could be allowed, provided it can be clearly shown that the facility concerned is no longer needed or that it will be adequately replaced in a suitable location, and that no other identified local facility needs the site. The following policy applies across the whole district but it is likely to be interpreted more strictly in rural areas, where services are under greater threat and where facilities are already spread more thinly.

POLICY CF12 – RETENTION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES

PERMISSION WILL ONLY BE GRANTED FOR PROPOSALS WHICH WILL ENTAIL THE LOSS OF A COMMUNITY FACILITY WHERE IT IS CONCLUSIVELY SHOWN THAT:

- (i) THE USE IS EITHER NO LONGER NEEDED OR NO LONGER VIABLE IN ITS CURRENT LOCATION; AND**
- (ii) THE SERVICE, IF IT IS STILL NEEDED, IS ALREADY, OR IS TO BE, PROVIDED ELSEWHERE AND ACCESSIBLE WITHIN THE LOCALITY TO EXISTING AND POTENTIAL USERS.**

WHERE PLANNING PERMISSION IS GRANTED FOR PROPOSALS THAT WILL ENTAIL THE LOSS OF A COMMUNITY FACILITY, THE COUNCIL WILL CONSIDER FAVOURABLY ALTERNATIVE USES WHICH FULFIL OTHER COMMUNITY NEEDS AND WHICH SATISFY OTHER POLICIES OF THE PLAN. WHERE THERE IS AN IDENTIFIED NEED FOR ANOTHER FACILITY, THE COUNCIL WILL HAVE TO BE SATISFIED THAT THE SITE IS UNSUITABLE FOR THAT USE PRIOR TO CONSIDERING THE SITE FOR OPEN MARKET HOUSING OR OTHER COMMERCIAL PROPOSALS.

THE COUNCIL MAY REQUIRE THE PROVISION OF A COMMUTED SUM, BY MEANS OF A LEGAL AGREEMENT, AS A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE MAINTENANCE OR UPGRADING OF OTHER LOCAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES WHERE THESE RELATE DIRECTLY TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

WHERE THE PROPOSAL INVOLVES THE RELOCATION OF A FACILITY, THE COUNCIL WILL NEED TO BE SATISFIED THAT THE NEW LOCATION WILL ALLOW THE FACILITY OR SERVICE TO BE OFFERED AT THE SAME OR BETTER LEVEL OR STANDARD.

13.71b Community facilities include a wide range of uses which not only meet local needs but can often involve some employment opportunities. Affordable housing

may also be an appropriate alternative use of a site, particularly if the most recent survey of housing need has identified specific shortages in the locality.

Chapter 14 - Utilities

Chapter 14 - Utilities

(Changes to policies U2 and U3 and paragraphs 14.7 to 14.10)

Flood Plains, Flood Risk Assessment Zones, Catchment Effects and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS)

Flood Plains

14.7a Parts of the district have suffered from serious flooding events in recent years. Flood alleviation schemes have been implemented in North Weald, Loughton and Thornwood. The Council has resolved to grant permission for a major scheme for Cobbins Brook which will reduce flooding risk in Waltham Abbey and the River Lea. Details of a Section 106 obligation are not finalised and it is not certain when this scheme will commence (July 2006). Smaller schemes at Nazeing; Boxted Close, Buckhurst Hill; and Hillmans Cottages, Abridge remain under longer-term consideration. The latter two are part of a Flood Risk Management Strategy for the River Roding which has been commissioned by the Environment Agency. Where appropriate, opportunities will be sought through planning obligations to restore floodplain areas, including the restoration of river channels and natural river and channel processes.

14.8a PPG25: Development and Flood Risk (July 2001) advises that the susceptibility of land to flooding is a material planning consideration. Policies in development plans should outline the consideration which will be given to flood issues, recognising the uncertainties that are inherent in the prediction of flooding and that flood risk is expected to increase as a result of climate change. Planning authorities are urged to recognise the importance of functional flood plains where water flows or is held at times of flood, and to avoid inappropriate development on undeveloped land and undefended flood plains. It should also be recognised that the consideration of flood risk and its management needs to be applied on a whole-catchment basis and not be restricted to flood plains. PPG25 also advises that local plans should seek to encourage implementation of SUDS throughout the district – i.e. over and above any specific locations where they may be an essential pre-requisite of development.

14.9a Any development in a floodplain is likely to be at risk from flooding. Development can also have the effect of reducing the storage capacity of the floodplain and/or impeding the flow of water, thereby increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere. The Council will have regard to the Environment Agency's Catchment Flood Management Plans and Strategy Studies, and any other detailed local studies in determining applications for development within floodplains. At sites suspected of being at risk from flooding, or where uncontrolled development could exacerbate flood risk elsewhere in the catchment, but where no adequate flood risk information is available, developers will be required to carry out a Comprehensive Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and to implement any necessary agreed measures to ensure risks of flooding are minimised.

POLICY U2A – DEVELOPMENT IN FLOOD RISK AREAS

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WITHIN THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY'S CURRENTLY DESIGNED FLOOD RISK ZONES WILL BE DETERMINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH A SEQUENTIAL APPROACH AS SET OUT IN PPG25. THIS WILL BE, IN ORDER OF PRIORITY:

- (a) AREAS WITH LITTLE OR NO FLOOD RISK
- (b) AREAS OF LOW TO MEDIUM RISK
- (c) AREAS OF HIGH RISK
- (d) AREAS OF FUNCTIONAL FLOOD PLAIN.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS ORDER OF PRIORITY, THE COUNCIL WILL ONLY PERMIT DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS OF FUNCTIONAL FLOOD PLAIN IF:

- (i) IT INVOLVES USE OF LAND ONLY, AND WOULD NOT INCREASE FLOOD RISK OR DANGER FROM FLOOD RISK; OR
- (ii) IT IS PROVEN TO BE ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE WHICH CANNOT BE LOCATED ELSEWHERE. NO SUCH DEVELOPMENT WILL BE ALLOWED IF IT WOULD CAUSE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON ANY PART OF THE FLOOD REGIME OF THE WATERCOURSE INVOLVED.

DEVELOPMENT IN HIGH RISK AREAS WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED IF:

- (iii) THERE WILL BE NO INCREASED RISK OF FLOODING EITHER ON SITE OR ELSEWHERE IN THE FLOODPLAIN OR SUITABLE MITIGATION MEASURES WILL BE INCORPORATED AS PART OF THE SCHEME; AND
- (iv) THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT REDUCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING FLOOD DEFENCE MEASURES; AND
- (v) THERE IS NO SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE SITE AVAILABLE IN THE LOCALITY WHICH IS AT A LOWER RISK OF FLOODING; AND
- (vi) THERE WILL BE NO SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECTS UPON A WATERCOURSE, NAVIGABLE WATERWAY OR SEWER; OR
- (vii) ADEQUATE AND APPROPRIATE FLOOD-PREVENTION MEASURES TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF FLOODING ARE INCORPORATED AS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT.

DEVELOPMENT IN ALL OTHER FLOOD RISK AREAS WILL BE ALLOWED UNDER THIS POLICY, PROVIDED THAT SUITABLE FLOOD MINIMISATION AND/OR MITIGATION MEASURES ARE INCLUDED AS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT. ALL APPLICATIONS OR PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN FLOOD RISK AREAS WILL BE REQUIRED TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY A FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT COVERING MATTERS (i) TO (v) ABOVE, TO BE CARRIED OUT TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY.

14.10a Flood Zone maps are now regularly updated by the Environment Agency and this precludes their inclusion on the Local Plan Proposals Map. The defined zones are intended as a consultation tool and so should not be used to make an absolute judgement of flood risk. If development is proposed within a Flood Zone, the applicant should carry out an appropriate flood risk assessment to consider the specific flood risk at that location. Zone 1 (little or no risk) is where the flood risk is less than 0.1% annually ; Zone 2 (low to medium risk) has a 0.1 to 1.0% chance of flooding and Zone 3 (high risk) has a chance of 1.0% or greater. Depending on the nature of the development, PPG25 recommends that some building may be allowed

within Zone 2 but advises that the Agency should be consulted on any development within Zone 3. In implementing policies U2A and U3A the Council will therefore use the most up-to-date plans and other information from the Environment Agency (www.environment-agency.gov.uk).

Flood Risk Assessment Zones

14.10b Flood risk assessment zones are catchments of ordinary watercourses which have been identified by the Council. These may contribute to main river watercourses or where there is a known risk or history of flooding. Within these zones any development in excess of 50m² (other than house extensions) will require a FRA. The boundaries of the flood risk assessment zones are shown on the Proposals Map. For sites outside FRA zones, any development in excess of 235m² will also require a flood risk assessment. The figures of 50m² and 235m² refer to the area of new buildings.

POLICY U2B – FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT ZONES

WITHIN THE FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT ZONES AS SHOWN ON THE ALTERATIONS PROPOSALS MAP, FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENTS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR ANY DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS (OTHER THAN HOUSE EXTENSIONS) WHICH EXCEED 50M². OUTSIDE THESE ZONES, A FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT WILL BE REQUIRED FOR ANY PROPOSALS WHICH EXCEED 235M².

Catchment Effects

14.10c Built development will normally increase the area of impermeable ground, meaning water will run off rather than percolate into the ground. Unless carefully sited and designed, the additional surface water run-off (within or outside areas at risk from flooding) can lead to an increased risk of flooding downstream. Damage to, or erosion of, the receiving watercourse can also occur, caused by silt deposition or increased pollutant loads from the increased volume of water and changes to the pattern of flows.

POLICY U3A – CATCHMENT EFFECTS

THE COUNCIL WILL NOT PERMIT DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD RESULT IN EITHER:

- (i) INCREASED RISK OF FLOODING OR A REDUCTION IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING FLOOD DEFENCE MEASURES, EITHER ON SITE OR ELSEWHERE WITHIN THE CATCHMENT; OR**
- (ii) SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECTS UPON A WATERCOURSE, NAVIGABLE WATERWAY OR SEWERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE,**

UNLESS IT IS SATISFIED THAT ADEQUATE AND APPROPRIATE ATTENUATION MEASURES, SUCH THAT THERE IS NO INCREASE IN THE RISK OF FLOODING, ARE INCORPORATED AS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT.

14.10d Attenuation measures to reduce peak flows or hold back surface water run-off include storage areas (surface or underground) and, where ground conditions permit, infiltration areas or soakaways. PPG25 recommends the use of drainage systems which mimic natural processes, rather than using the more normal piped drainage

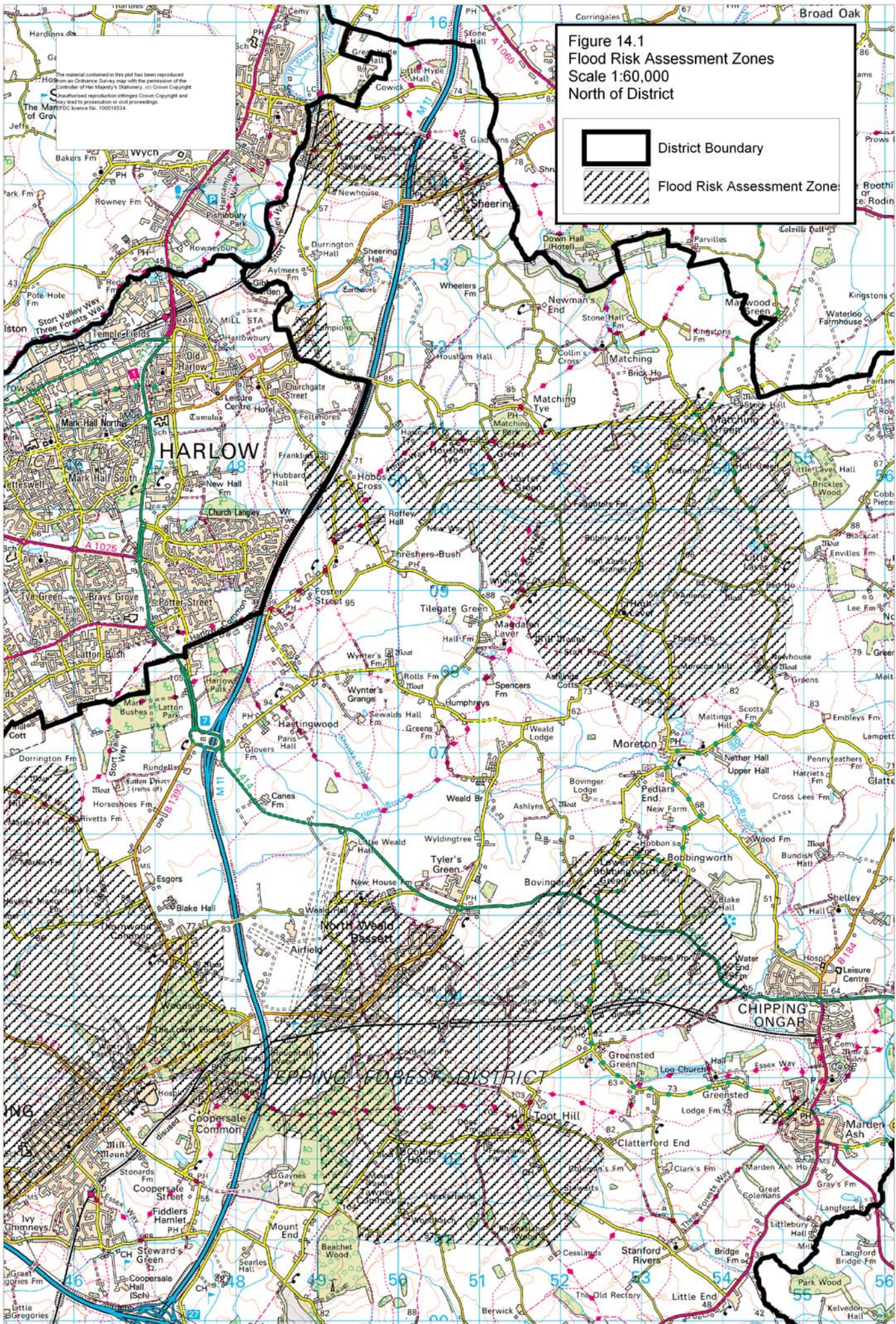
systems, and suggests that planning authorities should work with the Environment Agency, sewerage undertakers and prospective developers to enable surface water run-off to be controlled as near to the source as possible by the encouragement of sustainable drainage systems. The use of SUDS can contribute significantly to the aims of sustainable development by improving the wildlife and amenity interest of developments and, at a more strategic level, encouraging natural groundwater recharge.

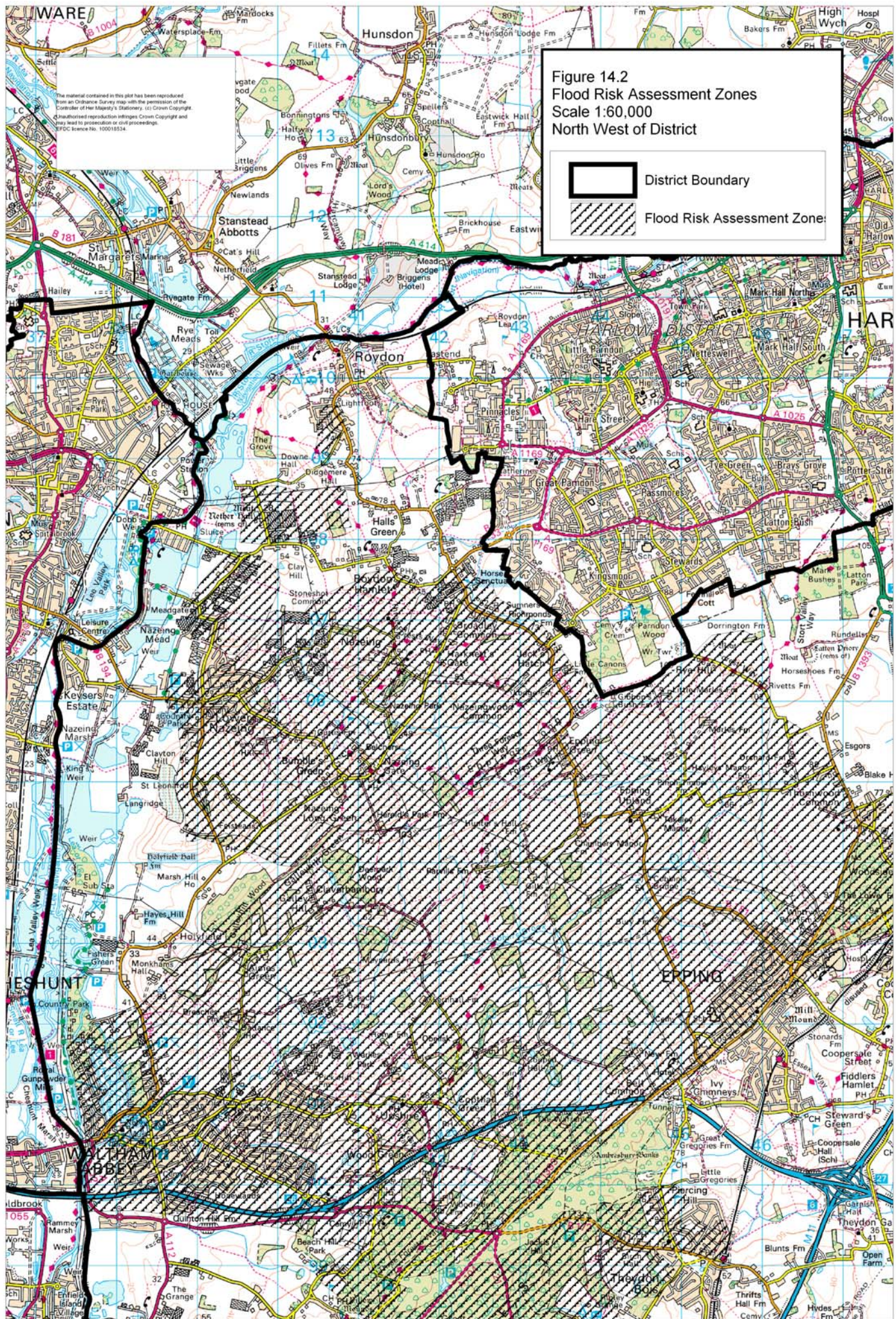
POLICY U3B – SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

IN CONSULTATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, SEWERAGE UNDERTAKERS, THE COUNCIL MAY REQUIRE DEVELOPMENTS TO INCLUDE SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS TO CONTROL THE QUALITY OR ATTENUATE THE RATE OF SURFACE WATER RUN-OFF. CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE FORM OF COMMUTED SUMS MAY BE SOUGHT IN LEGAL AGREEMENTS TO ENSURE THAT THE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS CAN BE ADEQUATELY MAINTAINED.

14.10e Further advice about SUDS is given in Appendix E of PPG25. It is not possible at this stage to be more prescriptive about when SUDS will be required as part of a development although all development is encouraged to adopt the principles irrespective of any specific requirements which may be imposed as a result of a FRA. The Council will ensure, however, that developers are made aware as early as possible about the need to use this type of drainage. In compliance with the terms of the Water Framework Directive the Council will, where appropriate, require SUDS to address not only issues of quantity of run-off but also quality as any new development represents a potential source of diffuse pollution.

14.10f These policies will be implemented through consultations with the Environment Agency (in the case of main rivers), the Council's Land Drainage Service (in the case of non-main rivers with reference to Local Byelaws), Thames Water Utilities and, in appropriate instances, British Waterways and English Nature. Surface water discharge into the Rivers Lee and Stort (where navigable) requires the consent of British Waterways.





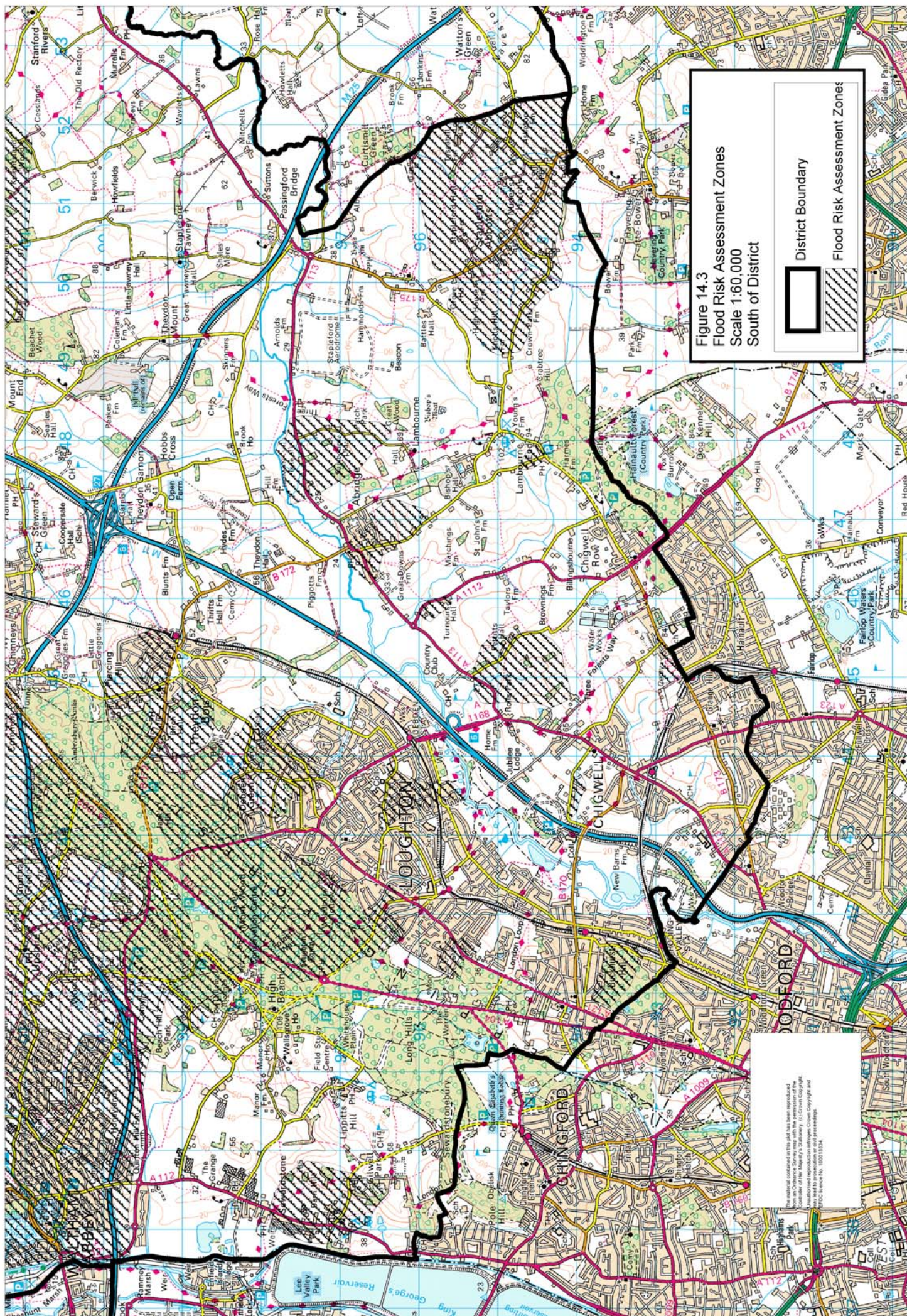


Figure 14.3
Flood Risk Assessment Zones
 Scale 1:60,000
 South of District

District Boundary

Flood Risk Assessment Zones

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Chapter 17 – Sustainable Transport

Chapter 17 – Sustainable Transport (Replacement Chapter)

17.1a Aims

- To better integrate transport and land-use planning to reduce the need to travel within the district;
- To promote integrated and sustainable transport choices for residents, workers and visitors to the district to minimise reliance on the car and road haulage;
- To ensure new development within the district is designed to encourage use by pedestrians and cyclists;
- To ensure that lorries and other commercial vehicles are directed to the most appropriate roads in the hierarchy and to minimise disturbance to residential and other sensitive areas.

Government Policy

17.2a The 1998 White Paper ‘A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone’ aimed to deliver an integrated transport policy which would extend choice in transport and secure mobility in a way that supported sustainable development. Integration was to be between different types of transport, environmental policies, land use planning and policies for wealth creation, education and health.

17.3a The main aims of PPG13: Transport (revised 2001) are to:

- promote more sustainable transport choices for people and for moving freight;
- promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling; and
- reduce the need to travel, especially by car
- maximum parking standards for cars

17.4a These aims are supported by guidance and policy within other PPGs and PPSs, particularly PPG3: Housing and PPS6: Planning for Town Centres. Together with PPG13 these form a planning policy framework for promoting sustainable patterns of development. PPG3 seeks to concentrate development within built-up areas, close to a range of facilities to promote walking and cycling, and within easy access of public transport. PPS6 intends major generators of travel to be located in existing centres, where access by a choice of means of transport, not only by car, is easy and convenient. PPG13 encourages planning authorities to manage the pattern of growth to make the fullest use of public transport and reduce some of the need for car journeys.

Regional Transport Strategy

17.5a The East of England Local Government Conference published the final report of its Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) in April 2003. This identifies regional transport priorities, mainly through a number of Multi Modal Studies (MMS). The studies concentrated on specific transport corridors, either entirely within the region or which pass through it, and assessed how each corridor is used and what infrastructure and other improvements would be necessary to improve traffic movement. In particular the MMS examined how more sustainable means of transportation could be delivered. Three studies and their proposals have relevance for this district:

ORBIT: London Orbital (M25) MMS

- the development of inter-modal terminals (for both people and freight) and protection of sites with potential multi-modal access;
- the widening of the M25 between junctions 27 and 31 (expanded to include junctions 23 to 27 in a July 2003 announcement by the Department for Transport regarding tackling congested roads in Britain);
- potential review of land use development controls on land adjacent to trunk roads and the motorway network within the study area; and
- road user charging.

LOIS: London to Ipswich MMS

- a new rail link between Chelmsford-Ongar-Epping with links to Stratford and Stansted (via Harlow/Sawbridgeworth) and possibly Crossrail 2 at Kings Cross;
- a north-south passenger and rail freight route (Benfleet/Wickford/Shenfield) with a link to the new Epping-Ongar line);
- strengthening of bus links on the A414 corridor;
- integrated land use planning to reduce the demand for movement; and
- improved interchanges with additional park and ride sites and new stations and facilities.

London/South Midlands MMS

- change the West Anglia Great Northern (WAGN) line from two to four tracks between Tottenham Hale and Bishop's Stortford – this has implications in the district for Roydon and Lower Sheering.

These proposals are only indicative at this stage and further detailed assessment with community consultation is expected.

17.6a The Council is also aware that there are proposals for widening the M25 throughout the district but no specific plans have been prepared. This obviously has significant implications in terms of land take, landscape impact, and traffic generation on local roads linking to the motorway – especially at Waltham Abbey. Progress with the proposals will obviously be monitored.

Regional Planning Guidance

17.7a The Panel Report on the Examination in Public for the Draft East of England Plan was published in June 2006. Adoption of the final Plan is expected by Spring 2007 and transport consequences for the district can then be assessed. The South East Regional Airport Strategy (SERAS) has concluded that Stansted Airport should have an additional runway by 2011 and this also has potential implications for the district. It is only when the regional guidance is finalised that the Council will know what growth will have to be accommodated and the transport infrastructure that will be required to serve the new development.

County Policy - Replacement Structure Plan (April 2001)

17.8a Structure Plan policies are broadly in line with PPG13 – promoting sustainable transport and accessibility with specific attention to rural transport, walking and cycling. Emphasis is also placed on developing an integrated transportation system and widening travel choice. The main challenges are considered to be reducing (a) levels of congestion and (b) atmospheric pollution and other emissions and their consequent effects on public health and climate change.

17.9a The Structure Plan road hierarchy has recently been updated. Within this new hierarchy, roads are designed to various standards related to traffic needs, with priorities for investment, management and maintenance being appropriately allocated. This is the most economic, efficient and environmentally sensible way of providing for vehicle movements. The hierarchy of roads now includes 10 categories from motorways to local rural.

17.10a The “higher- level” routes in the district are shown on a map produced by the local Highways Authority. The latest version (August 2005) is available from Essex County Council . The principal function of the higher level routes is traffic distribution – they are considered to be vital to achieving economic prosperity and helping to discourage the use of less suitable routes. Consequently only exceptionally will direct access to new development be permitted for the higher categories of road.

Essex Local Transport Plan (July 2000)

17.11a This plan replaced the Transport Policies and Programme. It was a five year plan, reviewed annually, which set out a detailed transport strategy for the county and took full account of the Replacement Structure Plan and regional guidance and strategies. The aim was to provide a more integrated and inclusive transport system, co-ordinated with strategic and local land-use planning. The Plan’s general description of the district’s situation was as follows: ‘EFDC faces considerable transportation problems. The district borders London, it has two major motorways passing through it and one of the highest car ownership levels, per household, in the country. It comprises a mix of rural and urban communities and this generates a large number of car journeys to and from the towns. A lack of readily available rural public transport exacerbates this problem. The Central Line to Epping passes through the district and is heavily used by commuters, bringing with it considerable parking problems for residents living around the stations at Epping, Theydon Bois, Debden, Loughton and Buckhurst Hill. There is also a significant number of car journeys to and from major shopping facilities such as Harlow, Lakeside and Bluewater’. The WAGN line has one station in the district (Roydon) which offers a limited service to London, Harlow, Bishops Stortford and Cambridge. Other nearby stations on the line (Waltham Cross, Cheshunt, Broxbourne, Harlow Town and Sawbridgeworth) are used by residents of the district and provide a valuable commuter link to London and other centres.

17.11b The Second Local Transport Plan was finalised in March 2006, and is now being distributed to appropriate organisations. It focuses on delivering accessibility, tackling congestion, promoting air quality, creating safer roads and enhancing maintenance. Other issues include noise, climate change and a sustainable distribution strategy with particular reference to goods vehicles. Area Strategies are listed with the County being split into five such areas – most of this District being within the ‘Harlow and Stansted/ M11 Corridor.’ Specific issues of note include localised congestion in Epping High Street, Loughton High Road and at problem junctions in Chigwell and Waltham Abbey. The capacity of M11 Junction 7 at peak times is also listed and concern is expressed about traffic volumes in Epping Forest.

Reducing the need to travel

17.12a A fundamental aspect of sustainable development is the promotion of land-use patterns that (i) reduce the need to travel or use the private car; (ii) reduce the length, duration and number of motorised journeys; and (iii) encourage people to use alternative means of travel - i.e. public transport, walking and cycling. These issues

are the basis of sustainable transport and are dealt with in this and the following sections.

Location of New Development

17.13a A sequential approach should be used in making decisions on the location of new development - this will encourage the use, re-use or intensification of use of sites in appropriate locations in the main settlements and help to achieve a balance between residential, business and service uses. It will also ensure that patterns of land-use are well related to (i) each other (to minimise the need to travel or use a car), (ii) the function of a settlement centre, and (iii) reliable public transport provision.

POLICY ST1 – LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL BE LOCATED IN PLACES THAT ENCOURAGE WALKING, CYCLING AND THE USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT (INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE). THE COUNCIL EXPECTS NEW DEVELOPMENT TO SATISFY THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- (i) MAJOR TRIP GENERATING USES WILL BE LOCATED IN THE PRINCIPAL CENTRES AND BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RETAIL HIERARCHY LISTED IN POLICY TC1;**
- (ii) FACILITIES USED ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS WILL BE LOCATED IN NON KEY FRONTAGE OF PRINCIPAL CENTRES OR SMALLER, DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES;**
- (iii) HOUSING WILL PRINCIPALLY BE LOCATED IN EXISTING URBAN AREAS, AND MAKE THE BEST USE OF LAND WHICH IS, OR COULD BE, HIGHLY ACCESSIBLE TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT OR CLOSE TO SERVICES AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.**

IN RURAL AREAS, FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH HAS TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS, PREFERENCE WILL BE GIVEN TO LOCATIONS WITH ACCESS TO REGULAR PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES AND CONTAINING BASIC SHOPS AND OTHER FACILITIES. PROPOSALS THAT ARE NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS POLICY AND WHERE THEIR LOCATION IS CONSIDERED TO BE UNSUSTAINABLE WILL BE REFUSED.

LEGAL AGREEMENTS MAY BE USED TO SECURE THE PROVISION OF NEW OR ADDITIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES AND FACILITIES.

17.14a This policy will be used to promote means of travel other than the private car, to achieve better integration of all modes of transport, and to respect and reinforce the distinct character, function and hierarchy of settlements within the district.

Accessibility of New Development

17.15a If reduction in usage of the car is to become a reality, new development must be designed to encourage walking and cycling, and greater use of public transport where possible. The National Travel Survey found that 27% of journeys made between 1997 and 1999 were less than one mile in length and that 80% of these were on foot, but the proportion made by car is increasing. The provision of safe and convenient access for walkers and cyclists is therefore essential, coupled with secure

cycle parking where appropriate. Design also needs to take account of the mobility impaired and to address issues such as fear of crime and personal security.

POLICY ST2 – ACCESSIBILITY OF DEVELOPMENT

NEW DEVELOPMENT MUST BE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE SAFE, PLEASANT AND CONVENIENT ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS, INCLUDING WHERE APPROPRIATE, INTEGRATED TRANSPORT CHOICES AND PRACTICAL LINKS WITH ADJOINING PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND CYCLEWAY NETWORKS. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS MUST BE WELL SERVED BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND, IF NECESSARY, MAKE PROVISION FOR ENHANCED SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE. PROPOSALS SHOULD THEREFORE INCORPORATE THE FOLLOWING MEASURES, WHERE RELEVANT:

- (i) TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT TO IMPROVE SAFETY, GIVE PRIORITY TO PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT OVER EASE OF CAR MOVEMENTS, ENABLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS (E.G. TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT SCHEMES) AND TO DIRECT HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES ONTO SUITABLE ROADS;**
- (ii) SECURE, CONVENIENT AND SHELTERED FACILITIES FOR CYCLE AND POWERED TWO WHEELER STORAGE AND PARKING;**
- (iii) MORE ROAD SPACE AND INTERNAL NETWORKS FOR SUSTAINABLE MODES OF TRANSPORT;**
- (iv) VEHICLE PARKING STANDARDS THAT REFLECT LOCATION IN RELATION TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT, EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND TOWN CENTRES AND ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STANDARDS REQUIRED BY POLICY ST6;**
- (v) DESIGN AND LAYOUT WHICH WILL REDUCE THE POTENTIAL FOR CRIME AND FEAR OF CRIME;**
- (vi) THE PROVISION OF SUITABLE AND ADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR MOBILITY IMPAIRED PEOPLE ENTERING, EXITING AND WITHIN THE SITE, INCLUDING APPROPRIATELY LOCATED PARKING FACILITIES.**

THE COUNCIL MAY USE LEGAL AGREEMENTS TO ACHIEVE SOME OF THESE MEASURES, ESPECIALLY IF THEY INVOLVE OPERATIONS OUTSIDE THE APPLICATION SITE.

17.16a The Council has prepared Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for Designing Out Crime and has adopted, as SPG, various county council documents on walking, cycling, bus strategy, railway policy and powered two wheeler strategy. The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas (1997) has also been adopted as SPG. All these documents and other relevant guidance, such as the County Council advice note for developers 'Development and Public Rights of Way', will be used in the implementation of the policy.

17.17a The Council will encourage opportunities to promote integrated transport choices – e.g. the provision of increased and secure cycle parking/storage facilities at Tube stations.

17.18a In locations that could be considered to be very well located in terms of access to public transport, shops and services the Council will consider sympathetically applications for residential development with no or very low provision for parking. Such proposals would need to have an enforceable Travel Plan, which could include measures such as a car club, the designation of nearby roads as controlled parking zones and preventing residents of the new development from having parking permits.

17.19a The Council will welcome proposals that follow the design principles of Home Zones, defined by the (then) Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions as 'residential streets in which the road space is shared between drivers of motor vehicles and other road users, with the wider needs of residents (including people who walk and cycle, and children) in mind. The aim is to change the way that streets are used and to improve the quality of life in residential streets by making them places for people, not just for traffic. Changes to the layout of the streets should emphasise this change of use, so that motorists perceive that they should give informal priority to other road users.' (Home Zone Design Guidelines – June 2002 – Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers) This sort of approach, and the design principles promoted by the Essex Design Guide, mean that the Council can be receptive to innovative schemes which do not meet normal highway standards, as long as road safety is not compromised.

17.20a In accordance with policy I1A legal agreements may be used to secure financial contributions towards the support of rural transport schemes (including community buses) where the extension or continuation of such services is related to the approved development (see also para 18.10a).

Transport Assessments, Road Safety and Travel Plans

17.21a New development proposals need to demonstrate that the traffic impacts on the environment, local road network and other road users have been fully considered. In appropriate circumstances planning applications must be accompanied by either of the following: a Transport Assessment or a Travel Plan. If a development involves any alteration to a public highway, the Highway Authority will require the submission of a Road Safety Audit.

Transport Assessments

17.22a PPG13 requires that proposals with significant transport implications should be accompanied by Transport Assessments. For major developments, the guidance advises that the assessment should cover accessibility to the site by all modes of transport. In a district such as this, it is not possible to prescribe what will constitute 'significant implications' or 'major developments' for every occasion – e.g. the transport impact of a change of land use in a rural area is likely to be greater than in the commercial part of a town. For this reason, the following policy does not attempt to specify these terms and its application will depend on the individual circumstances of each application. Ideally, the need for a Transport Assessment will have been agreed by discussions prior to the submission of an application (as is recommended in PPG13).

17.22b In respect of development in the vicinity of trunk roads, the Highways Agency will need to be satisfied, through the production by a developer of a Transport Assessment, that traffic generated by proposed development would not be detrimental to the safe and free flow of traffic on the trunk road network. The point where development-related traffic first accesses the trunk road must be sufficient to

accommodate all traffic 15 years after the development opens, otherwise highway improvements funded by the developer will be required. Where further improvements are required upstream or downstream of this point, these will be of a standard capable of ensuring that conditions on the trunk road are no worse at any time during the 15 year assessment period than if the development had not taken place.

POLICY ST3 – TRANSPORT ASSESSMENTS

THE COUNCIL REQUIRES THAT APPLICATIONS FOR MAJOR DEVELOPMENT, OR WITH SIGNIFICANT TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS, WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY TRANSPORT ASSESSMENTS. RELEVANT PROPOSALS WHICH DO NOT INCLUDE ASSESSMENTS WILL NOT BE REGISTERED AS PLANNING APPLICATIONS. AN ASSESSMENT SHOULD ENSURE THAT A MAJOR DEVELOPMENT MEETS THE NEED FOR THE SITE TO BE ACCESSIBLE BY SUSTAINABLE MODES OF TRANSPORT, BY PROVIDING AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE PRIVATE CAR. WHERE SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS ARE IDENTIFIED, PERMISSION WILL BE REFUSED UNLESS MEASURES TO REDUCE THESE IMPACTS TO ACCEPTABLE LEVELS ARE INCLUDED AS PART OF THE ASSESSMENT. WHERE SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS ARE IDENTIFIED AND PERMISSION IS GRANTED, THE COUNCIL MAY USE LEGAL AGREEMENTS TO ENSURE THAT THE MEASURES ARE IMPLEMENTED.

17.23a The Government has issued good practice advice on the content of an assessment. The coverage and detail should reflect the scale of the development and the extent of the transport implications – issues to be addressed include impact of the development on the road and transport infrastructure, including public transport capacity. For major proposals, a survey and analysis of accessibility by all modes of transport will be needed.

17.24a Movement of goods, the frequency and routing of journeys, the type and size of vehicles involved, and the estimated length of the construction period will be necessary components of assessments for applications for commercial development, and those involving major construction. Where the eventual use of the site (e.g. warehousing) will involve frequent heavy goods vehicle movements, permission will only be granted where the Council is satisfied that the location will allow ready access to the motorways or the A414. The Council may use legal agreements to prescribe 'lorry routes' for such freight movements and for applications involving major building works or other long-term construction.

17.25a Assessments should include details of measures to improve or encourage access by more sustainable methods (i.e. walking, cycling and public transport), and to reduce the need for car parking. Applications may be refused if opportunities to pursue sustainable transport are not included. Where significant transport implications are identified, a fundamental part of the assessment will be the inclusion of practical measures to mitigate the adverse impacts.

Road Safety

17.26a Even when an assessment is not required, the Council will still take into account the potential impact of new development on the road hierarchy, traffic congestion, road safety, and the character or environment of the area.

POLICY ST4 – ROAD SAFETY

THE COUNCIL WILL GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT ONLY WHEN THE PROPOSAL EITHER:

- (i) IS WELL RELATED TO THE ROAD HIERARCHY;**
- (ii) IS UNLIKELY TO LEAD TO AN EXCESSIVE DEGREE OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION;**
- (iii) WILL NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO HIGHWAY SAFETY; AND**
- (iv) IS NOT LIKELY TO RESULT IN EXCESSIVE ADVERSE EFFECTS, FROM TRAFFIC GENERATION, ON THE CHARACTER OR ENVIRONMENT OF ANY PART OF THE AREA THROUGH WHICH THE NEW TRAFFIC WILL MOVE;**

OR WHEN SATISFACTORY MITIGATION MEASURES WILL BE ADOPTED TO ADDRESS ANY POTENTIAL ADVERSE ROAD SAFETY IMPLICATIONS.

IN THE INTERESTS OF HIGHWAY SAFETY, THE COUNCIL MAY USE LEGAL AGREEMENTS TO ENSURE THAT ALTERATIONS TO THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY ARE COMPLETED, IN SOME CASES, BEFORE A SCHEME IS COMMENCED, AND IN OTHER CASES BEFORE A DEVELOPMENT IS OCCUPIED OR USED.

Travel Plans

17.27a Sustainable transport involves encouraging the use of means of travel which have less environmental impact than large numbers of single occupant cars. PPG13 advocates the use of travel plans for all major developments comprising jobs, shopping, leisure and services. A Travel Plan is a package of measures designed to reduce reliance on car journeys, particularly single occupancy trips and to promote alternative, more sustainable forms of travel. In appropriate cases the plans should also address reducing traffic speeds, improving road safety and identifying more environmentally friendly freight movements and delivery services (e.g. home delivery). It is the council's intention to encourage all local businesses and organisations that employ or attract large numbers of people to consider how they can contribute to promoting more sustainable means of travel. A successful Travel Plan can reduce vehicle trips by 15 to 20%, but even a reduction of 5 – 10% can have a significant effect on congestion.

POLICY ST5 – TRAVEL PLANS

NEW DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THAT WOULD EMPLOY OR ATTRACT LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY TRAVEL PLANS. THESE PLANS WILL INCLUDE MEASURES AS APPROPRIATE TO REDUCE CAR USAGE, ENCOURAGE MORE SUSTAINABLE FORMS OF TRANSPORT, REDUCE TRAFFIC SPEED, IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY AND MINIMISE INCREASE IN ROAD HAULAGE. WHERE SUCH MEASURES ARE REQUIRED, THE COUNCIL WILL USE LEGAL AGREEMENTS TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE IMPLEMENTED AND MONITORED ON A REGULAR BASIS.

17.28a Measures should where possible include higher levels of cycle parking (with facilities such as showers for employees), no on-site provision of staff car parking, home working options, public transport information and car sharing schemes. Further

advice on Travel Plans is contained within PPG13: Transport and in 'A travel plan resource pack for employers' by the Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme.

17.29a The Council may require applications for new or expanded school facilities to be accompanied by a travel plan covering issues such as safe cycle and walking routes, cycle parking (and showering/changing facilities) and restrictions on car parking and access.

Parking

17.30a PPG13 advises that reducing the amount of parking in new development is essential, as part of a package of planning and transport measures, to promote more sustainable travel choices. This approach has to be balanced so that developers are not enticed or forced to locate away from town centres, potentially threatening levels of future investment. PPG13 therefore recommends that development plans should set maximum levels of parking for broad classes of development. These will reduce the land-take of development, enable schemes to fit into central urban sites (ultimately reducing pressure on the release of greenfield sites), and help to reduce traffic congestion in town centres.

17.31a The Essex Planning Officers' Society has prepared revised parking standards in the light of PPG13 and these have been adopted by the County Council and this Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance (Vehicle Parking Standards – August 2001). They include maximum standards for car parking and minimum standards for cycles and motorcycles to promote more sustainable forms of transport. The standards also allow a degree of flexibility depending on the location of the new development – e.g. a town centre location with good access to public transport and other services is likely to have less need for parking than more rural or isolated locations where cars may be the only realistic means of transport.

POLICY ST6 – VEHICLE PARKING

THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT ALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS TO PROVIDE ON-SITE PARKING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ADOPTED 2001 STANDARDS OR ITS SUCCESSOR DOCUMENTS.

Controlled Parking Zones

17.32a Commuter parking is a problem in the district, especially where there is a Central Line station. Some public car parks and residential streets have, in the past, been filled with commuters' cars, preventing shoppers and other visitors from being able to access town centre facilities and causing aggravation to local residents. To address this problem, the Council will be reviewing the need for controlled parking zones in the six main centres of the district (Buckhurst Hill, Epping, Loughton (Broadway area and High Road), Ongar and Waltham Abbey). Provisions may include on-street residents permits and pay and display parking matched by off-street parking which will favour short term shoppers and other visitors. The impact of these zones will be monitored, particularly in other centres with a station (e.g. Chigwell).

Lorry Parks

17.33a The Council decided that it no longer needed either of its lorry parks – at Langston Road, Loughton and The Borough, Chipping Ongar. The Langston Road lorry park was sold by the Council and has been redeveloped for a car showroom and office. The County Council owns The Borough and a planning application was

made for the redevelopment of the site for health care uses. In November 2005 the District Council resolved to grant permission for a health centre, subject to the completion of a Section 106 Obligation. By June 2006, the Obligation had not been finalised.

New Roads

17.34a The implications of new Regional Planning Guidance, the Multi-Modal studies and the widening of the M25 have been outlined above. Depending on the outcome of these studies, it is possible that some new or wider strategic roads may be proposed in the district. Such development would be contrary to the aims of sustainable transport – i.e. to reduce the need for travel, to discourage use of the car and to encourage the use of greener modes. The Council believes that the best use should be made of the existing network (including traffic management measures) before any new strategic roads are considered.

POLICY ST7 – NEW ROADS AND EXTENSIONS OR IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING ROADS

THE COUNCIL EXPECTS SCHEMES FOR NEW ROADS OR FOR EXTENSIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING ROADS TO SATISFY THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- (i) MINIMAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ON SENSITIVE AREAS (INCLUDING OPEN COUNTRYSIDE AND ITS MANAGEMENT, SITES OF WILDLIFE AND BUILT HERITAGE INTEREST, AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS) WITH ADEQUATE COMPENSATORY MEASURES IN THOSE CASES WHERE ENVIRONMENTAL LOSSES ARE UNAVOIDABLE;**
- (ii) MINIMAL ADVERSE IMPACT ON ROAD SAFETY AND TRAFFIC CONGESTION;**
- (iii) MINIMAL DISRUPTION TO, OR REALIGNMENT OF, THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK;**
- (iv) RETENTION OF A DEFENSIBLE GREEN BOUNDARY AND MINIMAL LOSS OF GREEN BELT LAND.**

17.35a Policy LL13 also applies to applications for new or altered highway proposals.

Epping – North Weald – Chipping Ongar branch line

17.36a This branch of the Central Line ceased operations in September 1994. Works subsequently carried out at Epping Station to improve Underground services have meant that it is not easy to reinstate an interchange, while the costs of improving the Epping to Ongar line up to main line standards would be considerable. Since 1996 a private company has developed the railway as a heritage leisure line and reintroduced leisure-based services between Coopersale and Ongar, currently operating on Sundays only. It is the policy of the Council to promote public transport services. The revival of the branch line and extension to Harlow or Chelmsford have been promoted in studies. As well as having the prospect of developing further as a leisure line the route can be seen to have the potential to provide a wider sub-regional public transport link and it is justified to protect it from development that could prejudice these goals. This should not prevent the continued growth of the leisure use of the line, nor the development of land that would not be likely to be

required for railway purposes.

POLICY ST8 – EPPING TO ONGAR LINE

PROPOSALS THAT WOULD PREVENT THE REINSTATEMENT AND FUTURE OPERATION OF THE BRANCH LINE BETWEEN EPPING – NORTH WEALD – CHIPPING ONGAR WILL BE REFUSED. IN THE EVENT OF THE TRACK AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE BEING DISMANTLED, THE COUNCIL WILL SUPPORT INTERIM PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE ROUTE FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND HORSERIDERS.

North-facing slip roads at Junction 5 (Loughton) on the M11

17.37a Policy T6 of the Adopted Local Plan reserved land to facilitate the upgrading of Junction 5 of the M11 to include entry slip roads travelling north and exit slip roads travelling south. The proposal had been approved following a Public Inquiry in 1994 but was abandoned by the Government in 1997. The land is therefore no longer reserved and the Council will encourage commercial use of the site in accordance with its location within an industrial estate.

A414 improvements

17.38a There are presently no dedicated proposals or funds to facilitate improvements to the A414 between Aukingford Gardens, Chipping Ongar and the Talbot roundabout at North Weald. Due to changes in the appraisal criteria and design guidelines for road improvement, any scheme would need to be fully reassessed. It is therefore neither appropriate nor necessary to continue to reserve land at this stage, although the Council remains aware that it is important to take traffic implications into account for any developments which may increase use of the road, particularly any large scale developments that may be proposed for Harlow or North Weald as part of the East of England Plan. The Regional Transport Strategy states that the A414 Harlow to Chelmsford has the highest stress levels (in terms of peak period congestion) of any motorway or A road within the region. The LOIS MMS concluded that the A414 corridor needed better bus links and that this would require infrastructure improvements.

Abridge, Epping, and Chipping Ongar bypasses, and improvements to the B194 Crooked Mile at Waltham Abbey

17.39a Although these schemes have received detailed consideration in the past, the County Council as highways authority has concluded that they are not priorities. It is therefore unlikely that funds will become available for any of these schemes within the lifetime of this plan and that land cannot be reserved for them, although the District Council will continue to press for a funded programme of improvements to the B194 at Waltham Abbey.

Airfields

17.40a The district has two working airfields – North Weald and Stapleford (east of Abridge). Policies for North Weald Airfield (RST27 – 30) are in the Recreation chapter as the airfield is primarily used for leisure purposes. Stapleford Airfield has a variety of users including air ambulance and a number of air related and other businesses. It is also used for training pilots but its main use is probably still for recreational purposes with Stapleford Flying Club having 250 members (October 2005). The future of North Weald Airfield is unclear because of pressures for other

forms of development and because any expansion of Stansted Airport may curtail flying activities at North Weald. The Council supports the continued use of Stapleford Airfield but this has to be in the context of its location within the Green Belt.

Aerodrome Safeguarding

17.41a Aerodrome Safeguarding Zones around airports are established and defined on Safeguarding Maps approved by the Civil Aviation Authority. The maps define areas within which certain types of development which, by reason of their proposed height or attraction to birds, or inclusion of aviation activity, or interference with aeronautical aids (e.g. wind turbines), require the local planning authority to consult with the relevant aerodrome operator. Planning advice is set out in Circular 1/2003.

POLICY ST9 – STANSTED AERODROME SAFEGUARDING

WITHIN THE AERODROME SAFEGUARDING ZONE AROUND STANSTED AIRPORT, DEVELOPMENT WHICH WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT THE OPERATIONAL INTEGRITY OR SAFETY OF THE AIRPORT, OR INTERFERE WITH THE OPERATION OF AERONAUTICAL NAVIGATION AIDS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

17.42a Proposals which are covered by this policy include (i) developments that could attract large numbers of birds (e.g. waste handling facilities, mineral extraction, and the creation or modification of reservoirs, lakes etc.), (ii) development above specified maximum heights within safeguarded zones, (iii) wind turbines which would be within specified distances of airfields or technical sites, and (iv) new or re-aligned roads that are close to runways.

17.43a North Weald and Stapleford Airfields are not officially safeguarded. The operators or owners of smaller airfields should liaise with the planning authority to establish safeguarding procedures when dealing with planning applications. Circular 1/2003 (Safeguarding Aerodromes) establishes the process by which owners of airfields must be consulted on relevant planning applications.

17.44a The National Air Traffic Service (NATS) is responsible for all radar and navigational aids in the country. This body should therefore be consulted on any proposals which may affect the functioning or operation of such equipment. The Council has been advised about 'technical sites' (i.e. those on which NATS equipment is located and operated) within and adjoining the district and any safeguarding limits which apply.

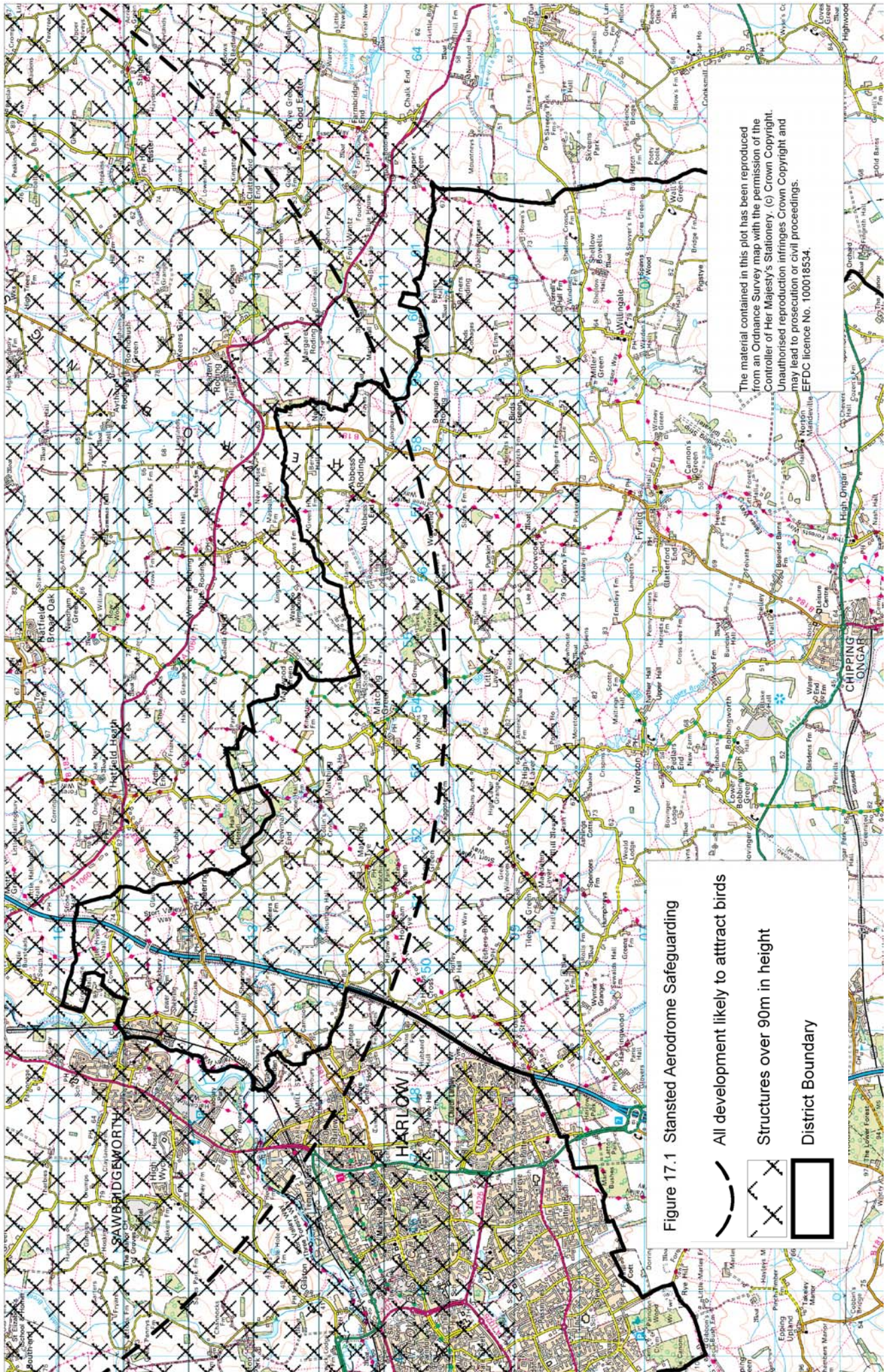


Figure 17.1 Stansted Aerodrome Safeguarding

-  All development likely to attract birds
-  Structures over 90m in height
-  District Boundary

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Chapter 18 – Implementation

Chapter 18 – Implementation (Alterations)

(Changes to paragraphs 18.3, 18.9 and 18.10 to 12 and policy I1)

Introduction

18.1 The implementation of Plan policies is dealt with, for the most part, by the explanatory text after each policy. It identifies, for example, which body is expected to fund the development, when it is likely to occur, and the nature of any planning constraints that might exist. This chapter serves essentially to introduce planning policies which relate solely to, and are crucial to, the successful implementation of the Plan. They deal with:

- planning obligations;
- phasing large housing developments; and
- enforcement of planning control.

Government Guidance

18.2 Guidance about the implementation of Local Plans is set out in PPG12. Plans are required to:

- have regard to the likely availability of resources (by taking account of national economic policies, the financial policies of the implementing agencies and the likely availability of land, labour and other resources);
- take account of the capacity of existing infrastructure and the need for additional facilities;
- incorporate an appropriate policy where an authority expects developers to enter into planning obligations on a regular basis;
- assess development requirements over the whole Plan period in the light of projections and national and regional policy guidance.

Planning Obligations

18.3a The Council can seek changes or improvements, necessary supporting and mitigating measures, compensatory provision, and the addition of community benefits to development proposals in order to have regard to the interest of the local environment and other planning considerations. This is generally known as ‘planning gain’ although this term has no statutory significance.

18.4 Planning gain can be achieved through planning obligations. These comprise both legal agreements (between the Council and the developer) or ‘unilateral undertakings’ (whereby a developer, independently, commits himself to a legally-binding obligation). Such obligations may:

- restrict development or use of the land;
- require operations or activities to be carried out;
- require the land to be used in a specific way; or
- require payments to be made to the authority either in a single payment or periodically.

18.5 PPG12 states that ‘... where a planning authority expects developers to enter into planning obligations on a regular basis... it should set out its policy in the Local Plan.’

18.6 Government guidance on the proper use of planning obligations is contained in Circular 05/2005 'Planning Obligations'. It sets out the circumstances in which certain types of benefit can reasonably be sought. The Circular states that the tests to apply for the use of planning obligations are that '... they should be necessary; relevant to planning; directly related to the proposed development; fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development; and reasonable in all other respects.'

18.7 The guidance continues '...Acceptable development should never be refused because an applicant is unwilling or unable to offer benefits' and 'Unacceptable development should never be permitted because of unnecessary or unrelated benefits offered by the applicant.'

18.8 According to the guidance, in general it will be reasonable to seek, or take account of, a planning obligation if what is sought or offered is:

- needed to enable the development to go ahead and, in the case of financial payment, will meet or contribute towards the cost of providing such facilities in the near future; or
- necessary from a planning point of view and is so directly related to the proposed development and to the land after its completion that the development ought not to be permitted without it.

18.9a The District Council welcomes the opportunities created by the guidance to bring about the implementation of planning and related community objectives in appropriate circumstances. The scope offered is seen as enhancing the Council's 'enabling' role. The following policy will therefore apply:

POLICY I1A - PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

IN APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES AND PRIOR TO THE GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION, THE COUNCIL WILL NEGOTIATE WITH DEVELOPERS TO ENTER INTO A LEGAL OBLIGATION TO:

- (i) **RESTRICT DEVELOPMENT OR USE OF LAND;**
- (ii) **REQUIRE WORKS, OPERATIONS OR ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT;**
- (iii) **REQUIRE LAND OR BUILDINGS TO BE USED IN A SPECIFIC WAY;**
- (iv) **REQUIRE PAYMENTS TO BE MADE, OR FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS;**
- (v) **REQUIRE LAND TO BE PROVIDED;**
- (vi) **SECURE THE PROVISION OF IMPROVEMENTS, SUPPORTING AND MITIGATING WORKS OR MEASURES, COMPENSATORY FACILITIES OR ACTIONS, AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS WHICH HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AND RELATE TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT; AND**
- (vii) **SET OUT THE REQUIRED TIMETABLE/PHASING FOR ANY OF THE ABOVE.**

SUCH PLANNING OBLIGATIONS WILL BE SECURED UNDER SECTION 106 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 AS AMENDED BY THE PLANNING AND COMPENSATION ACT 1991 OR THEIR REPLACEMENTS, AND THE CURRENT RELEVANT CIRCULAR.

18.10a Benefits which may be sought via planning obligations can include direct operational necessities including - highway works; specific requirements of Local Plan policies such as the provision of affordable housing and Travel Plans; measures required to mitigate or balance harm (e.g. landscaping); and material planning considerations such as the replacement of a displaced facility. Community gains which satisfy established guidance about links with development may also be derived or identified from other corporate/ stakeholder plans or policies. Such schemes could include, for example, town centre enhancement and transport projects, or financial contributions to these schemes. In the case of contributions for school places, county-wide guidance produced by Essex Planning Officers Association (September 2004) will be referred to.

18.11a The Council will prioritise the needs of an area as and when opportunities to secure planning obligations arise. In cases where the developer claims that the requirements of obligations make the development unviable, or there is no case for the requested benefit, it will be for the developer to prove this to the Council.

18.12a The Council will prepare more detailed guidance on planning obligations within the district, in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document.