

Section 7

Controlling the location, scale and mix of development

(i) Stratford-upon-Avon

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 To its residents, Stratford-upon-Avon is a small, market town which is expected to meet their day-to-day needs. To the rest of the world it is a national and international visitor destination owing to its association with Shakespeare. This dichotomy of roles leads to considerable pressures on the fabric and function of the town and raises complex challenges in seeking to resolve the conflicts which exist.
- 7.1.2 The town has a population of about 23,000 but attracts close to 3 million visitors a year. It has an historic core designated as a conservation area within which there are about 350 listed buildings. Roads leading into the town are frequently congested during peak times, while traffic movement in the centre is often obstructed by large delivery vehicles and coaches. At the same time, large numbers of pedestrians are restricted to narrow footways.
- 7.1.3 The town centre supports a wide range of shops and facilities; far greater than would normally be expected for a town of Stratford's size. There are many leisure attractions, including the Royal Shakespeare Company theatres, popular riverside gardens and open spaces, and a good choice of hotels and guest houses.
- 7.1.4 The town itself lies within the valley of the River Avon and has extended gradually in most directions but leaving a swathe of attractive open space alongside the river. Recent growth has not been excessive; about 700 additional homes in the past ten years or so, with a further 900 due to be built on sites identified in the adopted District Local Plan.
- 7.1.5 The physical characteristics of the town, and the pressures exerted upon it, indicate that substantial additional development could not be readily absorbed without major improvements to infrastructure and services.

7.2 Context

- 7.2.1 Stratford-upon-Avon lies within the 'Central Crescent', a ring of towns surrounding the Birmingham conurbation, according to Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11). It is envisaged that these towns will experience locally generated growth as well as a continuing, albeit reduced, need to accommodate households moving from the conurbation. Provision for employment is also expected although at a level and of a type which would not undermine the economic regeneration of the conurbation.
- 7.2.2 The Warwickshire Structure Plan (WASP) takes regional guidance on board in identifying the main towns in the County where it is anticipated that most development will be concentrated. Stratford-upon-Avon is specified as a 'main town' in this context, but other objectives of the WASP make it clear that the environment and heritage of such towns should be protected from unnecessary harm. Furthermore, the WASP stresses the importance of making them attractive, convenient and safe places to live in, work in and visit.

7.3 Objectives

- 7.3.1 Of the 14 operational objectives identified in the Local Plan Review, only one relates specifically to Stratford-upon-Avon itself; that is enhancing the town centre as the focus for a wide range of attractions and activities to ensure that its vitality and viability is maintained.
- 7.3.2 However, many of the other objectives are directly applicable to the town, in particular:
- satisfying housing needs
 - satisfying employment needs
 - protecting landscape character
 - protecting historic heritage
 - promoting alternative modes of transport to the car
 - supporting sustainable tourism
 - providing leisure opportunities.

7.4 Issues

7.4.1 The consultation leaflet 'Shaping our Town', published in April 2000, sets out clearly the issues affecting the town which need to be addressed in this Local Plan. These were generally endorsed through the consultation process.

7.4.2 The future planning of Stratford-upon-Avon over the next few years and in the longer term, as set out in this Local Plan, should endeavour to handle these issues in a thorough, balanced manner, acknowledging the constraints which apply in terms of assets, infrastructure and resources.

7.4.3 The key issues affecting the town are addressed in a range of District-wide policies and a number of specific policies set out in this section. The following issues go to the heart of what the Local Plan Review is seeking to achieve in providing a framework for the future planning of the town:

- to respect the landscape setting of the town through the identification of sensitive features which require long-term protection and management;
- to protect the character of the built form of the town through the encouragement of high quality, sensitive design of development;
- to protect existing facilities and provide new facilities which meet the particular needs of local people;
- to accommodate an appropriate scale of housing and employment development in accordance with the emphasis on the main towns of the County but within the overall requirements set out in WASP;
- to make provision for the types of dwellings which meet the needs of local people and for a wide range of jobs which reflect the changing local economy;
- to ensure that the scope to utilise previously-developed land within the urban area is maximised before further greenfield land on the edge of the town is taken up;
- to manage the impact of traffic by providing new facilities which reduce the numbers of vehicles moving around the town and encourage walking, cycling and public transport;
- to promote the role of the town centre as the focus for shopping, entertainment and tourism while enhancing its overall environment for local people and visitors to enjoy; and

- to encourage a diversity of development and activity through mixed-use schemes in appropriate locations, particularly within and on the edge of the town centre.

7.5 Research

7.5.1 A number of studies have been undertaken over recent years which have contributed to the preparation of the strategy for Stratford-upon-Avon in this Local Plan.

Stratford Town Fringe Landscape Study

7.5.2 The study was carried out jointly by Warwickshire County Council and Stratford-upon-Avon District Council. Its purpose was to assess the character of the landscape around the town and identify more effective ways of including landscape character as a consideration in the planning process including the review of the Local Plan.

7.5.3 The study identifies areas of distinct landscape and townscape character around and within the town. For land on the edge of the urban area, it assesses the quality and condition of each character area and prescribes what measures would be appropriate in order to ensure that the character of the town and its surroundings are maintained or enhanced if change does occur.

7.5.4 The outcome of the study has been used as the basis for **Policy SUA.1** and **Policy SUA.2** which provide a framework for protecting landscape quality around the town and the character of the urban area itself.

Urban Capacity Study

7.5.5 Government guidance in PPG3 and associated advice expects such studies to form the basis of a sequential approach to the managed release of sites for development in local plans. The emphasis is on identifying the scope to utilise previously-developed sites within urban areas for new housing, industry and other uses before further greenfield land is allocated for development.

7.5.6 The study carried out by the District Council considered comprehensively the opportunities within the town to redevelop sites for a range of uses. It provided the basis for assessing the suitability of allocating individual sites in the Local Plan in terms of impact, opportunity, marketability and deliverability. The findings of the Study led to the conclusion that further greenfield land on the edge of the town is not required for development during the period up to 2008.

- 7.5.7 The provisions of the various allocations for development identified in Stratford-upon-Avon in this Plan have been informed by the study process.

Retail Study

- 7.5.8 The District Council commissioned a Retail Study by Colliers Erdman Lewis which was published in August 1997. The scope of the Study included a comprehensive assessment of the need for additional retail floorspace in Stratford-upon-Avon for the period to 2011. A full 'health check' of the town centre was carried out as well as surveys of residents within the catchment area and shoppers in the town.
- 7.5.9 The Study concluded that in terms of food/convenience goods shopping, little additional provision needs to be made. With respect to retail warehousing for the sale of bulky goods, the Study estimated that a further 10,500 sq.m (approximately 3.0 ha.) could be considered although was not found to be essential to the function of the town. ~~The consultants stressed that locating such a development in the vicinity of the Maybird Centre should be avoided.~~
- 7.5.10 The Retail Study provides a clear justification for resisting further [large-scale](#) retail floorspace outside the town centre in accordance with [Policy COM.19](#).

Riverside Environs Study

- 7.5.11 The Study was commissioned by the District Council in 1997 to provide a vision for this highly significant part of the town. Stratford-upon-Avon is one of very few towns in this country to treat its riverside as a true 'frontage'. The river corridor forms a magnificent setting for the town, but the pressures exerted on it have led to incremental change to its character over the years.
- 7.5.12 The core recommendation of the Study was that the area along the river and adjacent parts of the town should be considered primarily for the benefit of those on foot rather than for vehicular traffic. A wide range of initiatives were presented to illustrate how the character of this area could be improved and managed. Some of these principles are being taken forward through the [Public Realm Study](#) [production of the Waterfront Master Plan](#) which is currently being prepared in parallel with the Royal Shakespeare Company's project to ~~create a new theatre in the centre of the town~~ [modernise its theatres and adjacent properties](#).

Parking Strategy

- 7.5.13 The District Council published a sustainable parking strategy for the town in 1998 following extensive involvement of a wide range of interested parties. It seeks to provide adequate accessibility to meet the needs of all sections of the community and visitors to the town while ensuring that the amenity, environment and the economy of the town are not compromised. One of the core objectives of the strategy is to effectively manage a reduction in the amount of on-street parking in the town centre while ensuring that access to shops and facilities remains convenient and attractive. The provision of park-and-ride facilities is at the heart of the strategy.
- 7.5.14 The approach taken on parking cannot on its own be a panacea to transport problems faced in the town. It should be seen as an integral part of a package of measures designed to manage traffic and encourage means of transport other than the private car.

7.5.14a [The parking strategy is due to be updated in light of the debate on the current Local Transport Plan bid.](#)

7.6 The Stratford-upon-Avon Transport Strategy

- 7.6.1 Car ownership in Stratford-on-Avon District is higher than the national average. Public transport services within the town and between the town and other settlements is inadequate for meeting the travel needs of most local people. The vast majority of visitors to the town come by private car. Consequently, most of the vehicular movements within the town are due to the wish of people to gain access to employment, shops and attractions within the town itself, rather than to pass through the town.
- 7.6.2 The town continues to experience economic growth with low unemployment rates. Its success in attracting new jobs and visitors has added to the transport problems. The adopted Local Plan allocates a significant amount of land for development and much of this is still to be implemented. This will be increased further by the expectation in the Warwickshire Structure Plan that most development to take place in the District over the next ten years should be located in Stratford-upon-Avon. The town's transport problems are also exacerbated by the historic nature of its street pattern which presents limited opportunity to improve the movement of traffic.





7.6.3 This situation manifests itself through the undesirable levels of congestion and pollution experienced in various parts of the town, especially during peak periods. There is also increasing concern for the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other road users. There is a real threat of exclusion from key services and facilities for those without access to the car. The need for an effective and integrated transport strategy to deal with the transport problems of Stratford, and to provide a genuine choice in the mode of travel available, is pressing.

7.6.4 The previous transport strategy for Stratford-upon-Avon, promoted in the early 1990s, was based on the construction of a northern extension to Seven Meadows Road between Evesham Place and Birmingham Road. This approach was significantly revised through the local plan process as a result of objections based on concerns about local environmental impacts.

7.6.5 The Inspector who held the Inquiry into modifications to the Local Plan recommended that a Multi-Modal Study be carried out to identify all possible options for resolving the transport problems of the town. This recommendation is in line with the new approach to national transport policy which has ruled out the 'predict and supply' approach and replaced it with demand management and an emphasis on exploring the potential for all possible modes of travel.

7.6.6 The County Council commissioned Oscar Faber to carry out a study to assess the potential for, and likely impact of, implementing demand management measures in Stratford-upon-Avon. The Study, published in March 2001, identified only limited potential for modal shift. It concluded that walking has considerable potential due to the relatively small size of the town but that cycling has a limited role and there are significant constraints to providing effective cycling facilities. Conventional public transport also has limited scope due to the size and population of the town. However, park-and-ride has the potential to transfer car movements from the road network, particularly to and from the town centre, in conjunction with appropriate parking restraints. It is expected that park-and-ride facilities should be fully operational and effective before the capacity of the town centre car parks is reduced.

7.6.7 The objectives of the transport strategy for Stratford-upon-Avon emerging from this study, are:

- to reduce the level of traffic growth;
- to improve the environment of the historic core;
- to improve safety for all road users;
- to reduce the impact of transport on the environment; and
- to widen travel choice by seeking a transport system that promotes a fairer, more inclusive society.

7.6.8 Based on the above, the Strategy comprises the following broad components:

Effective management of the existing network

7.6.9 There is a shared view between the District and County Councils and amongst the general public through consensus building exercises that the existing road network could be managed more efficiently and effectively. A key element of the transport strategy which will seek to achieve this is a new Urban Traffic Management and Control System, dedicated bus and cycle lanes where appropriate, and traffic reduction schemes.

Effective management of parking and enforcement

7.6.10 Parking is a growing problem in Stratford-upon-Avon. It is a visible and immediate issue in the town and one which is experienced in different ways by different people and groups. It is therefore an essential part of the transport strategy and the approach to parking is to provide adequate accessibility for the travel needs of all sections of the community whilst, at the same time, ensuring that the amenity, environment and the economy of the town is not compromised. Key elements are permanent all season park and ride facilities, decriminalisation of parking enforcement, and changes to parking provision and pricing.

Promotion of environmentally friendly modes of travel

- 7.6.11 A major cause of congestion in the town is the increased use of the car. The aim is to provide a genuine choice of transport which is environmentally friendly, safe and reliable, and has the potential to influence a shift from car based travel to alternative modes. Key elements include pedestrian priority schemes, improvements to public transport infrastructure, dedicated bus and cycle routes where appropriate, improved junction arrangements and traffic signals, a steam locomotive centre and a bus/rail interchange.

Integration of land use and transport

- 7.6.12 The interaction between land use planning and transport is now recognised in the preparation of planning policies and transport plans. The Transport White Paper emphasises the importance of land use planning to develop integrated transport policy and to reduce the need to travel. The Local Plan Review sets a clear strategy for influencing future patterns of development in the District. Key elements include the concentration of most new development in Stratford-upon-Avon where public transport infrastructure is more easily available and the utilisation of brownfield land for development. A number of brownfield sites are located close to the centre where services and facilities are readily available within walking and cycling distance and where increased dwelling densities are achievable.

Promotion of travel awareness

- 7.6.13 There is a consensus amongst the general public that individuals, businesses, schools and attractions are all part of the cause of transport problems and should therefore be part of the solution. Travel awareness to encourage people to take proper responsibility for their travel needs is an essential part of the transport strategy. A key element of this is the approach embodied in Green Transport Plans, Safe Routes to School and educational initiatives.
- 7.6.14 It should be emphasised that the Local Plan alone cannot resolve all the complex transport issues facing the town because it only deals with land use matters. Mechanisms such as development briefs, legal agreements and other strategies will be used to deal with issues beyond the remit of the Plan itself.
- 7.6.15 The key elements outlined above are consistent with the objectives of the Warwickshire Structure Plan and the Local Transport Plan.

- 7.6.16 Warwickshire County Council, as the highway authority, and the District Council have committed significant sums of funding towards the implementation of many components of the overall strategy. However, developer contributions will also be necessary to ensure the implementation of certain aspects and also to mitigate the traffic impact of proposed new development. A revised methodology for calculating developer contributions has been prepared by the District Planning Authority to cover this issue, which will have the status of supplementary planning guidance (see **Annexe 5**).

- 7.6.17 The Local Plan Review adopts the 'plan, monitor and manage' approach promoted in PPG3. Effective monitoring of the transport effects of the proposals in the Plan is therefore an essential component in the process of informing a regular review of the transport strategy. At this stage, the assessment has been based on the assumption that development proposals in the Plan to serve the period to 2008 are implemented by that date and an estimated maximum potential for modal shift is achieved.

- 7.6.18 In the event that further significant greenfield allocations need to be made on the edge of Stratford-upon-Avon in the period beyond 2008, the transport strategy will have to be reviewed to consider road-based options. ~~Potential schemes for investigation may include a Shottery Bypass to the west of the town. Detailed investigations of any such road-based options will be carried out in conjunction with a subsequent review of the Local Plan.~~

7.7 Policies and Proposals

- 7.7.1 Many of the policies set out elsewhere in the Local Plan Review are applicable to Stratford-upon-Avon and should be referred to in gaining a full picture of the future planning of the town.

- 7.7.1a [Particular note should be made that certain areas of land within and on the edge of the town are safeguarded for transport purposes as identified in Policy PR.10.](#)

[Recommended references: Policies STR.1, STR.4, PR.10, EF.3, COM.2-COM.11, COM.16, COM.19, COM.21]

- 7.7.2 The policies and proposals which follow are specifically related to the town and derive from the issues set out above.



7.8 Town setting

Policy SUA.1

In considering proposals for the development and use of land outside the Built-Up Area Boundary, on the fringe of the urban area of Stratford-upon-Avon, regard will be given to their potential impact on the distinguishing features of the 'character areas' defined. Opportunities will be sought to manage and enhance landscape features in order to sustain them for in the longer term.

[Recommended references: Policy PR.1]

Explanation

7.8.1 The character areas to which the policy refers have been identified through a landscape character assessment. Broadly speaking, landscape character is concerned with the inherent quality and distinctiveness of a landscape. Landscape character assessment looks at how the visual, natural and cultural elements of the landscape combine to make areas different from one another. Such an assessment helps to identify what gives a landscape its own unique identity and interest.

7.8.2 The 'character based' approach to landscape assessment is supported in PPG7, the Warwickshire Structure Plan and by the Countryside Agency, which helped develop the methodology. A Stratford Town Fringe Landscape Study was carried out in accordance with the Countryside Agency's Interim Landscape Character Assessment Guidance, 1999. The study builds on and refines the county-wide character assessment undertaken by Warwickshire County Council in association with the then Countryside Commission and published in 1993 as the 'Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines'.

7.8.3 The assessment started with a review of the individual components that make up a landscape type - geology, soils, archaeology, and habitat biodiversity - and in particular changes in land use, field pattern and tree cover. The next step involved a visual assessment of the landscape, recording important local features and identifying the key qualities that define landscape character.

7.8.4 Such an analysis involves examining the following aspects:

- the designation or coding of the parcel or feature;
- its key characteristics;
- how it relates to the urban edge;
- how it connects to the wider landscape type;
- its current condition; and
- its relationship to the landscape type.

7.8.5 Four distinct character areas have been identified through the assessment, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Proposal SUA.A

The creation of a wildlife area is proposed at Clopton in order to secure long-term nature conservation and enhancement measures.

[see Inset Map 1.1]

Explanation

7.8.6 The ecological significance of this area of land was clearly demonstrated in the Stratford-upon-Avon Landscape Study produced in 1992. Its character is especially valued by the local community. Future management should be geared to maintaining and enhancing the diversity of the flora and safeguarding the area as a local amenity. The District Council is seeking implementation of the proposal through agreement with the landowner, although it has indicated a willingness to consider other measures within its powers to secure the long term protection of the land.

[7.8.6a](#) [The area has a close inter-relationship with the adjacent Welcombe Hills/Clopton Park Local Nature Reserve.](#)

7.9 Town character

Policy SUA.2

In considering proposals within the built-up area of the town, regard will be given to the existing components of the built form and the extent to which the proposed scheme would complement or conflict with the character of the area affected.

[Recommended references: Policy PR.1]

Explanation

7.9.1 An assessment of town character was carried out as part of the Stratford Town Fringe Landscape Study. To that end, the study adopted a two-way view. On the one hand, the settlement is seen as part of the landscape. On the other hand, the landscape is seen as part of the town. This perspective leads to the basic distinction of three main areas: the countryside surrounding the town; fringe features; and built-up areas, mainly in residential uses. Fringe features are for the most part non-residential parts of the town that lie at the edge of town or did lie at what was the edge of the town historically. Examples of such features are churches, schools, hospitals, cemeteries or recreation grounds. The three-way distinction recognises

- that a built-up area boundary is an artificial designation and there will be landscape features within the boundary and built-up features outside the boundary.
- 7.9.2 As in the case of the landscape character assessment, one of the principal aims of the approach is to identify and describe areas of distinct landscape and townscape character within the urban area. In general this results in defining areas of broadly similar character and distinct sub-areas within them.
- 7.9.3 The survey of the built up area uses a similar method to that of the landscape assessment but focuses on different aspects. The principal components include the position of the feature within the town; the generic form of the area or feature (street/block patterns, streets, plot patterns, plots, planting and buildings); the dominant land use (commercial/industrial, institutional, recreational, residential) and the relative amounts of building and planting. The approach also focuses on the historical development of the town and the contribution of that development to its present character. Assessment of the built-up area further involves a visual analysis recording important local features and identifying the key qualities that define character.
- 7.9.4 A Town Design Statement has been prepared which provides an important source of information and analysis when considering the effect of development proposals on the character of the town.
- 7.9.5 The basic character areas which have been identified within the town are illustrated in Figure 2.

7.10 Environmental enhancement

Policy SUA.3

Improvements to the appearance of Stratford-upon-Avon will be sought, in conjunction with developers, property owners and relevant organisations. Particular attention will be given to the following areas:

- the river environs, including Bridgeway;
- along Birmingham Road; and
- the canal and railway corridors.

Explanation

- 7.10.1 Stratford-upon-Avon is an attractive town and its fabric and appearance is generally well maintained. However, parts of the urban area do suffer from intense pressure of activity or because they are becoming outworn.

- 7.10.2 The Riverside Environs Study identified a number of aspects of the area alongside the river which would benefit from a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to the management of activities and development. The ~~Public Realm Study~~ [Waterfront Master Plan](#), currently being prepared, will further assess this part of the town which is fundamentally important to its character and the impression given to visitors. The character of Bridgeway needs particular attention as it is the main pedestrian route from car and coach parks to the town centre for large numbers of visitors. Currently, the experience of this route does not create a good impression of the town.

- 7.10.3 Of all the main routes into the town centre, Birmingham Road is most dominated by commercial and industrial uses. In recent years major environmental improvements have been achieved through various redevelopment projects. This process of regeneration is due to continue through a number of development proposals in this Plan. The proposals provide a valuable opportunity to further upgrade the image of this area and should be promoted in association with improvements to roads and footways where possible.

- 7.10.4 As with many towns, the canal and railway corridors were the focus of industrial activity. Regrettably, little attention was previously given to the impression that people using these forms of transport gained of the town. ~~British Waterways and Railtrack now acknowledge the responsibility they have and various environmental improvements have been made, particularly alongside the canal. However, it is hoped that various interested parties working in partnership will bring forward further projects.~~ [British Waterways are custodians of inland waterways while Network Rail are responsible for managing the railway infrastructure. Both bodies are active in maintaining and improving the networks within their charge and a range of improvements have been made recently to the canal environment through the town.](#)

- 7.10.4a [There is a wish to build on the environmental improvements already achieved in the town and it is hoped that partnership arrangements with interested parties will bring forward further projects. The District Council will encourage developers to have full regard to the canal and rail corridors and, where appropriate, their enhancement will be secured through planning conditions and S106 agreements.](#)



Proposal SUA.AA

The Waterfront area, as identified on the Proposals Map, is designated as an action area. The District Council, in partnership with Warwickshire County Council, will prepare a Master Plan for the future of the area to achieve the following objectives:

- to create a world class public realm which complements the proposed development of the Royal Shakespeare Company's theatres and landholdings;
- to accommodate the needs of those who use the area and travel through it; and
- to improve the character and quality of the physical environment

To achieve these objectives the Master Plan will:

- inform the preparation of detailed designs for the area;
- seek to avoid conflict and safeguard land use;
- form the basis for securing and co-ordinating funding and resources;
- reflect the importance locally, nationally and internationally of the proposals; and
- allow for inclusive and effective consultation.

Explanation

7.10.5 The Waterfront Action Area is shown on Inset Map 1.1b and extends from the Fisherman's Car Park in the north to Seven Meadows Road in the south. The District Council, in partnership with Warwickshire County Council, is committed to the preparation of a Master Plan for the area following extensive public consultation.

7.10.6 Key proposals in the draft Master Plan include improvements to the Bancroft area, the creation of a pedestrian priority area in Southern Lane, enhancement proposals for the Recreation Ground and urban design improvements to Bridgeway.

7.10.7 It is intended that the Master Plan will be adopted as supplementary planning guidance. The further development and implementation of detailed proposals for the Action Area will be guided by the Master Plan and will proceed outside the statutory Local Plan preparation process.

7.11 Transport

Policy SUA.4

The provision of permanent park-and-ride facilities to serve Stratford-upon-Avon will be promoted in partnership with Warwickshire County Council. Any site which is proposed should:

- **minimise any impact on the setting of the town and on the wider landscape;**
- **be well-located in relation to the sources of potential users and the road network; and**
- **be sufficiently large to accommodate the predicted level of use.**

Explanation

7.11.1 There are clear advantages in the establishment of park-and-ride facilities in Stratford-upon-Avon. Successful schemes will reduce traffic congestion, energy consumption and pollution and would thereby enhance the town centre environment.

7.11.2 Any scheme will require a fast route from the collection car park to the town centre to be most effective. Consideration will have to be given to bus priority at key junctions or on congested parts of the highway network.

7.11.3 This Plan does not itself propose a specific site for a park-and-ride facility. ~~The County and District Councils are currently working together to identify a site on the northern edge of the town~~ The County Council is currently promoting a scheme on land to the north of Bishopton Lane which would be the most appropriate initial facility to be provided in operational terms. It is anticipated that at least three sites could eventually be provided, one of which would be south of the river.

7.11.4 The effective operation of a park-and-ride service will require a reduction in the number of parking spaces provided in the town centre and in public car parks. However, such a reduction will not be made until a park-and-ride facility which provides an equivalent number of parking spaces has been established.

Proposal SUA.B

Land adjacent to Stratford-upon-Avon Railway Station is allocated for the provision of a bus/rail interchange.

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

- 7.11.5 This location was identified in the adopted District Local Plan as an effective opportunity for promoting the use of public transport serving the town. Attempts in the past to encourage bus services to link with the railway have been hindered by the poor location of the rail station in relation to the road network. However, the proposed adjustments to the highway arrangements associated with the redevelopment of the Cattle Market and the potential use of the proposed transport corridor between Alcester Road and Birmingham Road will assist the use of such a facility.

Proposal SUA.C

Land between Western Road and the railway line is allocated for the provision of a Steam Locomotive Centre.

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

- 7.11.6 A steam service is now well established between Birmingham and Stratford-upon-Avon, operating on a seasonal basis. There has been a longstanding aspiration of the operator to secure a facility to allow engines to be turned round and to take on coal and water. A site was identified in the adopted Local Plan but this is now seen to be inappropriate in operational terms. Consequently, an alternative site is now proposed alongside the railway off Western Road, which meets the technical requirements of the steam service operators.

Proposal SUA.D

The creation of new pedestrian and cycle links are proposed:

1. between Masons Road and Western Road; and
2. between Shottery Brook Business Park and the committed residential development off Birmingham Road

[see Inset Maps 1.1 and 1.1a]

Explanation

- 7.11.7 The railway and canal create major physical barriers to movement between certain parts of the town on foot and by cycle. Two opportunities have been identified which will help to overcome this situation and make such journeys more convenient.

[7.11.7a The District Council is presently working in partnership with the County Council and with the Stratford Cyclists' Forum to promote and implement a network of Quality Cycling Corridors as part of the Local Transport Plan process. In this regard, the District Planning Authority recognises that other schemes could be identified and the policies of the Local Plan Review are adequate to deal with such proposals.](#)

Between Masons Road and Western Road

- 7.11.8 There is currently no direct route between the Alcester Road and Birmingham Road areas of the town. Consequently, those on foot and cycle have to use a significantly longer and inconvenient route. Close liaison with British Waterways and Network Rail will be required to create the proposed link due to the proximity of the route to the canal and railway. It will also be important in the design of this new route to ensure that it is safe and secure for users, particularly at night.

Between Shottery Brook Business Park and Birmingham Road

- 7.11.9 The development schemes in the Bishopton area of the town provide an opportunity to create a new link for pedestrians and cyclists across the railway line. The proposed layouts for the Business Park and the residential development to the east of the railway incorporate a route up to the line itself, although no provision is made for a bridge to be provided at this stage. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to indicate the intention for such a link to be secured and to safeguard the route accordingly.



Policy SUA.5

A range of measures will be encouraged within Stratford-upon-Avon town centre in order to improve the pedestrian environment. The following specific opportunities will be assessed further within the context set by the traffic management strategy for the town:

1. the provision of widened footways, improved pedestrian crossings and traffic calming in Bridge Street, including its junction with Bridgefoot; [and](#)
2. the introduction of a pedestrian priority area in High Street.
- ~~3. the pedestrianisation of Bridgefoot between Bridge Street and Bridgeway.~~

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[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

7.11.10 There has been a longstanding intention of the District Council to extend pedestrian priority areas within the heart of Stratford-upon-Avon town centre. A number of phases have been implemented, most recently the scheme covering Meer Street and lower Henley Street which was completed in 2000.

7.11.11 The main objectives in taking a comprehensive approach to pedestrian priority are:

- to reduce energy consumption;
- to reduce pedestrian/vehicle conflict and improve pedestrian safety;
- to create, as far as possible, a traffic free environment which will be safer, healthier and provide increased amenity to those who live and work in or visit the town;
- to safeguard the structure, stability and appearance of buildings and townscape, by reducing the impact of vehicles; and
- to enhance the appearance of the town centre through the careful design and selection of appropriate treatment of new pedestrian areas.

7.11.12 It is proposed to introduce further phases on an individual basis in order to minimise disruption to traffic movement and to trade and also to limit the adverse impact of construction works. The detailed design of each phase will be dependent upon consultation and survey work which will be carried out in advance of each scheme.

7.11.13 Two areas are identified in the policy although the order in which they are listed is not necessarily the eventual order of implementation. This will be dependent on the wider transport strategy for the town and the availability of resources to implement the schemes.

Bridge Street

7.11.14 This is the main shopping street in the town but the high volumes of traffic and on-street parking has a deleterious effect on the quality of the environment for shoppers and visitors. The various functions performed by this street means that it would not be possible to remove all traffic. However, introducing a one-way traffic flow would create considerable opportunities to widen footways and to improve the safety of all road users, especially pedestrians and cyclists. The means of improving facilities for bus passengers will be thoroughly assessed.

7.11.15 A comprehensive scheme has already been prepared following extensive consultation but this will require reassessment before a commitment to its implementation can be given.

High Street

7.11.16 The creation of a Pedestrian Priority Area in High Street would improve pedestrian safety and enhance the appearance of one of the busiest shopping streets within the town centre. Initially a trial scheme is proposed to establish the success of the proposal before implementing a permanent scheme. ~~The redevelopment of Bell Court (see **Proposal SUA.E**) provides an opportunity to seek a contribution towards the cost of the scheme by the developer.~~

Bridgefoot

~~7.11.17 The creation of a pedestrianised area would make a considerable improvement to this important link between the reception areas for visitors, car parks, Bancroft Gardens, the theatres and the town centre. However, its introduction is dependent on the widening of Bridgeway to allow two way flow (see **Policy PR.10.3**). Further consideration will be given to the previous intention to incorporate a bus lane through the pedestrianised area.~~

[7.11.17a](#) [The Waterfront area has been designated as an Action Area as shown on Inset Map 1.1b. Within this area a Master Plan will be prepared which will incorporate a comprehensive package of measures to improve the pedestrian experience of the whole area.](#)

7.12 Town Centre

Policy SUA.6

Within the town centre of Stratford-upon-Avon, as defined on the Proposals Map, the redevelopment and re-use of property for retail and other forms of commercial uses will be supported subject to the character of the area being maintained.

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

- 7.12.1 The town centre is dependent on continuing confidence and investment, not only in new schemes but also in the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing premises. Due to changing circumstances over time it is likely that some sites may come forward for redevelopment. In principle, it is reasonable to accommodate such schemes in order to stimulate investment and commercial confidence.
- 7.12.2 However, the District Planning Authority does not wish to sacrifice the qualities of the historic fabric of the town centre in order to achieve this. The whole of the town centre lies within a Conservation Area, the character of which should be protected and enhanced. Consequently any redevelopment scheme will have to be of the highest quality.
- 7.12.3 Such redevelopment schemes need not be restricted solely to retailing uses. An element of office or residential uses may be appropriate, for example, but it is stressed that retailing should be the predominant use, particularly on the ground floor.

Proposal SUA.E

~~The redevelopment of the Bell Court Shopping Centre and adjacent multi-storey car park will be supported, subject to the following specific provisions being satisfied:~~

- ~~• retailing should remain the dominant use within the scheme and a supermarket should be retained;~~
- ~~• a substantial car park facility should be incorporated;~~
- ~~• a Shopmobility facility should be provided as an integral part of the design, function and layout of the development;~~
- ~~• an element of residential use should be provided;~~
- ~~• a contribution to the implementation of a pedestrian priority area in High Street, in accordance with Policy SUA.5.2;~~
- ~~• the overall design should be sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area.~~

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

- 7.12.4 ~~The existing precinct was originally built in the mid 1970s and comprises a range of shop units, including the only supermarket remaining in the town centre. Whilst being a popular area for shoppers, the physical nature of Bell Court has become rather outmoded. A refurbishment scheme is currently being carried out but, in the longer term, a more comprehensive approach may be promoted which this policy covers.~~
- 7.12.5 ~~Any scheme to redevelop the centre will be expected to ensure that retailing forms the dominant use, especially on the ground floor. The District Planning Authority also expects that a food store will be retained due to the important function that it provides to certain sections of the community. However, it would be appropriate for other uses to be provided on the upper floors, particularly the inclusion of a residential element as a means of attracting more people to live in the town centre.~~
- 7.12.6 ~~An integral part of the redevelopment of Bell Court is the opportunity it presents to incorporate the creation of a pedestrian priority area in High Street. For example, a more dominant entrance to the shopping centre could be designed off what will eventually become one of the prime pedestrianized streets in the town centre.~~



Policy SUA.7

Retail uses within Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 will be expected to remain the predominant activity at ground floor level on the following primary shopping streets within the town centre:

- Bridge Street
- Henley Street (lower end only)
- High Street
- Sheep Street (north-side only)
- Wood Street

Proposals for non-retail uses at ground floor level will be considered against the following criteria:

- the number of existing and permitted non-retail units along the particular frontage affected; and
- the extent to which harm would be caused to the liveliness, character or amenity of the area.

Non-retail commercial uses will generally be supported on upper floors of properties situated in the primary shopping streets.

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

7.12.7 There is concern that in certain instances office-based businesses or food and drink outlets, particularly on the ground floor, can have a detrimental impact on the retail function of Stratford-upon-Avon town centre. This process could eventually affect its competitiveness against other centres, resulting in a decline which can be reflected in the general fabric of the buildings. It also reduces the level of shopping facilities available to local residents, especially the less mobile. In cases where such evidence is substantiated, the District Planning Authority will resist the change of use from a retail unit to an office or food and drink use.

7.12.8 In particular, the gradual influx of non-retail activities in many of the primary streets of Stratford-upon-Avon town centre has led to a change in the appearance and function of these streets. This has affected the quality of the conservation area due to the adoption of standard company styles of frontage and signage and also the vitality of the shopping centre in terms of the range of goods sold. In order to prevent a further concentration of non-retail commercial premises in the core of the town centre, the District Planning Authority will apply a restrictive approach to such changes of use unless it is clear that the impact of a particular proposal will not undermine the primary shopping function of the core of the town centre.

Policy SUA.8

Particular attention will be given to the means of improving the appearance and function of secondary shopping areas in the town centre.

Explanation

7.12.9 While primary frontages may be restricted to retail use, the District Planning Authority will generally take a more flexible approach to the use of existing commercial properties along secondary frontages elsewhere in the town centre. It is in these areas that diversification has most to contribute to ensure that properties are fully utilised and the overall environment is maintained.

7.12.9a [The western part of the town centre has an important role to play in providing shops and services that meet the day to day needs of local people as it lies beyond the area most frequented by visitors. The District Planning Authority would welcome a further diversification of retail outlets, particularly those selling food and other convenience goods.](#)

7.12.10 Greenhill Street in particular presents opportunities for improvement. This street forms part of an important pedestrian route from the railway station to the town centre and has scope for regeneration. The implementation of **Proposal SUA.M** partly for retail uses will assist this process.

Policy SUA.9

The loss of existing commercial uses within and adjacent to the town centre will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the proposed alternative use will be of comparable benefit to the vitality and viability of the town centre.

[Recommended references: Policy COM.2]

Explanation

7.12.11 Both PPG6: Town Centres and Retail Developments (1996) and the Warwickshire Structure Plan emphasise the importance of maintaining a diversity of uses in town centres. This helps to ensure that a range of uses are accessible to people who live and work in or visit the area and makes an important contribution to ensuring the ongoing vitality and viability of the centre.

7.12.11a For the purposes of this policy, commercial uses cover Classes A1 (retail), A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (pubs, restaurants, etc) and C1 (hotels and hostels). The latter is justified given the role of Stratford-upon-Avon as a major tourist attraction and the importance of providing a wide range of opportunities for visitors to stay overnight in accommodation that is accessible to services provided in the town centre.

7.12.12 It is intended that a wide range of complementary uses should be located within town centres, including leisure and entertainment, hotel accommodation, and services such as banks and building societies, restaurants and cafes.

7.12.13 The District Planning Authority wishes to ensure that such established uses which are well related to the town centre are not squeezed out, particularly in the face of pressure to accommodate residential development within the urban area. Although alternative commercial, leisure or similar uses would be supported in principle, the complete conversion or redevelopment of such sites for residential use is likely to be resisted due to the detrimental effect this would have on the function of the town centre.

Policy SUA.10

The creation of dwellings in the town centre will be encouraged, except in circumstances where existing commercial uses would be lost. Residential uses will be sought as an integral part of development proposals within the town centre.

Explanation

7.12.14 Empty space above commercial premises in the town centre is a wasted asset. Where opportunities come forward to re-use this space, the District Planning Authority will normally support such initiatives. Upper floors may also assist in providing affordable housing, and in meeting the needs of single or elderly people, or others requiring convenient access to shops and facilities.

7.12.15 The provision of dwellings contributes to the vitality of town centres particularly during the evening. It can also help local businesses both from a revenue and a security point of view. However, on balance it would be inappropriate for residential uses to displace commercial premises in the town centre, particularly at ground floor level, as this would serve to undermine the viability and attractiveness of the centre to shoppers and visitors.

7.12.16 It will be necessary to provide separate means of pedestrian access to dwellings and to comply with other health and safety requirements.

7.12.17 The District Planning Authority will assess the scope which schemes for commercial development in the town centre present for incorporating dwellings into the design and will expect such provision to be made in appropriate circumstances.

7.13 Tourism and leisure

Policy SUA.11

In considering proposals by the Royal Shakespeare Company for its artistic, production, administrative and support operations in Stratford-upon-Avon, regard will be given to the need to:

- encourage its contribution to the economic and cultural life of the town and region;
- support its growth and development as a national and international arts resource;
- recognise the historic and cultural importance of its links to the town and its role in the contemporary interpretation of Shakespeare's heritage;
- recognise the RST/Swan and its environs at Waterside as a focal point for RSC activities including performance, production, education and support facilities; and
- support initiatives to increase operational efficiency and improve accessibility.

In assessing proposals for new development the following criteria will be taken into account:

- significant new development should be considered within an agreed planning framework which seeks to balance the needs of the RSC with those of the local community;
- new buildings should be of high quality design and construction, and have regard to the character and scale of the local area and to features which contribute to its distinctiveness;
- a comprehensive approach should be taken to the design of buildings and improvements to the public realm in any proposals for new development;
- an integrated approach to assessing the impact of development on the transport network of the town, including car parking, is required;
- complementary facilities for users of the theatres (e.g. restaurant and retail outlets) will generally be permitted where these are ancillary to the main use;



- proposals for new uses in and around the theatres should complement, enhance and extend the cultural provision in this area; and
- where possible, and consistent with its operational needs, maximum use of and access to the RSC's facilities should be offered to the local community.

Explanation

- 7.13.1 The economies of Stratford-upon-Avon and the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) are interdependent and it is important to ensure the effective and viable operation of the company in the town. The RSC is seeking to rebuild and refurbish its artistic and operational base in the town in order to overcome a wide range of deficiencies.
- 7.13.2 The vision of the RSC in its current project is to build on the strengths of the existing location on Waterside by creating a 'theatre village' which is open and welcoming to all. Central to this approach is the provision of three theatre spaces of appropriate scale and specification, including a new theatre which will meet the future expectations of actors, technicians and audience.
- 7.13.3 The design of such a theatre will be a highly sensitive issue given the prominent location of the site. It presents a major challenge and opportunity to devise a scheme which will make a bold architectural statement while, at the same time, not undermining the character and enjoyment of the established open spaces and the river.
- 7.13.4 The criteria set out in the policy indicate the wide range of issues which need to be satisfactorily addressed in considering the proposals when they come forward. It should also be emphasised that the main theatre is a Grade II* listed building. Consequently, the provisions of Policy EF.14 in this Local Plan will be taken fully into account in considering any proposal affecting the building.
- 7.13.5 Related to the RSC project, and being undertaken concurrently, is a ~~Public Realm Study of~~ the production of a Waterfront Master Plan for the area alongside the river, including the Bancroft and Riverside Gardens. This study is looking comprehensively at the function and appearance of this area and will cover matters which will have a bearing on the RSC proposals, such as traffic management, pedestrian movement and the range of activities supported on the various public open spaces. Opportunities to calm traffic on Waterside and to improve pedestrian safety in this area will be an important part of the proposals.

Policy SUA.12

The provision of additional conference facilities, either purpose-built or in association with existing hotels, will be encouraged within the urban area of Stratford-upon-Avon.

Explanation

- 7.13.6 Business related tourism has been identified as a specific growth sector in the Tourism Strategy for the District. It is recognised that the expansion of conference facilities, particularly within Stratford-upon-Avon, could help to diversify the tourism industry and provide an additional source of income, particularly out of peak season for visitors. It is unlikely, however, that Stratford-upon-Avon could support a major new conference centre, and this policy is primarily aimed at enabling the improvement of existing facilities and the provision of facilities in association with other forms of commercial uses.
- 7.13.7 In considering proposals, the District Planning Authority will have regard to the amenity and privacy of residents and will also insist on a high standard of design and associated services.

Policy SUA.13

Within the urban area of Stratford-upon-Avon the change of use of residential properties to guest houses and other forms of visitor accommodation will be limited to the following areas:

- Evesham Place - both sides
- Grove Road - west side only
- Shipston Road - west side only
- Alcester Road - north side only, from the junction with Masons Road to Shottery Brook.

[see Inset Maps 1.1 and 1.1a]

Explanation

- 7.13.8 The policy seeks to prevent this form of commercial use from becoming established in other areas of the town as it can generate patterns of activity which are disruptive to residents and have an adverse impact on the character of a residential area. The approach taken is to restrict such changes of use to those parts of the town which already support a high concentration of such premises.
- 7.13.9 It should not be implied that all properties on the roads identified are suitable for such a change of use or would necessarily receive planning permission. The District Planning Authority will expect any application to satisfy other relevant policies contained in the Local Plan Review relating to the impact of proposed uses on the character of the local area.

7.14 Facilities

Policy SUA.14

The retention of existing shops and services which meet the needs of the residents of Stratford-upon-Avon will be sought. In addition, the provision of new community facilities to serve the town will be supported in appropriate locations.

[Recommended references: Policies COM.2, COM.3]

Explanation

- 7.14.1 Policies elsewhere in the Local Plan Review seek to protect and enhance the provision of shops and facilities which serve local residents whether they live in rural communities or larger residential areas.
- 7.14.2 There are various shops and community facilities located within the urban area of Stratford-upon-Avon, outside the town centre, which are valued by local people. The gradual loss of such facilities has been detrimental to the quality and function of these areas and the District Planning Authority wishes to resist any further depletion.

Policy SUA.15

In assessing proposals at the Stratford-upon-Avon Leisure and Visitor Centre any scheme will be expected to:

- improve the level and range of facilities provided;
- protect the character of the river environs;
- retain the open nature of the Area of Restraint in accordance with Policy EF.3; and
- minimise any adverse impact on surrounding uses and properties; [and](#)
- [secure improvements to the visual appearance of the building and its surroundings.](#)

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

- 7.14.3 The Stratford Leisure and Visitor Centre was opened in 1995 and provides a comprehensive range of recreation facilities for local residents as well as acting as a 'gateway' to the town for visitors arriving by car and coach. The District Council will continue to assess the opportunity to improve the facilities provided at the Centre and its overall operation. Any proposals which come forward will need to be considered carefully for their impact on the character of the area given the sensitive location of the site close to the river. [It should also be recognised that the Centre is situated within a conservation area.](#)

Proposal SUA.F

Land off the Southern Relief Road (Eastern Extension) at Bridgetown is allocated for the provision of a local centre, to include a ~~foodstore~~ [convenience store](#).

[see Inset Map 1.1]

Explanation

- 7.14.4 There are limited facilities south of the river to serve residents of Bridgetown and also future occupiers of the new residential development. The construction of a new relief road between Banbury Road and Shipston Road provides an opportunity to locate a local centre in this part of the town. This should include a convenience store but might also incorporate other retail outlets and a public house. The most appropriate location for such a facility would appear to be on the northern side of the proposed roundabout on the relief road, adjacent to Bridgetown Farm.

[7.14.4a The scale of retail provision should be such as to meet the needs of local residents primarily and not affect established patterns of retail activity or attract large numbers of customers from other parts of the town. On that basis the overall amount of retail floorspace within the local centre should not be greater than 1000 square metres \(gross\) and any individual retail unit should not be larger than 350 square metres \(gross\).](#)

Proposal SUA.G

Land off Arden Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, is reserved for medical and medical-related uses.

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

- 7.14.5 The Government has set out a strategy of improving and extending primary and secondary health care. In order to provide scope for this strategy to be implemented at the local level it is proposed that the whole of the site currently and previously used by Stratford Hospital be retained for future medical and associated uses.
- 7.14.6 This proposal would encourage the extension of the existing facilities and also facilitate:
- the use of an accessible site with adequate parking;
 - the desire of local doctors' practices to relocate to this site;
 - the extension of primary care facilities to cover a wider range of treatments;



- the relocation of other medical facilities which are currently dispersed within the town;
- the needs of increasing numbers of elderly people in the town in future years, as forecast by the NHS; and
- the provision of extra step-down beds to reduce visitors having to travel to more remote hospitals.

7.14.7 The disposition of medical and medical-related uses on the existing hospital site, including the relocation of surgeries and other uses onto the site, is essential within the context of the Government's strategy of improving and extending primary and secondary health care. The site is conveniently located in relation to the town centre and public transport and provides adequate on-site car parking.

7.14.8 On that basis, it is appropriate to reserve the entire hospital site for medical and associated uses and the area of land covered by this Proposal is safeguarded for such uses.

Proposal SUA.H

~~Land comprising approximately 11.2 hectares to the west of Ann Hathaway's Cottage, Shottery, is allocated for the provision of public open space.~~

~~[see Inset Map 1.1]~~

Explanation

~~7.14.9 There are extensive and varied demands placed upon the town's open space network, both by its residents and through the large numbers of visitors.~~

~~7.14.10 Policy COM.4 sets out the standards that the District Planning Authority wishes to achieve regarding the provision of open space. Current provision of open space in Stratford-upon-Avon equates to about 59 hectares. This figure includes incidental open spaces that are found within residential areas, playing fields, parks and gardens and informal recreational space. Despite this, there are still shortfalls that need to be addressed relating both to the quantity and distribution of provision. There are concentrations of open space at the Welcombe Hills in the north and also adjoining the River Avon. Conversely, several residential areas in the town suffer from poor accessibility to open space.~~

~~7.14.11 This proposal will provide accessible open space for the western side of the town. The land is well related to a number of residential areas. Access can be gained by means of existing footpaths links, although some upgrading of these would be desirable. It will also allow for extensive views across open~~

~~countryside to the west and help limit the visual impact of the built up area of the town from that direction.~~

~~7.14.12 The District Planning Authority considers it appropriate that the land be generally retained in its current state so that its landscape qualities can be maintained or enhanced. Also, in seeking to implement this proposal, regard will be given to Policy EF.6 and Policy EF.7 which deal with nature conservation and ecological enhancement.~~

Proposal SUA.HA

Land comprising approximately 5.0 hectares north of Bishopton Lane is allocated for the provision of public open space.

[see Inset Map 1.1]

Explanation

7.14.13 It is apparent from an assessment of the quantity, quality and distribution of public open space in Stratford-upon-Avon that there is a shortfall of provision in the Bishopton area. Given the lack of opportunities to meet this deficit elsewhere in this part of the town, the allocation of this land for public open space is justified. The area of land proposed provides scope to incorporate access to the canalside.

Proposal SUA.HB

Land comprising approximately 4.0 hectares is proposed for the creation of Community Woodland and Meadowland to the south of Kipling Road. Arrangements for its long term retention and management will be secured.

[see Inset Map 1.1]

Explanation

7.14.14 The proposal covers that part of the Community Woodland and Meadowland designated in the adopted District Local Plan which is not included in the Section 106 Agreement associated with the Bridgetown housing development. It remains the District Planning Authority's intention that the remaining part of the original proposal should be secured as it forms an integral part of the overall concept for environmental improvements in the Bridgetown area.

7.15 Housing, industrial and other development proposals

- 7.15.1 A wide range of sites are proposed for development in Stratford-upon-Avon. The scale of intended development accords with the objective of the Warwickshire Structure Plan that most development should take place in the 'main towns' of the County.
- 7.15.2 Apart from commitments which were identified in the adopted Local Plan, all but one of the sites identified in the Review utilise previously-developed land in accordance with Government policy which seeks the re-use of such sites in preference to greenfield land.
- 7.15.3 It is acknowledged that each site will have a degree of impact on the local area. ~~Certain constraints need to be resolved and all sites require.~~ Developers will be required to work within the constraints that apply to each site and to include mitigation measures to reduce the effects of development. The proposals identify many of these matters but may not be comprehensive in this respect. Other issues may emerge when planning applications are being considered or through the preparation of development briefs.
- 7.15.4 For those sites incorporating residential uses, a minimum of 30% of the dwellings to be provided should be 'affordable' under the terms of **Policy COM.13**. In the case of 'greenfield' allocations, the District Planning Authority will seek to secure a higher proportion of affordable dwellings. This is justified given the substantial deficit in affordable housing provision. Under current circumstances the District Council is prepared, in principle, to provide grant funding towards the cost of providing affordable housing. Consequently, the overall economic viability of developing this land is unlikely to be adversely affected.
- 7.15.4a Developers are advised to work closely with the District Council's partner Registered Social Landlords in providing affordable housing.
- 7.15.5 An indicative dwelling capacity for individual proposals is provided at **Annexe 2**.
- 7.15.6 The requirements identified for each development will be secured either through conditions on any planning permission that is granted, or through legal agreements negotiated between the District Planning Authority and the developer/owner of the site.
- 7.15.7 In addition to those matters specified within each proposal, various policies of this Local Plan will be applied as appropriate.

Proposal SUA.I

Land comprising approximately 1.5 hectares (gross) at the Cattle Market, off Alcester Road, is allocated for mixed-use development. Acceptable uses would be:

- Class B1 (a) and (b) industrial
- residential (including a proportion of affordable units)
- commercial leisure
- ~~small-scale retail~~ commercial outlets within Classes A1 and A3.

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

- 7.15.8 The site offers a major opportunity to regenerate an important site on the edge of the town centre which occupies a prominent location adjacent to the railway station. A minimum of 4650 square metres (50,000 square feet) of office and research and development floorspace is a prerequisite of any scheme as a component part of the employment provision for the town. The site is suitable for a high density residential scheme with limited on-site parking provision. Leisure-based uses would be acceptable but it is not anticipated that this will be preferred by the development industry. An element of Class A1 and A3 uses associated with the public transport interchange is appropriate.
- 7.15.9 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:
- retain and enhance the character of the site as an historic fringe feature within the urban area;
 - extend the level of access to the site and the degree of permeability through the site to other parts of the town, including the pedestrian route between the railway station and the town centre;
 - provide two access points, one off Alcester Road and the other off Arden Street which will be required to secure a shared access with the adjacent site (see **Proposal SUA.G**);
 - protect a route through the site to link with the transport corridor safeguarded in Policy PR.10.7;
 - provide extensive tree planting along the street frontages;
 - orientate the public frontage and principal entrances to buildings onto the access roads and towards the railway station;
 - create a public space in front of the railway station;

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- take into account the proposed public transport interchange adjacent to the railway station (see Proposal SUA.B); and
- incorporate a public car park to replace the existing facility which serves the railway station.

7.15.10 A Development Brief has been prepared which provides more detailed aspects of the form of development anticipated on the site.

Proposal SUA.J

Land comprising approximately 0.5 hectares (gross) on Arden Street is allocated for mixed-use development. Acceptable uses would be:

- Class B1 (a) and (b) industrial
- residential (including a proportion of affordable units)

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

7.15.11 This site is allocated in the adopted Local Plan for a mix of employment and housing development. It is appropriate to retain the allocation in the Review since it is anticipated that it will become available for development once alternative parking provision is made in the form of park-and-ride facilities.

7.15.11a [A minimum of 1000 square metres of office and research and development floorspace is a prerequisite of any scheme as a component part of the employment provision for the town.](#)

7.15.11b [The release of this site for development will be subject to a test which requires that sufficient and appropriate alternative parking to compensate for the loss of the existing car park is available in the form of fully operational and effective park-and-ride facilities.](#)

7.15.12 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- provide a replacement facility for the existing public car park;
- design an access in association with that required to serve adjacent sites;
- mitigate noise impact created by traffic on Arden Street; [and](#)
- [undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.](#)

Proposal SUA.K

Land comprising approximately 1.3 hectares (gross) between Arden Street/Birmingham Road/Western Road is allocated for mixed-use development. Acceptable uses would be:

- Class B1 (a) and (b) industrial
- residential (including a proportion of affordable units)

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

7.15.13 A comprehensive approach to this area presents an excellent opportunity for the regeneration of a substantial tract of land close to the town centre and situated at an important 'gateway' to the centre. A mixed-use scheme is appropriate in this location, comprising office development on the main frontages to complement the existing uses on the western side of Arden Street. High density residential development is capable of being accommodated on the site and would provide an attractive urban living space.

7.15.13a [A minimum of 2500 square metres of office and research and development floorspace is a prerequisite of any scheme as a component part of the employment provision for the town.](#)

7.15.14 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- ensure a comprehensive approach to the redevelopment of the site in order to maximise its development potential and achieve the desired range of uses;
- consider the relationship of the development to existing industrial uses on Western Road; and
- mitigate noise impact created by traffic on Arden Street and Birmingham Road.

Proposal SUA.L

~~Land comprising approximately 2.4 hectares (gross) on Regal Road is allocated for mixed-use development. Acceptable uses would be:~~

- ~~• Class B1 industrial~~
- ~~• residential (including a proportion of affordable units)~~

Land comprising approximately 9.0 hectares (gross) on Regal Road/Maybird Centre is allocated for mixed-use development. Acceptable uses would be:

- residential (including a proportion of affordable units)
- non-food retail warehousing and associated activities

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

~~7.15.15 The site is allocated in the adopted District Local Plan for solely employment uses. It is now considered that a mixed-use development would be appropriate as a means of regenerating the site and improving the appearance of the frontage to Birmingham Road. It is anticipated that the preferred approach would be for industrial uses, including offices, to be located on the north side of the existing estate road with housing to the south, although an east-west split will be considered. A high-density form of residential development would be appropriate. Regal House has not been incorporated into the proposal but its conversion to residential use may be appropriate.~~

7.15.15a The site comprises the existing retail warehouse park which was developed in 1990 and the Regal Road Industrial Estate. Treating this extensive area of land in a comprehensive manner provides the opportunity to secure significant environmental improvements along the frontage of an important route to the town centre.

7.15.15b Any expansion of retail floorspace and associated uses should take up no more than half the area of the existing Regal Road estate. This will provide scope for a high density residential development on the remainder of the area.

7.15.15c This proposal seeks a comprehensive upgrading of the existing Maybird Centre in terms of the appearance of the facades, the quality of the landscaping and the manner in which it functions for vehicles and pedestrians. There may also be an opportunity to locate new buildings alongside Birmingham Road in order to partially enclose the site, thereby reducing the visual impact of the extensive area of car parking.

7.15.16 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- upgrade the existing junction arrangements with Birmingham Road;
- achieve improved pedestrian and cycle links to Clopton Road;
- consider the physical appearance of the development when viewed from the adjacent elevated stretch of Clopton Road; and
- undertake a survey of Great Crested and Smooth Newts which have been recorded on the site.

Proposal SUA.M

Land comprising approximately 0.5 hectares (gross) on Greenhill Street/Grove Road is allocated for mixed-use development. Acceptable uses would be:

- residential (including a proportion of affordable units)
- retail

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

7.15.17 At the present time the site comprises a private car park and a builders yard. However, its location on the edge of the town centre presents an important opportunity to intensify the use of the site through a high density residential use incorporating minimal or no car parking. The inclusion of retail units on the Greenhill Street frontage would help to bolster the commercial function of this part of the town centre.

7.15.18 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- identify an alternative site for the builders yard;
- create a high quality design which is appropriate to the position of the site within a Conservation Area;
- provide pedestrian routes through the site to improve linkages within the town centre; and
- assess and incorporate the most appropriate means of vehicular access.



Proposal SUA.N

Land comprising approximately 0.5 hectares (gross) off Windsor Street is allocated for mixed-use development. Acceptable uses would be:

- Class A2 and/or B1(a) office
- residential (including a proportion of affordable units)
- retention of a coach terminal

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

7.15.19 It is anticipated that the transport strategy for the town, in particular the provision of park-and-ride facilities, will allow a significant reduction in the number of parking spaces in the town centre. The multi-storey car park off Windsor Street is likely to be the most appropriate for redevelopment, particularly as its design is rather outmoded. However, the site is unlikely to become available in the short/medium term. The adjacent coach terminal operated by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is likely to remain in operation, although there may be scope to rationalise the area it utilises in order to increase the scope for redevelopment. A range of office-based uses will be sought given the location of the site within the town centre and the proximity of similar businesses.

7.15.19a The release of this site for development will be subject to a test which requires that sufficient and appropriate alternative parking to compensate for the loss of the existing car park is available in the form of fully operational and effective park-and-ride facilities.

7.15.20 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- create a high quality design which is appropriate to the position of the site within a Conservation Area;
- incorporate a vehicular access into the site which is compatible with coach movements;
- minimise the impact of development on adjacent residential properties; and
- undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.

Proposal SUA.O

Land comprising approximately 0.3 hectares (gross) on Guild Street (north-side) is allocated for residential development (including a proportion of affordable units).

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

7.15.21 This small site is in a prominent location adjacent to the town centre but comprises a nondescript building. Although the retention of the site in a commercial use would be acceptable, it provides an excellent opportunity to provide a high density residential scheme which has immediate access to the town centre incorporating minimal or no on-site car parking.

7.15.22 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- create a high quality design which is appropriate to the position of the site within a Conservation Area;
- provide an access off Guild Street and an egress onto Warwick Road; and
- undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.

Proposal SUA.P

Land comprising approximately 0.3 hectares (gross) on Guild Street (south-side) is allocated for residential development (including a proportion of affordable units).

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

7.15.23 This small site provides significant scope to further improve the frontage to Guild Street which has benefited from a number of attractive redevelopment schemes recently. While commercial uses on the site are not inappropriate, a high density residential development with minimal or no on-site car parking would increase the scope for town centre living.

7.15.24 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- create a high quality design which is appropriate to the position of the site within a Conservation Area;
- incorporate a pedestrian link into Henley Street utilising the existing alleyway; and
- undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.

Proposal SUA.Q

Land comprising 0.3 hectares (gross) on Church Street (west-side) is allocated for mixed-use development. Acceptable uses would be:

- residential (including a proportion of affordable units)
- Class A2 and/or B1 office

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

7.15.25 The relocation of the District Council offices provides an opportunity to improve the visual impact of the existing buildings behind the Church Street frontage through a sensitive redevelopment scheme. It is appropriate for any scheme to incorporate office uses to replace those which are being lost from the site, in order to support the commercial base of the town centre. A high density residential component with minimal or no on-street car parking is appropriate.

[7.15.25a A minimum of 1000 square metres of office floorspace is a prerequisite of any scheme as a component part of the employment provision for the town.](#)

7.15.26 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- create a high quality design which is appropriate to the position of the site within a Conservation Area;
- assess and incorporate the most appropriate means of vehicular access;
- consider the relationship and impact of development on adjacent uses and buildings; and
- undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.

Proposal SUA.R

Land comprising 0.4 hectares (gross) on Church Street (east-side) is allocated for mixed-use development. Acceptable uses would be:

- residential (including a proportion of affordable units)
- Class A2 and/or B1 office
- ~~education and/or theatre related facilities~~

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

7.15.27 This site comprises the car park which currently serves the District Council offices and is available for public use in the evenings and at weekends. The relocation of the District Council and the intention, as part of the transport strategy for the town, to replace some town centre parking with park and ride facilities, will release this site for development. A mix of residential and office uses would be appropriate. ~~but it may be that King Edward VI Grammar School or the Royal Shakespeare Theatre would wish to acquire at least part of the site to assist their operation.~~ Access to and egress from the site is particularly problematic and will require careful consideration.

[7.15.27a A minimum of 1000 square metres of office floorspace is a prerequisite of any scheme as a component part of the employment provision for the town.](#)

[7.15.27b The release of this site for development will be subject to a test which requires that sufficient and appropriate alternative parking to compensate for the loss of the existing car park is available in the form of fully operational and effective park-and-ride facilities.](#)

7.15.28 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- create a high quality design which is appropriate to the position of the site within a Conservation Area;
- assess and incorporate the most appropriate means of vehicular access;
- [maintain a pedestrian link through the site towards Southern Lane;](#)
- consider the relationship and impact of development on adjacent uses and buildings, [in particular Hall's Croft;](#) and
- undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.





Proposal SUA.S

Land comprising approximately 2.79 hectares (gross) north of Evesham Road is allocated for residential development (including a proportion of affordable units).

[see Inset Map 1.1a]

Explanation

7.15.29 This site consists mainly of a large number of extensive rear gardens and associated domestic uses, together with two businesses. It is therefore in multiple ownership and requires a comprehensive approach to land assembly and promotion in order to secure an acceptable form of development. This approach will need to address issues regarding access arrangements, particularly the acquisition of properties fronting Evesham Road, overall layout and design and securing the necessary proportion of affordable dwellings.

7.15.30 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- ensure a comprehensive approach to the development of the site;
- identify the most appropriate locations for vehicular access;
- maximise opportunities for pedestrian and cycle links into and through the site as a means of integrating the development with other parts of the town;
- undertake an ecological evaluation of the site; and
- consider the relationship of the layout and design of the development to adjacent residential areas.

Proposal SUA.T

Land comprising approximately 0.8 hectares (gross) south of Bishopton Lane is allocated for residential development (including a proportion of affordable units).

[see Inset Map 1.1]

Explanation

7.15.31 The site is currently occupied by two detached dwellings set in extensive gardens. Over the years they have become surrounded by higher density residential development and little harm would be caused to the character of the local area should the site be redeveloped.

7.15.32 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- provide appropriate visibility at the access onto Bishopton Lane together with any necessary traffic calming measures; and
- consider the relationship of the layout and design of the development to adjacent residential areas.

Proposal SUA.U

~~Land comprising approximately 0.8 hectares (gross) south of Loxley Road is allocated for residential development (including a proportion of affordable units).~~

~~[see Inset Map 1.1]~~

~~Explanation~~

~~7.15.33 Despite its location within the urban area, this site mainly supports a range of low key, unattractive storage activities. It provides an appropriate opportunity for a more intensive use in the form of residential development.~~

~~7.15.34 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:~~

- ~~• identify the most appropriate arrangement for vehicular access;~~
- ~~• consider the relationship of the layout and design of the development to adjacent residential areas; and~~
- ~~• undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.~~

Proposal SUA.V

Land comprising approximately 2.0 hectares (gross) west of Banbury Road is allocated for Class B1 (a) and (b) industrial development.

[see Inset Map 1.1]

Explanation

7.15.35 The Stratford-upon-Avon Business Park on Banbury Road has become well established in recent years comprising a range of office and technology companies. Although slightly detached from the urban area, the site is well-related to the town and will in due course be easily accessible from the new residential development at Bridgetown and the proposed link between Banbury Road and Shipston Road. Further land is available adjacent to the Business Park which was formerly part of the Ordnance Depot. Originally this was intended to be used for a landscaping belt but it is now considered that the visual impact of the development from the town does not require such extensive screening.

7.15.36 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- provide appropriate landscaping along the northern boundary;
- ensure that the design of the buildings, in terms of height, scale and massing, complements and is compatible with the existing business units;
- incorporate a cycleway from the site northwards alongside Banbury Road ;
- consider the opportunities available to link the site with the existing and proposed residential areas in Bridgetown utilising existing and new rights of way; and
- produce a Green Transport Plan to help minimise the use of the private car by the workforce on the site.

Proposal SUA.W

Land to the west of Shottery is allocated for mixed-use development. It is expected that the development will include the following components:

- approximately 20 hectares (gross) to the south of Alcester Road, for residential (including a proportion of affordable units) and associated uses
- approximately 7 hectares (gross) to the north of Evesham Road, for residential (including a proportion of affordable units) and associated uses
- a road link between Alcester Road and Evesham Road, incorporating a rear access to Anne Hathaway's Cottage for coaches, preventing coaches gaining access to the coach park from Shottery village and introducing associated traffic calming measures in the Shottery area
- approximately 6 hectares of public open space
- a local centre, to include a convenience store, a primary school and a doctors' surgery
- an area of woodland to the west of the proposed residential development off Alcester Road

[see Inset Map 1.1]

Explanation

7.15.37 The proposed development to the west of Shottery has been identified following a comprehensive assessment of a range of sites on the edge of Stratford-upon-Avon.

7.15.38 The timing of its implementation will be in accordance with the mechanism set out in Policy STR.2A.

7.15.39 The preferred option offers a wide range of benefits to the local and wider community and provides scope to effectively mitigate the impact of development on the landscape and setting of the town. There are no overriding constraints to implementing the proposed scale of development and the infrastructure required to serve the development is capable of being provided.

7.15.40 It is expected that the residential development will achieve a minimum average of 30 dwellings per hectare, in accordance with PPG3: Housing, although the detailed layout and design is likely to incorporate areas of higher density development.



- 7.15.41 The provision of a road link between Alcester Road and Evesham Road will help to relieve Shottery of traffic which tends to rat-run through the area. A range of complementary traffic calming measures will be identified for the Shottery area, in liaison with the County Highway Authority, to ensure the effectiveness of the new road link. The new road should be designed to reflect its various functions; ie. providing access to new residential areas but also serving as a relief road. Its design should incorporate pedestrian and cycle crossing points to assist movement between different parts of the development. A speed limit of 30 mph is anticipated and the design of the road should incorporate features that help to ensure compliance with this limit. The stretch of road outside the development areas should be unlit in order to minimise its impact on the landscape and the setting of Anne Hathaway's Cottage.
- 7.15.42 It is stressed that the link road illustrated on the Proposals Map is indicative only. Its precise alignment will be determined as an integral part of the design and layout of the development as a whole. The new link road will be designed to minimise the impact of traffic on the proposed housing areas. It is anticipated that a roundabout junction will be provided at both the Alcester Road and Evesham Road junctions, with the latter incorporating an arm onto Luddington Road.
- 7.15.43 The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has identified an opportunity offered by the proposed development to create a rear access to Anne Hathaway's Cottage, to be used mainly by coaches. This will provide scope for a range of improvements to be made to the management of visitors to this popular attraction and relieve Shottery of coach traffic.
- 7.15.44 A substantial area of public open space is incorporated into the proposal. This will, in part, serve the requirements of the new development, in accordance with **Policy COM.5**. It is also justified to help compensate for the deficiency of public open space in the Shottery area when assessed against the standards set out in **Policy COM.4** and the principles on quantity, quality and accessibility of provision in PPG 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (July 2002). The area identified for public open space involves land which would be unsuitable for development as it contributes to the open setting of Shottery village and its relationship to open countryside to the west which merits protection.
- 7.15.45 There are limited facilities serving the Shottery area. The proposal provides the opportunity to improve the situation for existing and future residents by providing land for a local centre to incorporate a range of facilities:
- the Education Authority has identified the need for a new primary school to replace the existing Shottery Junior and Infant School which is at capacity with no scope for expansion on its current site;
 - the South Warwickshire Primary Care Trust is seeking the provision of a new primary health care centre as the existing doctors' surgeries in the town are unable to take additional patients;
 - there are a small number of shops in the Shottery area providing convenience goods and services but additional retail outlets would widen choice and be more accessible to residents of the proposed development. However, it is necessary to ensure that the scale of such provision would not attract customers from other parts of the town. On that basis, the total retail floorspace to be provided should not exceed 1000 square metres (gross) and no individual unit should be larger than 350 square metres (gross).
- 7.15.46 Locating the local centre adjacent to the relief road will help to make the retail outlets more viable by attracting some passing trade. An indicative location is shown on the Proposals Map.
- 7.15.47 The northern residential area, off Alcester Road, affects rising land and breaches a ridgeline running north-south through the site. In order to mitigate the impact of development, a substantial area of woodland planting will be created adjacent to the western boundary of the site. This will effectively reduce the views of the development from the west and form a backdrop and partially enclose the development when viewed from various vantage points within the existing urban area.
- 7.15.48 The proposed area of woodland is on land currently in the same ownership as that taken by the northern part of the development and forms part of a larger estate. It is expected that the owners of the estate will be responsible for planting the woodland in advance of the commencement of development and for managing it in perpetuity. A legal agreement will be required to secure this situation.
- 7.15.49 It is intended that the woodland should be open to public access, although in a controlled manner as part of the management agreement in order to secure its long-term condition.

7.15.50 In addition to the requirements of other policies in the Local Plan, the promotion of this land for development should take into account the need to:

- submit a transport assessment to address the impact of the development on the trunk road network and identify any mitigation measures to be funded by the developer;
- submit a flood risk assessment to gauge the effect of development on the floodplain, the extent to which existing flooding problems would be exacerbated and put forward proposals to mitigate any adverse impacts identified;
- incorporate measures within and on the edges of the development to mitigate impact on the setting of the town;
- improve the character of existing rights of way to help integrate the development with adjacent parts of the existing urban area and to provide access to the countryside;
- protect the character of Shottery Brook and its margins from any adverse impact of development;
- undertake an ecological evaluation of the entire area covered by the proposal and incorporate measures to protect and enhance ecological features;
- place underground the electricity transmission lines which cross the northern development area; and
- make a financial contribution to secondary education in the town.

7.15.51 A Master Plan will be required to reconcile all the issues raised by the proposed development of the area.

(ii) Main Rural Centres

7.16 Introduction

7.16.1 The Main Rural Centres of Stratford-on-Avon District comprise a range of small market towns and large villages. Each has its own unique character but the common theme which binds them together is their function as service centres, providing a focus for local jobs and facilities. The role of these larger settlements in rural areas is recognised in national [planning](#) guidance and ~~is carried through into the Warwickshire Structure Plan (WASP) in the Rural White Paper.~~

7.16.2 **Policy STR.1** of the Local Plan Review identifies the following settlements as Main Rural Centres:

Alcester
Bidford-on-Avon
Kineton
Henley-in-Arden
Shipston-on-Stour
Southam
Studley
Wellesbourne

7.16.3 In the adopted District Local Plan, these settlements were identified as Category One Settlements, apart from Kineton. It is now considered that Kineton justifies being defined as a Main Rural Centre given the level of services it supports, including a secondary school and industrial estate, and its important relationship with surrounding smaller villages.

7.16.4 During the previous plan period (1989-2001) each of these settlements experienced substantial housing development and varying degrees of growth in employment. The level of growth which is anticipated ~~over the next ten years~~ [during the plan period](#) is expected to be much reduced and related specifically to local needs, in accordance with the provisions of the WASP.

7.16.5 The Local Plan Review, in designating these settlements as Main Rural Centres, recognises the function that they already perform and seeks to promote and enhance this role. The Plan seeks to underpin the retail and commercial sector in these settlements, to ensure that public services are retained, to support existing businesses and attract new ones, to promote environmental enhancement, and to improve public transport links with neighbouring villages.



7.17 Context

7.17.1 Government policy as set out in the Rural White Paper 'Our Countryside: the future' recognises the critical role that market towns play in helping rural areas thrive. In particular prosperous market towns can help regenerate the surrounding area as:

- a focus for economic development and regeneration including markets for local food and other products;
- centres which meet people's needs for access to retail, professional and public services;
- a focus for properly planned and co-ordinated public transport; and
- distinctive places to live with a fine heritage of historic buildings, attractive rural environments and centres for local cultural activity.

7.17.2 The objective of rural regeneration is a key aim of the Regional Development Strategy set out in Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11). In order to achieve this objective RPG11 urges local authorities to support the vitality and viability of market towns and other local centres. It also supports limited housing and employment growth in these centres. In southern Warwickshire, in particular, RPG11 recommends that housing growth should be largely confined to that for local needs in order to limit any increase in car-based commuting. Employment growth is also envisaged in order to widen local job opportunities, but at a small scale in keeping with the rural character of the area and to limit any increase in demand for housing.

7.17.3 Stratford-upon-Avon is the only settlement in the District which is identified as a main town in the WASP. The Main Rural Centres are therefore governed by the rural area policies in the Structure Plan which guide local plans to provide for development specifically to meet the needs of the local population and to support rural communities. The distribution of housing and employment development in the rural areas should be related to a hierarchy of settlements on a scale proportionate to job opportunities, and the availability of public transport and basic social facilities. The Local Plan Review seeks to reflect the WASP strategy by identifying the Main Rural Centres as the location for limited housing and employment growth to meet the needs of local communities.

7.18 Objectives

7.18.1 Stimulating rural centres is one of the 14 operational objectives which are central to the Local Plan Review strategy. This objective applies directly to the Main Rural Centres and the plan aims to support the function of these centres as a focus for facilities used by local people and businesses.

7.18.2 The Main Rural Centres also have a key role to play in achieving a number of the other operational objectives of the Plan, in particular:

- satisfying housing needs
- satisfying employment needs
- promoting alternative modes of transport to the car
- assisting rural diversification
- supporting sustainable tourism
- providing leisure opportunities.

7.19 Issues

7.19.1 Traditionally the small market towns and large villages of South Warwickshire have acted as focal points for commercial and social activity, places in which to find work, to buy and sell goods, or to find valued local services. This traditional role has, however, changed significantly over the last fifty years as a result of changes in society, the economy and agriculture. A number of key trends can be identified which are symptomatic of the changes affecting the Main Rural Centres in the District:

- the traditional hub role has been declining, with increased competition from larger retail, service, employment, education and entertainment centres. There is now a net outflow of journeys from rural centres for shopping, work and leisure;
- increasing access to and use of personal transport means that the majority of people who live in rural areas can readily access the wider choice of facilities offered by larger centres. This is increasingly offsetting the benefits of local convenience and disadvantages certain sections of rural communities;
- changes in retailing, entertainment and financial service rationalisation have favoured the larger towns at the expense of rural centres;

- changes in the agricultural economy have meant that the traditional market role of rural centres has either ceased or substantially declined; and
 - the rationalisation of public services, such as health, education and public transport, has led to reduced provision in the rural centres.
- 7.19.2 These trends have been countered to some extent by continued growth in population and employment. The rural centres have experienced significant housing and employment growth, beyond that required to meet local needs. This growth has undoubtedly helped to slow the process of economic decline and the leakage of services to larger centres.
- 7.19.3 The Government's Rural White Paper recognises that, in the interests of sustaining prosperous rural communities, the role of market towns needs support to enable them to adapt to reflect people's changing needs, an increasingly mobile society, and highly competitive urban centres. The Countryside Agency's strategy 'Towards Tomorrow's Countryside' is actively promoting the role of market towns as the basis of sustainable rural communities in the future.
- 7.19.4 In responding to the national agenda, the Local Plan Review seeks to put in place a land-use planning framework which will achieve the objective of stimulating the Main Rural Centres and support their roles as foci for local housing, employment, and facilities used by local people and businesses.
- 7.19.5 The key aspects of this framework are summarised below:
- provision for appropriate levels of housing and employment development to meet local needs in accordance with the requirements of the WASP, and ensuring that this development maximises the scope to use previously developed land within the Main Rural Centres;
 - promoting environmental enhancement to make the Main Rural Centres more attractive for local residents and the residents of the rural hinterland who use the facilities which are provided;
 - maximising the accessibility of the Main Rural Centres, by ensuring that they are the focus for local public transport services and by supporting improvements in the quality of walking and cycling links both within and into the Main Rural Centres;

- promoting the role of Main Rural Centres as local retail and commercial centres; and
- protecting existing facilities and providing new facilities which meet the particular needs of local communities.

7.19.6 The role and involvement of local communities in identifying and meeting their own needs will be an essential part of this process. The preparation of appraisals and design statements, now taking the form of Parish or Town Plans, provides the appropriate process for achieving this through their adoption as supplementary planning guidance.

7.20 Research

Warwickshire Market Towns Pilot Study

7.20.1 The Study was commissioned by Warwickshire County Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council to provide a framework for developing distinctive strategies for the long-term future of market towns in the County. It recognises the importance attached to such towns as the drivers of rural regeneration.

7.20.2 The pilot Study focussed on Coleshill, in North Warwickshire, and Southam. However, the common themes identified recur in similar settlements and the courses of action proposed can be applied to other centres.

Urban Capacity Study

7.20.3 The scope of the Study encompasses all the settlements which have been identified as Main Rural Centres. Through the study the District Planning Authority has considered comprehensively the opportunities within the Main Rural Centres to utilise previously developed sites for housing, industry and other uses.

7.20.4 The Study has provided the basis for assessing the suitability of sites as potential allocations in the Local Plan Review in terms of impact, opportunity, marketability and deliverability.

Retail Study

7.20.5 The Study commissioned by the District Council in 1997 assessed the need to provide additional convenience goods shopping floorspace in Alcester, Shipston-on-Stour and Southam.

7.20.6 In each case, the Study concluded that very little additional provision needed to be made for this form of retailing. If demand materialises, the impact of any proposal would need to be carefully considered and the location assessed in terms of its potential to strengthen the particular centre's retail provision without having an adverse affect on its character. Only in the case of Southam did the Study indicate that there may be a case for providing a new food store, due to the extent that local residents shop in Leamington Spa.

7.21 Policies and Proposals

7.21.1 Many of the policies set out elsewhere in the Local Plan are applicable to the Main Rural Centres and should be referred to in gaining a full picture of the future planning of these settlements.

[Recommended references: Policies STR.1, STR.4, EF.3, COM.1-COM.11, COM.16, COM.19, COM.21, COM.22]

7.21.2 The policies and proposals which follow are specifically related to the rural centres and derive from the issues set out above.

7.22 Retail and commercial development

Policy MRC.1

Within the existing commercial core of the Main Rural Centres proposals for new retail or commercial development, or the extension and improvement of existing retail or commercial premises, will be encouraged. For the purposes of this policy, Class A1(shops), Class A2 (financial and professional services), Class A3 (food and drink) and Class B1a (office) uses are acceptable in principle in such locations.

The change of use of existing Class A1, A2 and A3 premises to non-commercial uses, including residential, will not be permitted where this would harm, either individually or cumulatively with other proposals, the vitality and viability of the existing commercial centres.

[Proposals for alternative uses will only be permitted where the provisions of Policy COM.2 are satisfactorily met.](#)

Explanation

7.22.1 The Main Rural Centres are recognised as important local retail and commercial centres. The intent of this policy is to enable new retail and commercial activity to take place within the existing commercial cores of the Main Rural Centres and to retain existing retail and commercial uses in order to enhance and maintain the vitality and viability of these centres.

7.22.2 None of the Main Rural Centres are identified in the town centre hierarchy set out in Policy TC.2 in the Warwickshire Structure Plan 1996-2011 (WASP). Consequently, retail schemes in these centres should not exceed 1000 square metres (gross) in order to support the purpose of the hierarchy in achieving sustainable patterns of development.

7.22.3 The commercial cores of the Main Rural Centres are not specifically defined, but this policy is intended to apply to existing streets where commercial uses already have a significant presence and where further retail activities will not detrimentally affect the character of those streets.

7.22.4 It is acknowledged that the opportunities to provide new purpose built retail premises are constrained by lack of space to accommodate both the premises and off street car parking. There may be opportunities for redevelopment of sites or the conversion of properties. In principle, it is reasonable to accommodate such schemes in order to stimulate commercial activity in the Main Rural Centres.

7.22.5 However, the District Planning Authority does not wish to sacrifice the qualities of the existing fabric of the commercial centres in order to achieve this. Many of the Main Rural Centres have designated conservation areas, the character of which should be protected and enhanced. Consequently any redevelopment scheme will have to be of the highest quality.

7.23 Public transport

Policy MRC.2

In order to support the function of the Main Rural Centres, the District Planning Authority, in conjunction with Warwickshire County Council and transport operators, will promote the provision of improved and effective public transport services linking each centre with the rural hinterland it serves.

[Recommended references: Policies COM.7, COM.8]

Explanation

- 7.23.1 The provision of effective public transport services linking the Main Rural Centres to the smaller rural settlements they serve is essential to support their function as local service centres.
- 7.23.2 The District Planning Authority will work with transport operators, the County Council, local communities and other potential partners to ensure that public transport services in the Main Rural Centres are protected, improved and extended. Where conventional services cannot be made viable the District Council will work with partners to promote non-conventional public transport services which meet local needs. Particular support will be given to the work of the Rural Transport Partnership in improving the accessibility of the rural parts of the District.
- 7.23.3 In implementing **Policy COM 7** and **Policy COM 8** particular emphasis will be given to ensuring that the Main Rural Centres act as focal points for local public transport services.
- 7.23.4 Local communities can play a significant role in identifying potential improvements to local transport services through the preparation of Parish and Town Plans. Improvements identified could be eligible for grant aid from the District Council or other bodies such as the Countryside Agency.

7.24 Environmental enhancement

Policy MRC.3

Schemes which seek to enhance the environment of the existing commercial cores [and the settlement fringes](#) of the Main Rural Centres will be supported.

Such schemes may include:

- improvements to the management of traffic, including car parking;
- enhanced provision for pedestrians and cyclists to gain access to, and move within, the centre; and
- proposals which improve the character and appearance of the public realm.

Explanation

- 7.24.1 Environmental enhancement can act as a stimulus for the local business and retail economy, and help to develop the key role which the Main Rural Centres play in the District. The attractive small-scale environments of the Main Rural Centres, combined with relative ease of access and parking, are key strengths which should be built upon wherever possible.
- 7.24.2 The District Council will work with the County Council, local communities and other partners to identify and promote opportunities for environmental enhancement schemes in the Main Rural Centres. Such schemes should aim to be as comprehensive as possible. Whilst physical improvements are valuable in their own right, it is also important to ensure that they bring longer term, sustainable economic and social benefits as part of a wider strategy for the Main Rural Centres.
- 7.24.3 The preparation of Parish and Town Plans provides local communities with the opportunity to identify local enhancement schemes and projects which could be eligible for grant aid from the District Council and other sources.

7.25 Community facilities

Policy MRC.4

~~The provision of new shops and facilities in the Main Rural Centres will be encouraged in appropriate circumstances. The loss of an existing retail, service or other form of community use will not be permitted unless there is a lack of proven need for the facility or an adequate alternative is available or is to be provided.~~

The provision of new community facilities and leisure opportunities in the Main Rural Centres will be encouraged in appropriate circumstances. The improvement and extension of existing facilities will also be supported.

The loss of an existing community or leisure facility will not be permitted unless there is a proven lack of need for the facility or an adequate alternative is available or is to be provided.

Where justified, contributions from new development will be sought towards the provision of new or improved community and leisure facilities.

[Recommended references: Policies COM.2, COM.3]

Explanation

- 7.25.1 The Main Rural Centres are focal points for community facilities, including local services, shops and leisure opportunities. They provide a valuable and convenient service to local communities, reducing the need to travel by car and enabling those without a car to use such facilities easily. The District Planning Authority wishes to ensure the continued existence of such facilities and will encourage the development of new community facilities within the defined settlement boundaries of the Main Rural Centres.
- 7.25.2 The District Planning Authority will be seeking to promote the concentration of commercial and public sector activities within or close to the existing core of such centres in order to maximise accessibility and convenience for customers and users of these facilities. There is considerable scope to increase the scale of activity in these centres which will encourage the numbers of people using them and, in turn, improve their viability and the level of investment in them. It is important, therefore, that a range of choice is available. With respect to the provision of many types of goods or services in these larger rural centres, it is not sufficient for only one outlet to be available as it is important to preserve an element of competition.

- 7.25.3 Proposals which would result in the loss of a shop or facility will be assessed against the criteria set out in **Policy COM.2**. This assessment will include a thorough analysis of the viability of the business or facility concerned, the extent to which it has been marketed as a going concern, its importance to the local community, the availability of alternative provision and the scope for alternative community use of the building.

- 7.25.3a In accordance with Policy IMP.4, planning obligations will be used where appropriate to seek the increased provision of community and leisure facilities and the enhancement of existing facilities. The District Council is currently preparing a Cultural Strategy for the District which will identify priorities for the provision and improvement of facilities. The negotiation of planning obligations relating to new development will be informed by the priorities identified in the Cultural Strategy and any local information sources such as Parish and Town Plans.

Proposal BID.AA

Land comprising approximately 0.2 hectares (gross) adjacent to the Fire Station, Bidford-on-Avon, is allocated for a medical centre.

[see Inset Map 2.2]

Explanation

- 7.25.4 There is a clear need to provide a replacement medical centre to serve the requirements of the local area. The existing facility is operating at capacity and there is no scope to expand on the current site. Land next to the Fire Station is well positioned within the village and readily accessible. It also provides scope to maintain the important functional relationship with shops and services in the village centre. Provision for a pedestrian/cycle route along the eastern edge of the site should be made.

7.26 Public open space

Policy MRC.5

Proposals for the provision of new areas of public open space will be supported where deficiencies in the level of existing provision have been identified against the standards set out in Policy COM.4.

Explanation

- 7.26.1 This policy intends to enable the provision of public open space in locations not specifically identified in the Local Plan Review. The basis for any provision will be measured against the standards in Policy COM.4. It must be noted that the District Council's ability to take on the costs of maintenance of public open space is limited by the availability of finance.
- 7.26.2 In seeking to implement this policy regard will be given to the provisions of Policy EF.6 and Policy EF.7 in relation to nature conservation.
- 7.26.3 A number of specific areas of land are promoted through this Plan which present potential opportunities to improve the level of public open space in the Main Rural Centres.

~~Proposal ALC.A~~

~~Land comprising approximately 5.3 hectares west of Fairwater Crescent, Alcester, is allocated for the provision of public open space.~~

Proposal ALC.AA

Land comprising approximately 9.2 hectares south of Stratford Road, Alcester, is allocated for the provision of public open space.

[see Inset Map 2.1]

Proposal BID.AB

Land comprising approximately 3.0 hectares west of Dugdale Avenue, Bidford-on-Avon, is allocated for the provision of public open space.

[see Inset Map 2.2]

~~Proposal HEN.A~~

~~Land comprising approximately 2.2 hectares east of High Street, Henley-in-Arden, is allocated for the provision of public open space.~~

Proposal HEN.AA

Land comprising approximately 0.8 hectares south of Bear Lane, Henley-in-Arden, is allocated for the provision of public open space.

[see Inset Map 2.3]

Proposal KIN.A

Land comprising approximately 1.2 hectares west of Dene Close, Kineton, is allocated for the provision of public open space.

[see Inset Map 2.4]

Proposal SHIP.A

Land comprising approximately 1.1 hectares east of London Road, Shipston-on-Stour, is allocated for the provision of public open space.

[see Inset Map 2.5]

Proposal SOU.A

Land comprising approximately ~~3.9~~ 4.1 hectares west of Wattons Lane, Southam, is allocated for the provision of public open space.

[see Inset Map 2.6]

Proposal STUD.A

Land comprising approximately 4.3 hectares north of St. Jude's Avenue, Studley, is allocated for the provision of public open space.

[see Inset Map 2.7]

Proposal WELL.A

~~Land comprising approximately 1.7 hectares north of Bridge Street, Wellesbourne, is allocated for the provision of public open space.~~

Proposal WELL.AA

Land comprising approximately 2.5 hectares alongside the River Dene, Wellesbourne, is allocated for the provision of public open space.

[see Inset Map 2.8]

Explanation

- 7.26.4 At the present time many of the settlements in the District suffer from poor provision of public open space. An initial assessment of open space in Stratford-upon-Avon and in the Main Rural Centres has identified specific areas of shortfall when measured against the District Council's standards. Much of this shortfall relates to the quantity of provision and the proposals seek to address this identified problem.



- 7.26.5 Many of these proposals will require an upgrading of the existing access links, and even the creation of new ones, to make them accessible particularly on foot and by cycle. The District Planning Authority considers it appropriate that the land be generally used for informal open space rather than formal sports pitches so that landscape quality can be maintained or enhanced. Opportunities for nature conservation and ecological enhancement will also be sought.
- 7.26.6 There are a number of ways that the provision of these public open space can be secured. Local planning authorities are justified in seeking planning obligations where a deficiency of recreational provision exists or is likely to exist as a result of proposed development. In particular, they may be used to secure recreational facilities as a necessary part of a broader development, helping to ensure that standards stated in the Plan are achieved. This is referred to in **Policy IMP.4**.
- 7.26.7 For small developments, it may be more appropriate for the developer to establish or contribute to the provision of a facility nearby. Circular 1/97: Planning Obligations, explains the relationship between the proposed development and a benefit to be sought through individual planning permissions. Such an agreement may also cover maintenance and management arrangements.
- 7.26.8 In some cases, it may be suitable for the District Council to enter into agreements with the landowners to negotiate for their land to be brought into public use. In these cases there may be limitations imposed on the purpose for which the land can be used.
- 7.26.9 The District Planning Authority also has the option of compulsory purchase should it be concluded that this is the only course of action available to secure a facility in the public interest.

7.27 Housing, industrial and other development proposals

- 7.27.1 A wide range of sites are proposed to be allocated for development in the Main Rural Centres. The scale of intended development in these settlements accords with the objective of the Warwickshire Structure Plan that most development should take place in the 'main towns', which in the case of this District is Stratford-upon-Avon.
- 7.27.2 Apart from commitments which were identified in the adopted Local Plan, most of the sites identified in the Review utilise previously-developed land in accordance with Government policy which seeks the re-use of such sites in preference to greenfield land.
- 7.27.3 It is acknowledged that each site will have a degree of impact on the local area. ~~Certain constraints need to be resolved and all sites require~~ Developers will be required to work within the constraints that apply to each site and to include mitigation measures to reduce the effects of development. The proposals identify many of these matters but may not be comprehensive in this respect. Other issues may emerge when planning applications are being considered or through the preparation of development briefs.
- 7.27.4 For those sites incorporating residential uses, a minimum of 30% of the dwellings to be provided should be 'affordable' under the terms of **Policy COM.13**. Developers are advised to work closely with the District Council's partner Registered Social Landlords in providing affordable housing.
- 7.27.5 An indicative dwelling capacity for individual proposals is provided at **Annexe 2**.
- 7.27.6 The requirements identified of each development will be secured either through conditions on any planning permission that is granted, or through legal agreements negotiated between the District Planning Authority and the developer/owner of the site.
- 7.27.7 In addition to those matters specified within each proposal, various policies of this Local Plan will be applied as appropriate.

Alcester

Proposal ALC.B

Land comprising approximately 0.7 hectares (gross) on Bleachfield Street, Alcester, is allocated for residential development (including a proportion of affordable units).

[see Inset Map 2.1]

Explanation

- 7.27.8 The removal of the existing industrial uses on the site would bring environmental benefits to the adjacent residential areas and would have positive effects on the local highway network. Redevelopment provides an excellent opportunity for an urban design led approach comprising a high density residential scheme. The site is ideally located in relation to services and facilities.
- 7.27.9 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:
- enhance the street scene and the setting of the adjacent listed buildings;
 - form an estate street through the site linking Bleachfield Street to Birch Abbey;
 - incorporate pedestrian links between the site and adjacent parts of the town;
 - assist in the relocation of the existing industrial use; and
 - undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.

Proposal ALC.C

Land comprising approximately 0.4 hectares (gross) at Priory Road, Alcester, is allocated for residential development (including a proportion of affordable units).

[see Inset Map 2.1]

Explanation

- 7.27.10 The site lies in a conservation area and its redevelopment would provide an opportunity to enhance its character and make a positive contribution to the setting of the adjacent listed buildings. There is also good access to services and facilities. However, it lies within an area protected by an Environment Agency Flood Defence Scheme and will require a satisfactory solution to this issue.

- 7.27.11 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- ~~liaise closely with the Environment Agency to seek to overcome the flooding constraint;~~
- undertake a flood risk assessment to determine how the risk of flooding can be overcome or minimised;
- restrict access from Birmingham Road to left turn in and left turn out movements and provide an additional access from the rear of the site through the public car park; and
- provide linkages for pedestrians and cyclists between Priory Road and the public car park.

Proposal ALC.D

Land comprising approximately 1.4 hectares (gross) at the Greig Centre, Gunnings Road, Alcester, is allocated for mixed-use development. Acceptable uses would be:

- community facilities
- residential (including a proportion of affordable units)

[see Inset Map 2.1]

Explanation

- 7.27.12 The redevelopment of the site has the potential to make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. It would also serve to make better use of the site particularly as the Greig Centre and associated outbuildings are considered to be beyond their useful life and require substantial rebuilding and/or refurbishing. A comprehensive rationalisation of community uses on the site should provide scope for a limited amount of residential development which would help to fund the project but should, nevertheless, be secondary to the main use of the site.

- 7.27.13 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- consider and mitigate the potential for flooding on part of the site;
- protect the character of the river margins which are a designated Ecosite;
- undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site; and
- carry out improvements to the Gunnings Road/Kinwarton Road junction to improve highway safety.



Bidford-on-Avon

Proposal BID.B

Land comprising approximately 1.3 hectares (gross) on Grafton Lane, Bidford on Avon, is allocated for residential development (including a proportion of affordable units).

[see Inset Map 2.2]

Explanation

7.27.14 The site is currently occupied by a row of semi-detached dwellings arrangements. The dwellings are set in large plots, each having long front and rear gardens. The existing development is visually dominant when approaching the village from the east. Overall, there is an opportunity to effectively intensify the residential use of this area.

7.27.15 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- approach the redevelopment of the area in a comprehensive manner;
- create an attractive edge to the urban form of the village through appropriate design and landscaping; and
- provide two access points off Grafton Lane with a spine road through the development.

Proposal BID.C

Land comprising approximately 0.68 hectares (gross) at Marleigh House, Waterloo Road, Bidford-on-Avon residential development (including a proportion of affordable units).

[see Inset Map 2.2]

Explanation

7.27.16 The site is occupied by a substantial dwelling set in extensive grounds. Over the years it has become surrounded by residential development. Although attractive in its own right, there is an opportunity to utilise the site more intensively.

7.27.17 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- make appropriate allowance for the gradient within the site, particularly with respect to the access off Waterloo Road;
- incorporate the existing mature trees within the site as far as practicable;
- undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site; and
- consider the relationship of the layout and design of the development to adjacent residential areas.

Proposal BID.D

Land comprising approximately 3.0 hectares (gross) at Marriage Hill Nurseries, Salford Road, Bidford on Avon is allocated for Class B1 industrial development.

[see Inset Map 2.2]

Explanation

7.27.18 The allocation of this site for industrial purposes was confirmed through the modifications process in preparing the adopted District Local Plan. It was justified on the basis that additional land is required to provide employment opportunities given the amount of new residential development which is occurring in the village. This situation remains the case and it is appropriate for the allocation of the site to be carried through to this Plan in order to attract new jobs to the area.

7.27.19 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- protect the amenity of adjacent dwellings in the design of the development and the nature of industrial uses on the site;
- provide a ghost island junction on Salford Road;
- undertake archaeological and ecological evaluations of the site;
- pay attention to the watercourse which runs along the western boundary; and
- produce a comprehensive ground investigation of the site which analyses the contents of tipped material and tests for the presence of munitions and landfill gases.

Proposal BID.E

Land comprising approximately 7.7 hectares (gross) at Friday Furlong, Waterloo Road, Bidford-on-Avon, is allocated for mixed-use development. Acceptable uses would be:

- residential (including a proportion of affordable units) on approximately 2.0 hectares (net)
- specialist accommodation for elderly people
- Class B1 (a) and (b) industrial
- public open space

Explanation

7.27.19a A large part of the site is currently occupied by travellers, although there are a number of permanent dwellings within it. A range of unauthorised uses, including caravans, storage and tipping are also present. Many of these activities have become increasingly problematic for local residents as the village has expanded northwards and now abuts the site.

7.27.19b Due to this prevailing situation there is a strong measure of support within the local community for the site to be developed for a mix of uses. However, despite its current condition, much of the site is 'greenfield' according to the definition in PPG3 (Annex C). Furthermore, based on the strategic approach to the location of development, there is no justification for releasing greenfield land for housing development in Bidford. This proposal is justified due to the particular circumstances that prevail but it is necessary for the scale of the residential component to reflect the amount of brownfield land involved. It is for this reason that the net area of the site to be utilised for housing is specified in this case.

7.27.19c The need to provide specialist accommodation and facilities for the elderly in the village has been indicated and this site would be appropriate for such a use. However, this is not a requirement of the development since it will be dependent on responsible agencies to instigate.

7.27.19d The provision of small-scale business units would also be appropriate on the site. Although the overall industrial land requirement for the District has been met, a limited amount of additional business floorspace would complement the residential development that has taken place in the village in recent years and provide a source of local jobs.

7.27.19e A substantial area of public open space should be provided to serve the development itself and to reflect the imbalance in the location of open space in the village as a whole. Much of the existing open space is concentrated to the south of the river and is inconvenient for a large proportion of the village.

7.27.19f The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- remove all the existing uses and activities on the site;
- incorporate a pedestrian/cycle link to The Bank; and
- create an attractive edge to this part of the village through appropriate design and landscaping.

7.27.19g A Development Brief should be produced for the site to establish the detailed nature and disposition of uses.

Henley-in-Arden

Proposal HEN.B

~~Land comprising approximately 0.7 hectares (gross) on Bear Lane, Henley in Arden, is allocated for residential development (including a proportion of affordable units).~~

~~[see Inset Map 2.3]~~

Explanation

~~7.27.20 The site comprises a number of long, rear gardens and has the potential to intensify residential development in the area. This will require the acquisition of various parcels of land and a comprehensive approach will be necessary to ensure an effective layout and design.~~

~~7.27.24 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:~~

- ~~• protect the character of the old railway embankment adjacent to the site which is a designated Ecosite;~~
- ~~• assess and incorporate the most appropriate means of vehicular access; and~~
- ~~• ensure that the design of the development minimises its impact on the character of the adjacent dwellings and countryside.~~

Proposal HEN.C

Land comprising approximately ~~0.7~~ **1.2** hectares (gross) at the Cattle Market, Warwick Road, Henley-in-Arden, is allocated for mixed-use development. Acceptable uses would be:

- residential (including a proportion of affordable units)
- Class B1 (a) and (b) industrial
- a small-scale retail use

[see Inset Map 2.3]

Explanation

7.27.22 The redevelopment of this site presents an opportunity for environmental enhancement which, in its present form, detracts significantly from the adjacent Conservation Area. The site is suitable for a high density form of residential development. The opportunity should also be taken to provide business space for office-based companies and, if an interest materialises, a small-scale retail unit(s) to serve local residents. The site is protected by an Environment Agency Flood Alleviation Scheme which may place a constraint on the extent and design of the development.

7.27.23 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- consider the relocation of the Cattle Market;
- provide an access via a new estate road linking Prince Harry Road and Warwick Road;
- liaise closely with the Environment Agency to overcome the flooding constraint;
- promote a high quality design which will enhance the setting of the Conservation Area; and
- undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.

Proposal HEN.D

Land comprising approximately 1.5 hectares (gross) off High Street, Henley-in-Arden, is allocated for Class B1 and B2 industrial development.

[see Inset Map 2.3]

Explanation

7.27.24 Until recently this site has been in industrial use and supported an important local employer. The village has been prone to losing businesses and the economic base of the community has suffered as a consequence. Given these circumstances it is important to retain the site in industrial use.

7.27.25 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- upgrade the existing access to the site from High Street, including a segregated pedestrian provision;
- improve the junction with High Street, incorporating safety measures;
- investigate any potential effects on the adjacent Scheduled Ancient Monument; and
- ensure that the design of the development minimises its impact on the character of the adjacent countryside.

Kineton

Proposal KIN.B

Land comprising approximately 0.4 hectares (gross) on King John's Road, Kineton is allocated for residential development (including a proportion of affordable units).

[see Inset Map 2.4]

Explanation

- 7.27.26 The site consists of two short terraces of dwellings which have long rear gardens. There is potential to effectively intensify the residential use of this area.
- 7.27.27 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:
- approach the redevelopment of the area in a comprehensive manner; and
 - introduce traffic management measures to ensure that access to the primary school is safe.

Proposal KIN.C

Land comprising approximately 0.9 hectares (gross) on Banbury Road, Kineton, is allocated for residential development (including a proportion of affordable units).

[see Inset Map 2.4]

Explanation

- 7.27.28 There are various components to this site, including a vacant garage, three dwellings and an area of hardstanding used for storage. The capacity of the site would be increased through comprehensive redevelopment but this is not a prerequisite of any scheme.
- 7.27.29 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:
- liaise with the Environment Agency regarding the impact of development on the River Dene floodplain; and
 - promote a form of development which provides an appropriate entrance feature to the village.

Shipston-on-Stour

Proposal SHIP.B

Land comprising approximately ~~2.5~~ 3.2 hectares (gross) off Darlingscote Road, Shipston-on-Stour is allocated for Class B1, B2 and B8 industrial development.

[see Inset Map 2.5]

Explanation

7.27.30 A large part of this proposal is carried forward from the adopted Local Plan. The site ~~and~~ has an important role to play in attracting new employment opportunities to the town.

7.27.30a Given the recent loss of the Tilemans site from employment uses there is merit in compensating for this by extending the allocation onto adjacent, albeit 'greenfield', land. Such an increase in area should make the provision of infrastructure more viable and help to bring the whole site forward for development.

7.27.30b As the land involved rises gradually to the west and is visible from the Fosse Way and from distant views to the east of the town, it is important that substantial planting is provided along the western boundary to reduce the impact of development on the landscape.

7.27.31 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- ensure that the design of the development minimises its impact on the character of the adjacent countryside; and
- consider the relationship of the site to future development on adjacent land.

Southam

Proposal SOU.B

Land comprising approximately 1.0 hectare (gross) on High Street, Southam, is allocated for mixed-use development. Acceptable uses would be:

- community facilities
- retail (including a supermarket)
- residential (including a proportion of affordable units)

[see Inset Map 2.6]

Explanation

7.27.32 This site offers a major opportunity to create a focal point at the heart of the town centre which will help it to perform its role as an important service centre. The site lies within a Conservation Area and any scheme must be sensitive to its character. In fact, redevelopment of the area provides considerable scope to enhance the appearance and function of the town centre. A wide range of uses would be acceptable but at this stage it is not appropriate to specify the preferred approach.

7.27.33 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- approach the redevelopment of the area in a comprehensive manner;
- devise a layout and design which make a positive contribution to the function and appearance of the town centre;
- include a library [and police station](#) within the scheme or provide a suitable alternative site(s) for the facilities;
- consider thoroughly the impact and role of a foodstore in this location;
- provide a single junction from High Street/Coventry Street with a secondary access from Park Lane;
- widen Park Lane from its junction with High Street as far as The Rectory; and
- [undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.](#)

Proposal SOU.C

Land comprising approximately 2.1 hectares (gross) on Wattons Lane, Southam, is allocated for residential development (including a proportion of affordable units).

[see Inset Map 2.6]

Explanation

7.27.34 The site comprises a decommissioned sewage works and a number of commercial properties. It is situated in a sensitive location adjacent to and partly within an Area of Restraint. This designation relates to the importance of the valley of the River Stowe in creating a wedge of undeveloped land into the heart of Southam. In addition, the topography of the site presents a major design challenge to ensure that the purpose of the Area of Restraint is not undermined and the open character of the area not severely compromised. This suggests that the design of development will vary significantly between the two parts of the site. That on the former sewage works should comprise low density housing with extensive planting to assist its assimilation into the Area of Restraint. The remainder should be at a much higher density reflecting the scale of the commercial buildings it will replace and the adjacent Wattons Lodge. The development of the site will be expected to help deliver the proposed public open space on adjacent land (see **Proposal SOU.A**).

7.27.35 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- approach the redevelopment of the area in a comprehensive manner;
- enhance the nature conservation value of the river environs which are designated as an Ecosite;
- undertake [an archaeological and](#) an ecological evaluation of the site;
- improve Park Lane to acceptable standards and provide a traffic calming scheme on St James' Road in relation to the primary school;
- improve the access to the site from the St James' Road/Park Lane junction; and
- incorporate a sustainable drainage system which will assist flood management in the Stowe Valley and the Leam Catchment.

Studley

Proposal STUD.B

Land comprising approximately 1.0 hectare (gross) on Alcester Road, Studley, is allocated for mixed-use development. Acceptable uses would be:

- retail (including a supermarket)
- residential (including a proportion of affordable units)

[see Inset Map 2.7]

Explanation

7.27.36 The redevelopment of this site presents an opportunity to regenerate a very prominent site in the centre of the village and to enhance the setting of the listed buildings in Priory Square. The retention of a foodstore is essential as it underpins the commercial function of the centre, but its size could be reduced. This would allow for a number of smaller retail units to be provided, as well as a high density residential component.

7.27.37 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- ~~devise a prominent but~~ [produce a high quality design to deliver a sensitive form of development which will reflect and enhance the character of the village centre;](#)
- undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site;
- provide vehicular access solely off Alcester Road; and
- incorporate pedestrian links through the site to improve access to other parts of the village centre.

Wellesbourne

Proposal WELL.B

Land comprising approximately 0.4 hectares (gross) on Warwick Road, Wellesbourne, is allocated for residential (including a proportion of affordable units).

[see Inset Map 2.8]

Explanation

7.27.38 The site comprises a terrace of four dwellings which are in poor conditions and appear to be vacant. They are situated in a prominent location within a Conservation Area and two of them are listed. To the rear of the buildings is an area of generally untended garden. The redevelopment of the site would significantly enhance the visual quality of the Conservation Area and the setting of the listed buildings.

7.27.39 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- retain and refurbish the listed buildings;
- assess and incorporate the most appropriate means of vehicular access; and
- ensure a high quality development which is well-related to the existing buildings on the frontage and adjoining properties and uses.

Proposal WELL.C

Land comprising approximately 3.6 hectares (gross) off Loxley Road, Wellesbourne is allocated for Class B1, B2 and B8 industrial development.

[see Inset Map 2.8]

Explanation

7.27.40 This site covers land within the curtilage of the existing industrial estate. Part of the original allocation in the adopted Local Plan has been implemented and this proposal reflects the residual areas of land which remain to be developed.

7.27.41 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- assess and incorporate the most appropriate means of vehicular access;
- secure a financial contribution towards the provision of highway improvements in and around the village of Barford;
- [submit a comprehensive transport assessment as part of any proposal; and](#)
- [undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.](#)



(iii) Countryside

7.28 Introduction

7.28.1 The Rural White Paper 'Our countryside: the future' has confirmed rural issues as an urgent political issue of national significance. Stratford-on-Avon District is predominantly a rural district and hence its countryside deserves specific attention in the Local Plan Review. It is conceivable that we have reached a defining moment in the relationship between rural economies and the survival of rural life and the management of the countryside as a whole. Dealing with some of the emerging issues of the rural economy, such as farm diversification, requires changes to be made in the way that Local Plan policies are presented and applied.

7.28.2 There is no doubt that rural areas have undergone significant changes in recent years due to global economic trends, technological developments, changes in agricultural practices, and improved transport and communication systems. The recent BSE and Foot and Mouth crises have exacerbated these changing trends. In particular, adverse impacts on rural tourism and recreation have signaled the importance of a comprehensive and holistic approach to dealing with rural problems. Similarly, the implications of the imminent changes to the Common Agricultural Policy are not yet known. The Local Plan Review should anticipate and facilitate this transition to the benefit of the countryside.

7.28.3 Rural services have declined significantly in recent years through the processes of centralisation and rationalisation. Stratford-on-Avon District had the lowest proportion of parishes with key services, such as a general store, post office and doctor's surgery, of any part of Warwickshire. Public transport is poor or non-existent in a number of rural settlements. Consequently, many people such as the elderly and the young who have no or limited access to private cars find themselves isolated from key services and facilities. The need for the Local Plan Review to facilitate the regeneration of the rural economy and promote effective access to services for all, whilst at the same time protecting the special character of the rural environment, is apparent.

7.28.4 House prices are higher in the District than the average for Warwickshire. Consequently, in many parts of the District there is a significant need for affordable housing. This has been confirmed by a recent Housing Needs Survey commissioned by the District Council and through more detailed assessments carried out by individual communities.

7.28.5 The attractive environment, combined with relatively low crime and unemployment rates, make rural parts of Stratford-on-Avon District attractive places to live, work and visit. This exerts enormous pressure for development in the countryside. The importance of maintaining and enhancing the environmental quality of the countryside whilst, at the same time, providing for the proven needs of rural people is a critical function of the Local Plan Review.

7.29 Context

7.29.1 A top down – bottom up approach to policy formulation has been adopted in developing policies and proposals for the countryside. Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11) and the Warwickshire Structure Plan (WASP) provide clear guidance on the location of development in the District. The WASP identifies Stratford-upon-Avon as the main town where most development should be concentrated. Development elsewhere would only be justified to meet proven local need and should take account of the availability of job opportunities, local facilities and public transport.

7.29.2 Strong regard is also given to local initiatives in identifying key issues which affect rural communities. This approach has significant policy implications for planning the future of the countryside in the District and will be an important material consideration in determining planning applications. The policies in the Local Plan Review relating to the rural parts of the District should not be treated in isolation but as an integral part of the Council's drive to improve the life of people living in our rural areas. Some of the existing initiatives include:

- Parish Appraisals
- Village Design Statements
- Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Rural Transport Partnership.

The first two are now being merged into comprehensive Parish and Town Plans.

7.30 Objectives

- 7.30.1 Of the fourteen objectives which form the basis of the Local Plan Review, it is reasonable to claim that all but one has a direct relevance to the wish to enhance the quality of life of those who live in the rural parts of the District and to improve the environment of the countryside.
- 7.30.2 The objective to stimulate the role of the Main Rural Centres in providing a wide range of functions which serve rural hinterlands will help to strengthen the relationship between town and country which is emphasised in Government policy.

7.31 Issues

- 7.31.1 The key issues facing the rural parts of Stratford-on-Avon District are set out in the District Council's Rural Strategy. This Strategy is intended to assist and guide the Council and its partners in focusing on rural issues, in determining priorities and in taking action.

Local Economy

- 7.31.2 Since 1985, in common with most of Europe, there has been a gradual but relentless decline in agricultural employment in the District as a result of mechanisation and the Common Agricultural Policy. Consequently, there is an ever-widening diversity in rural employment, with tourism and the service sector in the ascendancy. It is important to ensure that a wide range of new job opportunities are created, particularly to meet the needs of people who live in rural areas.

Affordable housing

- 7.31.3 Whilst the housing stock in rural areas is diverse in style, size and age, house prices are 10% above the average for Warwickshire. Consequently, there is a shortfall in rural housing which can be afforded by many local families and young people who wish to stay in the area rather than have to move to urban areas. There continues to be an unrelenting and widespread need for affordable housing in rural communities as has been demonstrated by successive housing need surveys in the District.

Accessibility

- 7.31.4 Public transport services in rural areas are generally limited although there has been a recent increase in funding. The railway network links Stratford-upon-Avon with Birmingham and, to a lesser extent, to London via Leamington Spa. Together, the two lines provide only a handful of communities with a limited service. Bus services are equally tenuous, many relying on public subsidy and frequently being unrelated to work patterns or access to essential facilities.

Services

- 7.31.5 Rural services and facilities generally tend to operate at the margins of economic viability. There has been a dramatic reduction in village services in recent years and few settlements retain a general store, post office or school. Because of the economies of scale, the relatively small and dispersed population and transport costs, goods and services are often uncompetitively priced. Public services have also tended to be rationalised although, where possible, efforts are made to reverse this trend.

Environment

- 7.31.6 Underpinning the primary rural issues outlined above is the need to actively conserve the rural environment as one of the District's major assets. It is essential that the valuable features of our environment are thoroughly documented and protected from inappropriate development and activity. Furthermore, it is important to encourage owners to maintain those features for which they have responsibility.

7.32 Research

Rural Economic Issues Study

- 7.32.1 The Study commissioned by the District Council in 1996, while focussing on the future of the District's rural economy, went to the heart of all the issues outlined above. It emphasised the close interrelationship between economic, social and environmental factors. The Study concluded that a range of job opportunities must be available for rural dwellers in or near the communities where they live. This will necessitate the availability of a range of sites and premises for new and expanding businesses. The planning system should be positive and responsive to these needs whilst maintaining the environmental quality of the District.



7.32.2 However, the Study stressed that initiatives related solely to employment and business development would not, on their own, achieve significant improvements to the well-being of rural communities. Other actions are also required in relation to affordable housing, public transport and the provision of rural services.

7.33.3 In all other respects, it is anticipated that development proposals have no necessity to be located in the countryside or would not bring sufficient benefits to override the general principle of restraint.

7.33 Policies and Proposals

7.33.1 Many of the policies set out elsewhere in the Local Plan Review are applicable to the countryside, including the villages and hamlets which lie within it, and should be referred to in gaining a full picture of the future planning of the rural parts of the District.

[Recommended references: Policies STR.1, STR.4, PR.2, PR.4, PR.10, EF.1, EF.2, COM.1, COM.2, COM.3, COM.7, COM.8, COM.11, COM.16, COM.17, COM.21, COM.22, COM.23]

7.33.2 The policies and proposals which follow are specifically related to the countryside, including all settlements not specifically named in **Policy STR.1** (ie. Stratford-upon-Avon and the Main Rural Centres), and derive from the issues set out above.

7.34 Control over development

Policy CTY.1

All forms of development in the countryside, other than those in accordance with provisions elsewhere in the Local Plan, will be resisted in order to preserve its character and to ensure that resources are protected.

Explanation

7.33.1 It is Government policy that the countryside should be safeguarded for its own sake and in order to afford protection for non-renewable and natural resources. Accordingly, the emphasis of the Local Plan Review is to accommodate appropriate forms of development in the countryside, in a manner which minimises its impact, but otherwise to apply rigorous controls.

7.33.2 Provision is made in various policies throughout the Plan whereby the merits of various forms of development and activity in the countryside can be assessed. In general terms, these uses can either only reasonably be located in the countryside or have an important contribution to make to the function of rural areas.

7.35 Re-use of rural buildings

Policy CTY.2

Proposals for the conversion of existing rural buildings to industrial, commercial, tourism or recreation uses will generally be supported. All conversion schemes will be subject to the following criteria being satisfied as appropriate:

- the building should be capable of accommodating the proposed use without significant rebuilding, alteration or extension;
- the scale of proposals should not be such as to jeopardise sustainability objectives, particularly in relation to the generation of car and goods vehicle traffic;
- proposals for Class B8 (warehousing) uses should not be located where they would cause an increase in heavy goods vehicles on roads in the vicinity which are unsuitable for such traffic;
- proposed uses should complement the special qualities and features which help to create the distinctiveness of the locality, including those highlighted in ~~Village Design Statements, Parish Appraisals,~~ Parish and Town Plans (and their equivalent), Conservation Area reports and landscape character assessments, and as reflected in any designation affecting the site;
- proposals should be appropriate to a rural setting, particularly in relation to the scale of proposed extensions and the treatment of building elevations and curtilages, and should be consistent with the rurality of the area;
- in the case of an agricultural building of modern construction it will be necessary to prove that the building was genuinely required and used for farming purposes; and
- proposals should retain and respect the special qualities and features of listed buildings and buildings of local historic interest.

The scale of any retail use of such a building will be restricted to that which is directly related to the sale of goods produced on the site.

Proposals for the conversion of buildings in the countryside to self-catering holiday accommodation will also be assessed against the above criteria. If permission is granted it will be subject to a condition limiting occupancy to short-term holiday lets.

~~Proposals for permanent residential conversions will be resisted unless a specific justification is established, such as:~~

- ~~▲ a mixed use conversion scheme where a dwelling would be ancillary to an existing or proposed business uses. This will only be permitted where clearly necessary for and subordinate to the efficient and secure operation of those business uses; or~~
- ~~▲ where a residential conversion provides the only reasonable means of ensuring that a listed building or a building of local historic interest is protected from deterioration.~~

The potential environmental impact of permitted development rights will be assessed in each case and will be withdrawn where they would otherwise have significant environmental implications.

For schemes within the Green Belt, the proposed use should not jeopardise the openness of the Green Belt, or the purposes of Green Belt designation, through the significant extension of buildings, the provision of extensive ancillary facilities such as external storage, vehicle parking/manoeuvring space, or boundary walling/fencing. The potential cumulative impact of schemes will also be taken into account.

[Recommended references: Policies COM.1, CTY.4, CTY.6, CTY.14]

Explanation

- 7.35.1 This policy applies to buildings in all settlements other than Stratford-upon-Avon and the Main Rural Centres, as well as isolated buildings in the open countryside.
- 7.35.2 The purpose of the policy is to provide a positive framework for the growth and diversification of the rural economy. Industrial, commercial, tourism and recreational uses are well placed to enable this objective to be achieved compared with residential development.
- 7.35.3 However, the policy is not only about promoting development that is important to the rural economy but also protecting the qualities of the countryside that are valued. It is therefore important to acknowledge that maintaining the essential rurality of the countryside is an equally important objective of the Plan. A holistic approach that looks at the scale, location, design, character and nature of a proposal is essential in considering any scheme to convert rural buildings.

7.35.3a Government guidance seeks both to promote appropriate forms of economic activity in the countryside in PPG7 and to reduce overall levels of travel and car-based journeys in PPG13. In most cases, proposals for converting rural buildings to business use should be acceptable on transport grounds. However, there may be cases where the location, scale and nature of the proposed activity will be inappropriate due to the pattern of vehicular movement that would be generated.

7.35.4 Comprehensive and accurate before and after elevations, sections and layouts should be submitted with a planning application to help assess the impact of the conversion scheme on the character of the building. In addition, a full structural survey, prepared on a professional basis, will normally be required. If the building is in a poor condition, planning permission may be conditional on the early execution of an agreed schedule of repairs.

7.35.5 PPG7: The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development (1997) does not seek to prevent the re-use of modern buildings. However, the District Planning Authority wishes to ensure that a building was initially constructed for an agricultural purpose and not with the intention of putting it to a different purpose. Consequently, it will require clear evidence to be submitted that the building has been used for agricultural activities. Annex G in PPG7 provides further advice on this matter.

7.35.6 There are various sources of information available, such as the District Design Guide, Village Design Statements, Parish Appraisals and Plans and landscape character assessments, to help assess the impact of conversion schemes on the character of the countryside affected.

7.35.7 Retail use of any rural building will only be supported when it is directly related to the sale of goods produced on the site. An assessment of the economic viability of the whole operation will be required in order to justify the contribution of the retail activity. The impact of the proposal on retail activities in villages nearby will also be taken into account



Policy CTY.2A

Proposals for permanent residential conversions will be resisted unless a specific justification is established in one or more of the following ways:

- a mixed-use conversion scheme where a dwelling would be ancillary to an existing or proposed business use. This will only be permitted where clearly necessary for and subordinate to the efficient and secure operation of those business uses;
- where a residential conversion provides the only reasonable means of ensuring that a listed building or a building of local historic interest is protected from deterioration;
- where a building situated within the confines of a settlement, and which makes an important contribution to the character and amenity of the settlement, has been unsuccessfully marketed for a business use or is otherwise unsuitable for such a use.

The provisions of Policy CTY.2 will be applied where appropriate.

Explanation

7.35.8 The District Planning Authority will not support permanent residential conversion of rural buildings unless it is to meet a proven local need. Proposals for the conversion of rural buildings to permanent residential use will be subject to the same controls applied to new dwellings in the countryside. This approach is supported by the clear objective of the Warwickshire Structure Plan to restrict the number of new dwellings created in rural areas in order to concentrate development in the main urban area of Stratford-upon-Avon.

7.35.9 However, mixed-use schemes with an element of residential development will be considered when a dwelling is proven to be essential for the efficient and secure operation of a business use. Sufficient evidence will be sought by the District Planning Authority through a comprehensive appraisal of the business in order to justify permanent residential accommodation. A business plan should be submitted with a planning application to demonstrate the degree of linkage between the business and residential uses. In all cases the scale of the residential element must be directly related and subsidiary to the business uses. Any dwelling approved on this basis will be subject to a strict occupancy condition.

7.35.10 There may also be circumstances where the conversion of a rural building to residential use offers the only viable prospect of maintaining a building which makes an important contribution to the character of the local area (listed or otherwise) in a good state of repair. However, in such cases evidence must be produced to show that the building has been marketed for a non-residential use for a period of at least six months.

7.35.10a Non-domestic buildings constructed of traditional materials, such as brick or stone, contribute to the physical fabric and general environment of rural settlements. It would be detrimental to their character for such buildings not to be retained in some form of positive use. The emphasis of PPG7 and this policy is that business uses should take preference over residential use. However, there will be cases where it is claimed that a business use is not feasible or appropriate.

7.35.10b In order to assess the situation in a specific case, the District Planning Authority will require detailed evidence to be submitted regarding the extent of the marketing exercise undertaken to attract a business use, the nature of any interest shown and an assessment of why the building may not be suitable for this form of use.

7.35.10c While no boundaries for rural settlements are defined in the Local Plan, to be within the confines a building should have a clear physical and functional relationship to the settlement.

Policy CTY.3

Outside the Green Belt, consideration will be given to providing scope for the expansion of existing groups of rural buildings for industrial uses where they are readily accessible by means of transport other than the private car from Stratford-upon-Avon or a Main Rural Centre.

In assessing such proposals, it will be necessary to ensure that the scale and nature of activities to be accommodated on the site are appropriate to the character of the local area and would not cause undue harm to features of acknowledged importance.

The criteria set out in Policy CTY.2 are applicable to the operation of this policy.

Explanation

7.35.11 Over and above the provisions of Policy CTY.2 regarding the conversion of existing rural buildings, there may be cases where a modest increase in the amount of floorspace on a site would be an appropriate means of supporting the rural economy and job opportunities.

7.35.12 It is essential that the merits of any proposal of this nature are thoroughly assessed. In the first place, the impact of a development and the activities it supports must not be harmful to the character of the area with respect to landscape, other properties and the nature of the road network which serves the site.

7.35.13 In addition, however, there needs to be a strong justification for overriding the normal presumption against new development in the countryside. This policy allows for a case to be made based on the proximity of the site from the larger centres of population in the District which would allow people to walk, cycle or use public transport to reach their place of work.

7.36 Farm diversification

Policy CTY.4

~~Planning applications which seek to diversify farm-based operations will be considered against the following criteria~~ Proposals which seek to diversify farm-based operations will generally be supported. All proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- whether best and most versatile agricultural land is affected;
- the extent to which existing buildings can be utilised in preference to new buildings being required;
- whether the scale and nature of the proposed activity can be satisfactorily integrated into the landscape without being detrimental to its character;
- the effect of the proposed activities on existing properties and settlements and on the road network;
- the potential generation of vehicular movements, the adequacy of the proposed means of access and the provision of parking on the site;
- the cumulative effect of activities on the character of the local area; and
- the potential impact of the proposal on the natural and historic environment and on protected species.

In assessing the merits of such proposals, the extent to which they would contribute to and not conflict with the long-term operation and viability of the existing farm holding will be taken into account.

In addition, the role of proposals in the implementation of Whole Farm Plans will be taken into account.

[Recommended references: Policies CTY.2, CTY.3, CTY.10, CTY.14]

Explanation

7.36.1 There is an urgent need to facilitate the diversification of farm-based operations in order to support agricultural operations and to sustain the rural economy. However, the Plan seeks to promote forms of diversification which are sustainable in the countryside. In particular, the utilisation of rural buildings often provides opportunities to support new businesses in the countryside in a sympathetic manner. Any activity must not detract from the character of the local area with respect to landscape and amenity. In particular, the transport impacts of any proposal must be fully mitigated. The Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines provide useful advice on the way in which development and activities can be assimilated successfully into the countryside.



7.36.2 Agriculture is still the backbone of the rural areas of the District. Consequently, it is important to ensure that diversification schemes will bring genuine, long-standing benefits to individual farm operations and to the wider rural area. There would be little to be gained from supporting schemes which merely disposed of the assets of the farm holding once and for all. The test of the merits of a particular proposal is the extent to which it would help to secure the long-term viability of the farm involved. The role of Whole Farm Plans are encouraged in this respect, whereby the relationship of a proposal to the wider farm operations can be fully assessed.

7.36.2a [A good example of a form of farm diversification that can help to sustain the viability of holdings is on-farm food processing. This is given much prominence in Government reports on the future of farming and food and is highlighted in the Countryside Agency's 'Eat the View' initiative. Local processing of local produce can have a range of economic and environmental benefits and there are examples of such businesses in the District which are already making a useful contribution to the local economy.](#)

- a local housing needs assessment; and
- a financial appraisal.

In all such cases a condition will be applied requiring the development to commence within twelve months of the grant of planning permission.

[Recommended references: Policies STR.1, COM.1]

Explanation

7.37.1 The particular housing pressures experienced by rural communities have been widely acknowledged by research at national and local level in recent years. The District Council therefore wishes to encourage and support local communities in meeting their own housing needs. One way of doing this is through the development of so-called rural 'exception' schemes. These are housing schemes on land which would not otherwise receive planning permission for development, where the occupancy of the homes is restricted to households who wish to live in the community but cannot afford to buy a property on the open market.

7.37.2 The full participation and support of the local communities concerned is critical to the success of such schemes. Any initiative must originate from rural communities themselves with the support of the relevant Parish Council. However the District Council and its Partnership Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are keen to provide help and support to ensure their realisation.

7.37.3 The 'exception' initiative is aimed at meeting the housing needs of smaller settlements, particularly those with a population of under 3,000. [However, it does not apply to any of the Main Rural Centres or the Local Centre Villages because Policy COM.1 and Policy COM.13 provide a framework for meeting their local housing needs.](#) There is no specific minimum qualifying size for settlements to benefit from 'exception' schemes. However, it will be necessary to ensure that a settlement has the necessary infrastructure and facilities to support such a development. In practice this may rule out some very small villages and hamlets. The role of Parish [Appraisals Plans](#) in assessing the suitability of settlements to accommodate schemes will be important.

7.37 Housing 'exception' schemes

Policy CTY.5

The development, in exceptional circumstances, of affordable dwellings to meet local housing need in perpetuity may be permitted in settlements where residential development is normally resisted.

Such schemes will be supported within or adjacent to existing settlements provided that:

- it has been demonstrated that there is a local and long-term need for affordable housing;
- the content of the scheme reflects and can reasonably be expected to meet identified local need;
- the scheme has been initiated by [from within](#) the local community concerned and has the support of the relevant Parish Council, or is identified in an adopted Parish [Appraisal Plan](#) (or equivalent);
- satisfactory prior arrangements for the management and occupation of the properties have been made to ensure that the homes to be provided will meet identified local housing needs, both initially and in perpetuity; and
- the need to ensure that other relevant policies of the Plan are not undermined in the location and design of the scheme.

Proposals will only be acceptable if they are submitted in the form of a full planning application and accompanied by:

[7.37.3a The District Council's Housing Division and Warwickshire Rural Housing Association are able to advise on the carrying out of local housing needs assessments.](#)

7.37.4 The policy applies to land both inside or adjacent to the existing physical form of villages. It is important that schemes should be physically well-related to their host village and not be located in open countryside. 'Exception' schemes are also acceptable in the Green Belt according to PPG2.

7.37.5 The content of any scheme must be tailored as closely as possible to the identified need, relating to the characteristics of the development, such as the number, type and size of homes proposed. It will only be possible to verify that this has been done if the scheme is submitted in the form of a full planning application: outline planning applications will not be acceptable within the terms of the policy. In practice it is expected that prospective applicants will discuss their proposals with the District Council prior to finalising a project brief with an RSL.

7.37.6 The management and occupation of the properties will need to be controlled by way of a legal agreement to ensure that the homes are used only to meet the identified local housing need. Occupancy of homes will therefore be restricted in perpetuity to households with a strong connection to the parish or parishes concerned. General market housing, or mixed developments consisting of high-value housing to cross-subsidise affordable housing on the same sites, are inappropriate on 'exception' sites. This is in order to ensure that no 'hope' value ever attaches to such developments. Similarly, the inclusion of clauses in planning obligations which would enable lenders of private finance to dispose of properties on the open market (sometimes known as 'mortgagee in possession' clauses) are unacceptable. Copies of a model agreement used by the District Council for 'exception' schemes are available.

7.37.7 The best way of ensuring the requirements of this policy are met will be through the involvement of one of the Partnership RSLs. They have the expertise to both develop and manage schemes on behalf of local communities, although they could act just as development agents on behalf of a community body. Alternatively, if a local community specifically prefers, there may be scope for the involvement of another body such as a charitable village trust to develop a self-financing scheme. However, such alternative arrangements are not normally recommended and are unlikely to be viable due to the non-availability of financial support from the District Council.

7.37.8 It is anticipated that most homes built under this policy will be for rent under assured tenancies. Whilst in theory other forms of tenure such as shared ownership or shared equity are equally acceptable provided they meet identified needs, restrictions in relation to staircasing to full equity and the prohibition on 'mortgagee in possession' clauses are likely to mean that, in practice, the scope for such alternatives will be limited.

7.37.9 In order to maintain the confidence and support of rural communities for the 'exception' initiative, it is vital that all schemes are built to the highest standard in terms of their appearance and quality of construction. In addition to the requirements of this policy, 'exception' schemes must fully accord with all other relevant design and environmental criteria in this Plan.

7.38 Rural workers' dwellings

Policy CTY.6

Proposals for a permanent dwelling for occupation by a person engaged in an agricultural operation, or another form of use which can only reasonably be located in the countryside, will only be supported if all the following criteria are met:

- **there is a clearly established functional need for such a dwelling to be provided in order for the activity to be sustained;**
- **the need is based on a full-time worker, or one who is primarily employed in the activity to which the application relates;**
- **the activity has been established for at least three years, has been profitable for at least one year, is currently financially sound, and has a reasonable prospect of remaining so; and**
- **the need could not be met by an existing dwelling on the holding, or any dwelling in the vicinity which is suitable and could reasonably be made available for occupation by the worker concerned.**

The size of any such dwelling should be reasonably related to the functional requirement which is established and appropriate in scale to its setting and surroundings.

Any permission granted will be subject to an 'occupancy' condition. The variation or removal of such a condition will only be granted if it is clear that its original purpose is obsolete and no longer required.

Where appropriate, a legal agreement will be sought in order to maintain the functional relationship of the dwelling to the use of the land to which it is initially associated.

Proposals for the stationing of temporary accommodation for occupation by an agricultural worker will be assessed against the provisions of this policy.

[Recommended references: Policy CTY.13]

Explanation

- 7.38.1 One of the few circumstances in which isolated residential development in the countryside may be justified is when accommodation is required to enable farm workers, or those engaged in other forms of activity located in the countryside, to live at or in the immediate vicinity of their place of work. Whether this is essential in any particular case will depend on the needs of the business or operation concerned and not on the personal preferences or circumstances of any particular individual.
- 7.38.2 The District Planning Authority will require sufficient evidence to demonstrate that there is an essential need for a person or persons to be present on the site at all times sufficient to justify the provision of residential accommodation. A case based solely on grounds of security will not necessarily be sufficient. It is also important that the sustainability of the enterprise should be taken into consideration along with established functional and financial tests.
- 7.38.3 Proposals for permanent or temporary accommodation will also be expected to meet all other relevant criteria of this Plan. The proposed dwelling should be located wherever possible as part of a complex of farm buildings or next to existing dwellings. Landscaping should be provided to assist with the assimilation of the dwelling into the rural environment.
- 7.38.4 In order for it to be demonstrated that the provisions of this policy are satisfied, the District Planning Authority will require all proposals to be supported by sufficient evidence. This should take the form of a comprehensive appraisal of the holding and business. It is advisable for such evidence to be prepared by a suitably qualified consultant, such as a chartered surveyor specialising in rural practice. This information will be assessed by the Authority's expert consultants.

7.38.5 Where planning permission is subsequently granted:

- a standard 'agricultural occupancy' condition will be imposed restricting the occupation of the accommodation to a person locally employed in agriculture and the dependants of such a person. Compliance with such a condition will be monitored;
- in certain circumstances, the District Planning Authority may impose an occupancy condition on any other dwelling on the agricultural unit concerned; and
- permitted development rights normally available to extend dwelling houses may be removed by condition to prevent agricultural dwellings being extended disproportionately in relation to the productivity of the holding.

7.38.6 PPG7 makes specific mention of the role of temporary agricultural dwellings to support new farming activities during the first three years of operation. The tests and controls set out in the policy are equally applicable to temporary dwellings, such as caravans or wooden structures. However, for the avoidance of doubt, it is accepted that it would not be necessary to prove that the activity had been established for at least three years. [Neither is proof of profitability required in order to justify a temporary dwelling.](#)

7.39 Gypsy sites Policy CTY.7

Proposals for the provision of permanent gypsy sites will be supported where all the following criteria are met:

- monitoring indicates that there is a significant unmet need for further provision within the District;
- the proposed site would not cause harm to the character of the local area [or to features of acknowledged importance](#), or unduly affect any neighbouring properties or activities; and
- appropriate facilities are provided to meet the requirements of people living on the site.

Explanation

7.39.1 The former duty of local authorities under the Caravan Sites Act 1969 to provide accommodation on caravan sites for gypsies was repealed by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. Government advice nevertheless advises local planning authorities to continue to have regard to the need to provide accommodation for gypsies.

7.39.2 The District Council is not aware of the need for further accommodation at the present time. Nevertheless, if as a result of monitoring, there appears to be a significant deficiency in accommodation, then small-scale proposals may be permitted as an exception to the normal policies of restraint over development in the countryside.

7.39.2a [It will be necessary for the requirements of Circular 3/99 to be met where non-mains sewerage facilities are to be provided.](#)

7.39.3 The provision of gypsy sites is also subject to the licensing regime established by the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.

7.40 Mobile homes

Policy CTY.8

Proposals for new sites for positioning mobile homes or caravans for permanent accommodation, including individual units, will be resisted.

The small-scale expansion of existing sites may be permitted where it is proven that environmental or other forms of benefits will be secured.

[Ancillary development to improve the amenities and facilities available to existing sites may be permitted.](#)

Explanation

7.40.1 The planning implications of mobile home and caravan sites for residential occupation are broadly similar to those relating to permanent housing. On that basis, all proposals for such dwellings will be considered against the generally restrictive housing policies of the Local Plan Review.

7.40.2 The District Planning Authority will, however, consider the specific planning merits of individual proposals for park homes. This could include, for example, an assessment of the contribution which a scheme could make to satisfying a need for low cost housing in a particular area.

7.41 Holiday accommodation

Policy CTY.9

In assessing proposals for new, or extensions to existing, sites for touring caravans, holiday chalets or camping, planning permission will only be granted where the proposals are compatible with the character and amenity of the area.

Proposals should be well related to a main road and not have a significant impact on the local highway network.

The amount of new building associated with the proposal should be kept to a minimum and, where practicable, existing buildings should be utilised.

Explanation

7.41.1 In certain parts of the District proposals for these forms of holiday accommodation will be vigorously resisted because of their sensitivity to development and activity. Within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Special Landscape Areas and the various Areas of Restraint it is considered that new or extended caravan and camping sites are likely to cause harm to the character and amenity of these areas. Caravan, [chalet](#) and camping sites are not considered to be appropriate development within the Green Belt and as such there will be a general presumption against such proposals.

7.41.2 The issue of scale will also be considered when dealing with planning applications. Sites that are smaller in nature are capable of being assimilated into the landscape more readily. The District Planning Authority will therefore have regard to this issue when determining planning applications. However, there may be circumstances where the impact of existing sites can be reduced through limited expansion. Where this is the case, further consideration will be given to the proposal.

7.41.3 Due to the potential for traffic generation, it is important that these forms of activity are readily accessible from a main road, ie. Class A roads in most cases, to reduce the impact of vehicles on local communities.

7.41.4 Sites consisting of up to five caravans do not require planning permission or a caravan license if they are subject to a certificate of approval issued by 'exempted organisations'. These are usually specialists in arranging locations at which their members can park touring caravans. They have been granted a certificate of exemption from some of the limitations on the location of caravan sites imposed by the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and also by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.



7.42 Rural recreation

Policy CTY.10

Proposals which seek to provide and extend the benefits of small-scale recreation and leisure facilities in the countryside will **generally** be supported.

In considering specific proposals regard will be given to the potential for nuisance to be caused to local residents and the effect on the tranquillity of the area as a result of the activities involved.

For proposals in the Green Belt the provisions of Policy PR.2 will be applied.

[Recommended references: Policy CTY.4]

Explanation

7.42.1 Countryside recreation and leisure makes a significant contribution to the rural economy. Farmers are increasingly looking at other ways of supplementing their income. Under the scope of this policy, small scale schemes which support the greater use of the countryside will be permitted providing that any proposals are sympathetic to the rural area, landscape and natural and cultural features. Any proposal will be expected to include proper management measures to avoid unacceptable environmental impacts and must respect the countryside.

7.42.2 The countryside is mostly in private ownership and is the workplace for many people as well as the means of production. Conflict is bound to occur where visitors amble at will without due regard and respect for those living and working on the land. Such situations can be avoided or at least limited by the use of legal access or management agreements. Such agreements are available to the District Planning Authority to enter into with landowners and tenants. In appropriate instances the diversion of rights of way may similarly avoid potential conflicts of interest.

Policy CTY.11

Where opportunities arise, improvements to the network of recreational footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes in the countryside will be supported and promoted.

The concept of 'quiet lanes' will be promoted, in conjunction with Warwickshire County Council.

Explanation

7.42.2 The countryside is a major source of enjoyment for informal recreation and opportunities should be taken to assist people to gain access to it in an authorised manner. The County Council is responsible for ensuring that public rights of way are kept open and are properly maintained and waymarked.

7.42.3 The District Planning Authority will support environmental improvements to, and the upgrading of, recreational routes which provide ready access to the countryside, in line with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Initiatives that will make these sustainable forms of transport in rural areas more convenient and attractive will be encouraged. People with disabilities often require special arrangements to enjoy the countryside and these will be incorporated into schemes to improve existing facilities or to provide new routes.

7.42.4 Quiet lanes provide an excellent opportunity to extend the network of rights of way in the countryside for walking, cycling and horse riding. Although vehicles are still permitted to use these lanes, speed limits are significantly reduced in order to ensure the safety of all users.

7.42.5 A number of proposals to create new recreational footpaths in the Alcester and Bidford-on-Avon area are carried forward from the adopted Local Plan. These are illustrated on the **Proposals Map**.

Proposal CTY.A

The District Planning Authority will create lengths of recreational footpaths **within in and around** the town of Alcester. These will link existing well-used footpaths in order to provide pleasant traffic free walks within the town, and easy access to the network of public footpaths in the countryside surrounding the town:

- a. from the disused railway along the west side of the River Arrow to Gunnings Bridge;
- b. along the north bank of the River Alne from the vicinity of Oversley Mill to the footpath (AL47) linking with the Old Stratford Road;
- c. from the Stratford Road bridge to the road at The Cherrytree public house along the south bank of the River Alne, bridging the Alne near White Hill Farm Estate;
- d. along the north bank of the River Alne from Kinwarton Park to Sernal Lane; and
- e. from Sernal Lane along the disused railway line and then along The Heart of England Way (footpath AL63) to Kinwarton Road.

Proposal CTY.B

The District Planning Authority will develop a recreational footpath from Welford-on-Avon to Bidford-on-Avon, utilising a section of derelict railway (Stratford-upon-Avon to Broom) from Binton Bridge to Blackcliff and existing rights of way (SD22, SD23 and SD23C). ~~This proposal includes provision for a walkers car park on the disused railway where it meets the C46 road at Binton Bridges, which will be investigated further.~~

Proposal CTY.C

The District Planning Authority will develop a recreational footpath from Welford-on-Avon to Barton, via Dorsington, utilising existing rights of way (SD32, SD34, SD34D and AL176).

Proposal CTY.D

The District Planning Authority will develop a recreational path between Alcester and Salford Priors, using the line of the disused railway, for use by walkers, horseriders and pedal cyclists.

7.43 Golf courses

Policy CTY.12

In considering proposals for golf courses, driving ranges and associated facilities, the following criteria will be taken into account:

- the impact of the proposal on the landscape and features of ecological, archaeological or historic significance;
- the appropriateness of the form and scale of the proposal, particularly the design and siting of buildings and other structures;
- the protection of water resources;
- the effect of the proposal on land drainage and existing aquatic habitats;
- the potential generation of vehicular movements and the adequacy of the proposed means of access to the site;
- the provision of adequate space for parking and manoeuvring of cars and service vehicles;
- the protection of the amenity value and the safety of users of public rights of way;
- the provision of landscaping and screening using indigenous species in order to minimise visual intrusion and to make a positive contribution to the appearance of the landscape;
- the extent to which the proposal affects the best and most versatile agricultural land;
- the effect on amenity, safety and visual intrusion of any form of external illumination; and
- the cumulative impact of proposals which are in close proximity.

Proposals which involve the construction of substantial new buildings which would detract from the character and appearance of the open countryside will not be supported.

The provision of new visitor accommodation will not be supported, except where this would comply with the requirements of Policy COM.21.

[For proposals in the Green Belt the provisions of Policy PR.2 will be applied.](#)





Explanation

- 7.43.1 While golf as a land use may be generally appropriate in the countryside, it must not be assumed that all sites will be acceptable. In order to enable the District Planning Authority to properly assess the impact of proposals, the submission of adequate details will be required at the initial stage. Applications must include the following information:
 - a course layout plan, including the siting and size of any buildings and car parking;
 - plans showing the existing and proposed contours of the site;
 - a landscaping scheme identifying existing features to be removed, existing features to be retained, and proposed new planting; and
 - supporting information on the envisaged effects of the development on the landscape, drainage, wildlife, archaeology, existing buildings, the highway network, nearby local residents, and any proposed floodlighting.
- 7.43.2 In certain circumstances, where proposals affect a particularly sensitive landscape, the District Planning Authority may require the submission of an environmental statement in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999.
- 7.43.3 Special attention should be paid to the siting and design of any new buildings to minimise visual intrusion. The design of new buildings and the materials used in their construction should respect the local vernacular. In order to protect the countryside, proposals for new buildings will be strictly limited to those facilities which are essential to serve the facility, such as a clubhouse (including changing rooms, office, refreshment facilities) and maintenance buildings.
- 7.43.4 The advice of Sport England and The English Golf Union will be sought in respect of all applications for golf courses.

7.44 Equestrian activities

Policy CTY.13

Proposals for the development of, or an extension to, an equestrian establishment will be considered against the following criteria:

- **whether there would be a significant adverse effect upon neighbouring properties or on the character of the landscape;**
- **the extent to which existing farm buildings are to be utilised or, if new structures are proposed, whether they are located adjacent to such buildings; and**
- **the likely extent of use of roads and bridleways by riders and the impact of the activity on traffic generation.**

Where the proposal involves the provision of a dwelling, the criteria in Policy CTY.6 will be taken into account.

For proposals in the Green Belt the provisions of Policy PR.2 will be applied.

Explanation

- 7.44.1 This policy applies to riding schools, stud farms and to development associated with hunting, cross country, polo, driving, livery, horse breeding, horse training and the hire of horses. It aims to set out a positive approach towards proposals for horse-based development that respects the rural environment.
- 7.44.2 It is inevitable that there will be some minor problems arising from equestrian activities which will impact on people living in the countryside. The District Planning Authority will have regard to the likely impact of these upon neighbouring properties, especially in relation to noise and smell. There may, however, be circumstances where the provision of equestrian facilities would lead to an unacceptable impact on the character of the local area, such as on the road network.
- 7.44.3 In cases where a new building is proposed, it should be situated where any visual effect can be mitigated and minimised, for instance by locating it in close proximity to existing buildings.
- 7.44.4 For applications involving a new dwelling, it will be necessary to prove that it is essential for the operation of the business. There may be cases where the functional need for a dwelling can be fulfilled by existing residential accommodation in the area.

7.45 Farm shops

Policy CTY.14

The establishment of new farm shops and the extension of existing farm shops will be supported where the proposal:

- involves the conversion of an existing rural building;
- can be serviced from a classified road but does not require the formation of a new access to the highway; and
- would not have an adverse impact on existing village shops in the local area.

A condition will be applied to any permission to control the proportion of goods to be sold which is not produced ~~on the farm holding to which the shop relates~~ locally.

[Recommended references: Policies CTY.2, CTY.4]

Explanation

- 7.45.1 Stratford-on-Avon District includes land which is used for intensive fruit and vegetable growing. Over the years, growers have set up shops on their land in order to sell produce direct to the public. In some cases pick-your-own businesses have been developed. The District Planning Authority recognises the importance of fruit and vegetable production to the local economy and accepts that farm shops are a means of assisting the commercial success of the operations.
- 7.45.2 It is important to ensure that the countryside does not become over-commercialised due to the lack of sufficient controls over retailing activities. However, it has to be appreciated that, legally, it is possible for goods produced on a farmholding to be sold on the site without the need for planning permission if the retail operation remains an ancillary use.
- 7.45.3 The policy allows, in principle, for the re-use of rural buildings for retail uses but any scheme will be subject to strict controls in order to safeguard the appearance of the countryside and to ensure that road safety is not jeopardised. On this basis it is likely that only the use of small-scale buildings, situated within a farm complex will be acceptable. There may be occasions when small-scale new building within an existing farm complex is sought in order to make the operation of a farm shop viable. Such proposals will be considered on their merits taking into account the relevant policies of the Plan.

7.45.4 Farm-based shops should sell mainly locally produced foodstuffs and products. The sale of a wider range of goods would require more substantial premises, often out of character in a rural area and generating considerable traffic and activity. Retailing of this nature, not related primarily to the sale of goods grown or produced locally, should be directed to the existing shopping centres.

7.45.5 In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to replace an existing access with one which would be more conducive to highway safety. The District Planning Authority will normally rely on the advice of the Highway Authority in such cases.

7.46 Cattle Market relocation

Policy CTY.15

In determining any application for the relocation of Stratford-upon-Avon or Henley-in-Arden Cattle Market, particular regard will be given to:

- the relationship of the proposed site to the strategic road network;
- the extent of screening provided by natural contours and other features in the landscape;
- whether the site is large enough to accommodate the proposed development and the necessary landscaping.

~~A site within the Green Belt will not be acceptable unless all reasonable alternative sites outside the Green Belt have been considered and rejected.~~

Any proposal should incorporate comprehensive mitigating measures in order to overcome any adverse effects which would otherwise be caused by the development on the landscape and settlements.

Explanation

7.46.1 Because the Local Plan Review proposes the redevelopment of the existing cattle market sites at Stratford-upon-Avon and Henley-in-Arden (see **Proposal SUA.I** and **Proposal HEN.C**), it is appropriate to include a policy against which any site proposed for their relocation can be assessed.

7.46.2 It has to be appreciated that livestock markets are becoming more extensive in their operations as the network of provision is rationalised. Operators now seek sites which are outside urban areas, mainly due to the more rigorous controls applied by the EU, and which offer a high standard of accessibility.

They can be known as 'agricultural parks', which incorporate a comprehensive range of services to agriculture, including feed supplies, machinery, insurance, bulk trade-related retailing, as well as the traditional livestock activities.

7.46.3 It should not be assumed that such a development in Stratford-on-Avon District should take the form of an agricultural park. However, it is possible that advantage will be taken of the relocation process to rationalise the provision of livestock market activities.

7.46.4 ~~It has not been possible to identify specific site in the Local Plan Review for relocating the cattle markets, either separately or combined. Therefore~~ The policy establishes that any proposal which is brought before the District Planning Authority will be judged against the principles controlling the location and form of development set out in various policies in the Plan. This policy particularly stresses the attention that will need to be given to ensure that the impact of such a large-scale form of development in the countryside is minimised. It may well be that the most appropriate type of site will utilise an existing farm complex where buildings already exist.

[7.46.4a Planning permission has recently been granted for the development of a livestock market on a site south of Stratford-upon-Avon, on the B4632 between Clifford Chambers and Quinton.](#)

7.46.5 In accordance with the guidelines contained in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999, the requirement for a comprehensive environmental assessment to be submitted with any planning application for this scale and form of development may be justified.

7.47 Gaydon Site

Policy CTY.16

In considering any planning application for the expansion of operations comprising the research, design and testing of motor vehicles and ancillary activities at the Gaydon Site, the following factors will be taken into account:

- the impact on existing properties at Lighthorne Heath and on the surrounding rural area;
- the need to provide comprehensive structural landscaping around the perimeter and within the Site;
- the impact on ecological and archaeological features within the Site;
- the effects of the proposed development on the demand for housing and local services;
- the effects of the proposed development on the need to travel;
- the need to improve the access from the B4100 and any other part of the road network in accordance with the requirements of the County Highway Authority; and
- the effect of increased vehicular movements at Junction 12 on the M40 and any upgrading that might be required by the Highways Agency.

New buildings should be contained within the area identified on Inset Map 5.2.

Explanation

- 7.47.1 The former RAF Base at Gaydon was originally acquired in 1977 in order to establish a vehicle proving ground. Since that time a wide range of facilities has been located there to carry out advanced design, development and testing of vehicles. During the 1990s, a significant expansion of activities took place including a design and engineering centre.
- 7.47.2 In addition to the need to assess the effect on the local area of activities at the Gaydon Site, further major expansion has the potential to raise strategic planning issues. The District Planning Authority values the major contribution which the operations at Gaydon make to the local [and national](#) economy. [It also recognises the potential role that the site could play in the development of business clusters in accordance with Policy PA2 of the emerging Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands.](#) However, it is necessary to limit the nature of activities carried out on the site to those which are already established there, including the research, design and testing of motor vehicles, and uses which are ancillary to these activities. The manufacture and assembly of motor vehicles would not be appropriate unless it is of a scale and nature which reasonably relates to the established uses on the site. It is on this basis that Aston Martin has been granted permission to produce a comparatively small number of cars which does not involve heavy engineering processes or assembly lines.
- 7.47.3 In addition, care needs to be taken to ensure that the scale and type of activities based at the Site do not place undue pressures on the character of the local area. [Inset Map 5.2](#) indicates the area of the site where it is intended that any further buildings which may be required in the future should normally be located. Inside this area, and elsewhere within the Site, it is expected that landscaping will continue to be strengthened, particularly along the boundary with the B4100 and adjacent to Lighthorne Heath.

7.48 Compton Verney Opera Project

Policy CTY.17

~~In considering any revised planning application for the development of an opera house at Compton Verney, the following factors will be taken into account:~~

- ~~▲ the consideration of a Master Plan indicating the location and form of each phase of development and its impact on the listed buildings and parkland;~~
- ~~▲ the relationship between the proposal, including all buildings, roadways, car parking and ancillary uses, and the existing Compton Verney estate in its entirety;~~
- ~~▲ the design of all buildings, including scale, height and the materials to be used, and their impact on Compton Verney house in particular;~~
- ~~▲ the visual impact of each element of the development when viewed from within the estate and also from public roads, footpaths and other vantage points outside the estate;~~
- ~~▲ the landscaping proposals, including any alterations to the existing features within the parkland and the nature of all new planting;~~
- ~~▲ the effect of the development on the flora, fauna, soil and hydrology of the site;~~
- ~~▲ the arrangements for the long term maintenance of the landscape within the entire estate;~~
- ~~▲ the impact of external illumination, including floodlighting of the buildings and lighting of roads and car parking areas;~~
- ~~▲ the effect on features of archaeological importance within the site and the means by which any constraints can be overcome satisfactorily;~~
- ~~▲ a comprehensive traffic study based on vehicle generation, the effects upon Junction 12 on the M40 and the need for improvements to the intervening highways to the site;~~
- ~~▲ the location and design of vehicular access to and egress from the site; and~~
- ~~▲ the arrangements for the internal circulation of vehicles within the site, including car parking and servicing.~~

~~It is considered that, due to the sensitive nature of the site, its historical importance, and the complexity of the technical and environmental issues which need to be addressed, an Environmental Assessment is required to accompany any planning application.~~

Explanation

- 7.48.1 The Compton Verney Opera Project proposal is intended to provide the Midlands with an equivalent to Glyndebourne, that is an opera house of international renown set in the grounds of a grand English country house.
- 7.48.2 Compton Verney Mansion House, stables and chapel are Grade I listed buildings. The Mansion House was the home of the Willoughby de Broke family for 450 years. The present 18th century house is believed to have been designed by Vanbrugh, with later modifications by Robert Adam. The aim of the project is to locate the opera building within the 'Capability Brown' landscape on the opposite side of the lake from the house. An international competition was held to choose an architect to design the building. It is also intended that the historic parkland will be restored following years of neglect.
- 7.48.3 An application for the Opera House, ancillary facilities and infrastructure was submitted in March 1992. The criteria identified in this policy were addressed by the applicants in an accompanying Environmental Statement. The application was supported by the District Planning Authority, albeit with reservations about the environmental impact of the necessary highway improvements. In July 1992 the application was 'called in' by the Secretary of State.
- 7.48.4 A Public Inquiry was held in 1994 and the Secretary of State granted full planning permission in March 1995. Since then no progress has been made to implement the permission and it is now considered to have lapsed. However, the policy has been retained in the Local Plan Review should a fresh application be submitted.

7.49 Engineer Resources Depot, Long Marston

Policy CTY.18

Land at the former Engineer Resources Depot, Long Marston, is considered suitable for a major tourism and leisure-related attraction. The following factors will need to be addressed in assessing the impact of a particular proposal:

- the need for comprehensive structural landscaping around and within the site, to be implemented as an integral component of any development, and arrangements for its long-term maintenance;
- the provision of an effective public transport service linking the site with Stratford-upon-Avon, including the utilisation of the former Stratford-Cheltenham railway line;
- ~~the findings of a comprehensive traffic study which assesses the likely traffic movements generated on the B4632 to the north and south of the site, and on the minor road network in the area;~~
- [the findings of a Transport Assessment which will be required to be submitted as part of any development proposal;](#)
- the impact of buildings, activities and associated features on views across the site, particularly from public vantage points around the periphery of the site and from Meon Hill;
- the extent to which existing properties and land uses would be affected and the need to satisfactorily mitigate any adverse impacts;
- the relationship of the attraction to the function of Stratford-upon-Avon and the nature of any impact it would have on the existing tourism facilities in the town and in the neighbouring area;
- the potential effect on natural features within and adjacent to the site and the opportunity to enhance such features;
- the retention and enhancement of the extensive open landscape areas and woodland plantations within the site as an integral part of any development scheme; and
- the removal of all existing buildings and structures on the site apart from those which are capable of beneficial use within the proposed form of development.

The case for other specific forms of uses will be considered on their merits, taking into account the criteria outlined above and other relevant issues.

Residential and industrial uses are not considered to be appropriate other than those that meet a proven local need or are ancillary or directly related to the eventual form of development and use of the site.

A Master Plan should be prepared in conjunction with the owners of the site, local communities, neighbouring local authorities and other interested parties.

An Environmental Impact Assessment should be undertaken and submitted with any planning application.

Explanation

- 7.49.1 The final closure of the Depot by the Ministry of Defence in 1999 has raised the issue of what alternative uses would be appropriate on this extensive tract of land. The site extends to some 190 hectares, containing woodland and fields as well as significant areas of development. It is situated about eight kilometres south-west of Stratford-upon-Avon on the B4632. The prominent feature of Meon Hill lies to the south, marking the fringe of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 7.49.2 The District Council has been liaising closely with the Ministry of Defence Estates and the County Council over the future use of the site. A wide range of suggestions have been considered, including various substantial single uses such as a film studio, national sports facility or holiday complex. To date, no such use has been attracted to the site although this approach has considerable merits in terms of assessing the impact of development on the local area and controlling the eventual form of development.
- 7.49.3 The overriding factor in considering the appropriateness and merits of any scheme is the manner in which the Warwickshire Structure Plan (WASP) provides a strategic position on the matter. It is clear in Policy GD.7 of the WASP that the scale of residential or industrial development on large 'brownfield' sites in rural locations should be restricted to that which meets a local need and should not be promoted as an alternative to locating development in existing urban areas. On that basis, the District Planning Authority maintains that this site should not be identified for such uses, although justification might be made for small-scale schemes to meet a proven local need for homes and jobs.

7.49.4 The position is taken that the most appropriate form of use of the site will lie within the tourism and leisure sectors. [Redevelopment of the site for tourism and leisure use is supported by Policy PA.2 of the emerging Regional Planning Guidance in which tourism and leisure is identified as a 'target' cluster.](#) However, because of the uncertainty over the nature of any development which might be promoted, the view is taken at this stage that the site should not be allocated but that an 'enabling' policy should be incorporated into the Local Plan Review.

7.49.5 The resulting policy sets out the wide range of factors to be taken into account in considering the merits and impact of a proposal. Of particular significance is the relationship of the site to Stratford-upon-Avon and the importance of establishing effective transport links between the two, including the scope to utilise the line of the former Stratford to Cheltenham railway.

7.49.6 The redevelopment of the site presents a significant challenge with regard to issues such as traffic management, layout and design, relationship with nearby settlements and services, provision of public transport to the site, management of the ecological assets of the site and the structural landscaping that will be required to protect the amenity of the local area. A comprehensive assessment of all the above factors will be an essential requirement of any development proposal. This assessment will be essential to identify adequate mitigation measures to enable the objectives of the Local Plan Review to be met.

[7.49.6a](#) [In accordance with the guidance set out in PPG13: Transport \(2001\), a Transport Assessment should be submitted as part of any planning application. The Transport Assessment should include the accessibility of the site by all modes of transport, the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site, the measures proposed to mitigate transport impacts and the measures proposed to improve access by public transport, walking and cycling. The likely traffic movements generated on the B4632 to the north and south of the site and on the minor road network in the area will be a key consideration in the assessment of any proposal.](#)

7.49.7 A Master Plan will be required to reconcile all the issues raised by the prospective redevelopment of the site. An Environment Impact Assessment will be required to be submitted with any planning application due to the likely scale of the development promoted and its potential impact on features of acknowledged importance.



7.49.7a The ecological value of this site has been recognised by the Warwickshire Museum through its designation as an Ecosite, parts of which are considered to be of substantive value in terms of PPG9: Nature Conservation (1994). The impact of development on ecological features and protected or notable species needs to be fully assessed. Opportunities to enhance such features should also be identified.

7.49.8 A Green Transport Plan will also be required, in accordance with **Policy IMP.7**, to manage the travel needs of those employed at and visiting the site.

- the potential effect on natural features within and adjacent to the site and the opportunity to enhance such features;
- the impact of buildings, activities and associated features on views across the site, particularly from public vantage points around the periphery of the site; and
- the removal of all existing buildings and structures on the site apart from those which are capable of beneficial use within the proposed form of development.

The case for other specific forms of uses will be considered on their merits, taking into account the criteria outlined above and other relevant issues.

Residential uses are not considered to be appropriate other than those that meet a proven local need or are ancillary or directly related to the eventual form of development and use of the site.

A Master Plan should be prepared in conjunction with the owners of the site, local communities and other interested parties.

An Environmental Impact Assessment should be undertaken and submitted with any planning application.

Explanation

7.50.1 Southam Cement Works finally ceased operating in 1999 after more than 150 years of quarrying and cement production. The site is situated between Southam and Long Itchington and comprises the works and associated infrastructure and a deep quarry to the south and east. In total, the site covers an extensive area but the works themselves affect only about 22 hectares. The site supports a range of habitats and geological features as well as aspects of industrial archaeology and transport features which linked the works to the canal and railway system.

7.50.2 The District Council has been liaising closely with the owners (now RMC), local communities and the County Council over the future use of the site. It has generally been accepted that a redevelopment scheme should focus on the creation of new job opportunities, but taking the opportunity to promote the site's considerable recreational and tourism potential.

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7.50 Southam Cement Works

Policy CTY.19

Land at the former Southam Cement Works site, Long Itchington, is considered suitable for light and general industrial, leisure, tourism and recreational uses. The following factors will need to be addressed in assessing the impact of a particular scheme:

- the expectation that new buildings should be restricted to the previously developed parts of the site;
- the need for comprehensive assessment of the ecological value of the site, with appropriate provision made to protect important habitats and species;
- the need for a comprehensive assessment of features of geological and archaeological interest to be protected as part of any development;
- the need for comprehensive structural landscaping around and within the site, to be implemented as an integral component of any development, and arrangements for its long-term maintenance;
- the provision of an effective public transport service linking the site with nearby settlements, particularly Southam;
- ~~the findings of a comprehensive traffic study which assesses the likely traffic movements and impact on the A423 and on the minor road network in the area, including the Welsh Road to Leamington;~~
- the findings of a Transport Assessment which will be required to be submitted as part of any development proposal;
- the extent to which nearby settlements and land uses would be affected and the need to satisfactorily mitigate any adverse impacts;

- 7.50.3 The overriding factor in considering the appropriateness and merits of any scheme is the manner in which the Warwickshire Structure Plan (WASP) provides a strategic position on the matter. It is clear in Policy GD.7 of the WASP that the scale of residential or industrial development on large 'brownfield' sites in rural locations should be restricted to that which meets a local need and should not be promoted as an alternative to locating development in existing urban areas.
- 7.50.4 The District Planning Authority maintains that the site should not be identified for residential uses, although justification might be made for a small-scale scheme to meet a proven local need for homes. However, given the long-established employment use of the site it would be appropriate to consider the merits of industrial development. ~~A very strong case will have to be made given the availability of industrial land in Southam and the fact that the industrial land requirement for the District specified in the WASP has been met.~~ In considering any proposal for the site, the District Planning Authority will ensure that the scale of activity would not compromise the employment strategy of the Plan and the character of the area. Any such development would only be acceptable on the footprint of the cement works itself.
- 7.50.5 The redevelopment of the site presents a significant challenge with regard to issues such as traffic management, layout and design, relationship with nearby settlements and services, provision of public transport to the site, management of the ecological, geological and archaeological assets of the site and the structural landscaping that will be required to protect the amenity of the local area. A comprehensive assessment of all the above factors will be an essential requirement of any development proposal. This assessment will be essential to identify adequate mitigation measures to enable the objectives of the Local Plan Review to be met.
- 7.50.5a In accordance with the guidance set out in PPG13: Transport (2001), a Transport Assessment should be submitted as part of any planning application. The Transport Assessment should include the accessibility of the site by all modes of transport, the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site, the measures proposed to mitigate transport impacts and the measures proposed to improve access by public transport, walking and cycling. The likely traffic movements generated on the A423 to the north and south of the site and on the minor road network in the area, including the Welsh Road to Leamington Spa, will be a key consideration in the assessment of any proposal.
- 7.50.6 The resulting policy sets out the wide range of factors to be taken into account in considering the merits and impact of a proposal. Of particular significance is the relationship of the site to Long Itchington and Southam and the importance of establishing effective public transport and other linkages between them.
- 7.50.7 A Master Plan will be required to reconcile all the issues raised by the prospective redevelopment of the site. An Environment Impact Assessment will be required to be submitted with any planning application due to the likely scale of the development promoted and its potential impact on features of acknowledged importance
- 7.50.8 A Green Transport Plan will also be required, in accordance with **Policy IMP.7**, to manage the travel needs of those employed at and visiting the site.



7.51 Development proposals

Proposal CTY.E

Land off Banbury Road, Kineton is allocated for the creation of a Battle of Edgehill Visitor Centre.

[see Inset Map 2.4]

Explanation

7.51.1 The Battle of Edgehill, fought in 1642, was the first battle of the English Civil War. The battlefield stretches from the edge of Kineton eastwards to the Edge Hill scarp and is registered by English Heritage. Much of the battlefield lies within the ownership of the Ministry of Defence. The District Council has expressed a wish to support the creation of a visitor centre which would also provide a home for the long established collection of battle artefacts. A site has been identified on the edge of Kineton which is readily accessible and provides extensive views across the battlefield. This location has the added advantage of helping to support the shops and facilities in Kineton itself.

7.51.2 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- assimilate all buildings, structures, parking and service areas satisfactorily within the site;
- ensure that the design of the visitor centre is sympathetic to a rural location [and the setting of the Battlefield](#) and can accommodate the necessary range of facilities;
- minimise the impact of activities on the countryside and neighbouring properties;
- identify appropriate arrangements for vehicles to gain access to the site through the use of signposting;
- implement appropriate traffic management measures within Kineton;
- consider the functional relationship between the visitor centre and attractions in the village;
- develop a network of footpaths between the visitor centre and the battlefield using existing rights of way and new links where possible; [and](#)
- [undertake an archaeological and an ecological evaluation of the site.](#)

Proposal CTY.F

Land comprising approximately 6.0 hectares (gross) at Napton Brickworks is allocated for mixed-use development to incorporate Class B1 industrial uses, residential units tied specifically to businesses on the site, holiday accommodation and canal-based recreation.

[see Inset Map 3.1]

Explanation

7.51.3 This site was allocated in the adopted Local Plan for employment development. Although it has been cleared and an access road constructed off the A425, no progress has been made to bring the site forward for development. The District Planning Authority acknowledges that the site requires attention but wishes to control the form of development to that which is appropriate in a rural location. In particular, residential uses on the site would not be acceptable unless related specifically to businesses operating on the site. A marina with associated workshops, chandlery and facilities would be an appropriate use for the site and is encouraged.

7.51.4 The promotion of the site for development should take into account the need to:

- maximise the relationship of the site to the canal through the overall design concept;
- respect the character of the area with regard to its setting in open countryside and its relationship to the village of Napton-on-the-Hill;
- preserve and enhance footpath links between the site and the adjacent area, including the village;
- restrict vehicular access to that provided off the A425;
- protect the ecological value of the adjacent claypit [and the canal](#); and
- restrict residential uses, through design and legal agreement, to those which are physically and functionally interdependent with businesses operating on the site.