

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER OR OFFICER

This form can be used for any decision but **MUST** be used to record:

- any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Councillor
- a key decision taken by a Council Officer

In these circumstances the form must be completed and passed to the Service Manager (Members' Services) no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Service Manager (Members' Services) has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

To recommend to Full Council that the draft submission version of the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (as set out in Appendix A) be approved for submission to the Secretary of State and for the purposes of public consultation.

To recommend to Full Council that the Head of Planning and Housing Services be delegated to make any necessary minor amendments to the plan , in consultation with the portfolio holder, prior to submission to the Secretary of State

2. Date of decision

25-5-06

3. Reasons for decision

To enable the Submission Version of the plan to be published and made available for consultation in accordance with the programme set down in the Local Development Scheme.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

None applicable.

5. How decision is to be funded

Existing budget.

6. Conflicts of interest

	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (if yes give details and date of dispensation)
None	

Signed [Signature] Date 25-5-06

Name of Decision Taker THE MAYOR
[This must be signed by the decision-maker or, if the decision was made by the Mayor or Councillor then the relevant Head of Service may sign it].

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Service Manager (Members' Services) as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published: 25-5-06

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: 7.6.06

Bedford Borough Council -

Date: 18th May 2006

Report by Head of Planning and Housing Services

SUBJECT: SUBMISSION VERSION OF THE CORE STRATEGY AND RURAL ISSUES PLAN - RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The preferred option of the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan was made available for public consultation between 16th January and 27th February 2006. During that time, a wide range of stakeholders, local organisations and the general public were invited to comment on the draft plan. Supporting information and the sustainability appraisal were also published.

The document provides a strategic planning framework for the borough as a whole and includes a number of policies which will update those in the existing Bedford Borough Local Plan.

This report seeks to agree the revised draft of the plan which has been amended in the light of the consultation response and to recommend to Full Council that this forms the basis of the submission version of the plan.

RECOMMENDATION

- i) **That the Mayor considers the revised draft plan as set out in Appendix A and subject to any amendments, recommends to Full Council that this be approved as the submission version of the plan and made available for public consultation.**
- ii) **That Full Council be requested to delegate any necessary minor amendments to the plan to the Head of Planning & Housing Services, in consultation with the portfolio holder, prior to submission to the Secretary of State**

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To enable the document to be made available for public consultation in accordance with the timetable set out in the approved Local Development Scheme.

3. IMPLICATIONS

Policy The Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan provides the strategic planning framework for the future growth of the borough and addresses such issues as the location of development, the regeneration of the

town centre, affordable housing and local needs housing in the rural area. This is consistent with both the Council's corporate priorities and the main themes of the Community Plan. It is important therefore that the plan is progressed to the next stage in its production.

Legal

None applicable.

Resource

The cost of producing the submission version will be met from existing budgets.

Risk

In the absence of this document, there is a risk that the Council's policies for the borough are not taken into account as new development proposals come forward.

4. DETAILS

Consultation on the preferred option took place between 16th January and 27th February 2006. Comments were invited by questionnaire, by e-mail and in writing. A total of 134 representations were received. Before progressing the plan further, the Council is required to have considered the representations received.

Overall, comments were generally supportive of the plan's approach. A summary of the comments received, proposed responses to these and consequential changes to the plan is the subject of a separate report.

The proposed changes seek to provide clarification on a number of issues, to strengthen the text and to bring the plan up to date following changed circumstances. The extent of the proposed changes does not represent a major shift in the Council's strategy for the borough. As a result the general scope of the submission version will be similar to the preferred option with the addition of detailed implementation and monitoring frameworks. Additional background studies and supporting information (including a revised sustainability appraisal) will also accompany the submission version. The document will also be supplemented with additional photographs and graphical material prior to publication.

Key Issues raised in the Preferred Option Consultation

In summary the keys issues are:-

Strategic Policies

- Broad acceptance of the approach though some seek more detail in CP1 (Spatial Strategy) and additions to CP2 (Sustainable Development Principles)
- Relationship between CP2 and CP3 (Location of development)

Location of Development

- Concerns raised about priority being given to existing Local Plan sites and their deliverability.

- CP4 (Key Service Centres (KSC)) Broad welcome for the settlement hierarchy but some concerns about the choice of KSC's.

Scale and type of development

- No major disagreement with figures in CP5 and CP8, although some concerns about housing/employment balance and development levels in the rural area were raised.
- Support for principle of affordable housing provision CP7 but developer interests and others critical of revised threshold in the rural area.

Infrastructure

- No major objections to policy approach. Some seek greater emphasis on walking cycling and rail (especially to the absence of a reference to a rail link with Cambridge) CP10-14

Town centre

- Broad support for objectives. No major comments on CP16 or CP17.

Rural Areas

- Mix of comments on SPA's - some seeking more flexibility. Others (mainly development interests) seeking immediate review CP18-19.
- Allocations sought in a number of settlements, however this would be beyond the remit of this plan CP21
- Wixams developer is seeking designation of the Wixams as a Market town (plus a northern expansion of the settlement).

Distinctiveness and environmental assets

- Refinements to the policies sought. CP24-27
- General support for the approach on climate change policy but detailed comments about the policy scope CP28. Some are seeking to expand its scope, others concerned about costs/remit of the policy.

In considering the results of consultation your Officers have also taken advice from Counsel in relation to fine tuning the plan. Following this advice a number of additional changes are proposed. These are:

- Updating the document to reflect the fact that this is a submission plan
- Added wording in the spatial strategy section to make clear the distinction between the growth area and the rural area.
- Restructuring of the document in the following order:-

Growth Area
Sustainable Rural Communities
Town Centre
Distinctiveness and environmental issues
Delivery and implementation

- As a result the policies have been renumbered
- In conjunction with changes to CP3, a policy containing a sequential approach to land allocations has been introduced
- A new gypsy and traveller accommodation policy which follows Circular advice has been added
- The amount of employment land required is amended to 75 hectares.
- Rural policies have been re-ordered to include a policy on the location of development in the rural area.
- Wording has been added re. employment development in the rural area
- An addition to CP16 re town centre uses to ensure compatibility with the updated Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan
- An amendment to CP28 to make a number of criteria development "requirements", following comments made by the Review Liaison Forum.
- A monitoring and implementation framework has been added
- Footnotes have been added to highlight terms included in the glossary.

What happens next?

Having considered the consultation responses and identified how the plan should change as a result, these changes have now been incorporated into the draft submission version set out in Appendix A. Full Council is required to consider the draft plan and approve the document for submission to the Secretary of State in July 2006. The draft submission version is due to be considered by Full Council on 14th June 2006.

Following submission, the plan will be made available for public consultation for a period of six weeks. Any representations received are summarised and forwarded to the Secretary of State.

The plan will then be the subject of a public examination which will be conducted by an independent Inspector. This is currently scheduled to commence in May of 2007. It is hoped that the document will be adopted at the end of 2007.

5. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND OUTCOME

A schedule identifying proposed changes to the plan was considered by the Review Liaison Forum at its meeting on 26th April 2006. Copies of the schedule were also circulated to all Members of the Council. This report reflects any comments received.

6. WARD COUNCILLOR VIEWS

None

Report Contact Officer:

Ronald McKay Tel. 01234 221732
e-mail rmckay@bedford.gov.uk

File Reference:

5/101/4

Previous Relevant Minutes(s):

Review Liaison Forum 26.4.06

Background Papers:

None

Appendices:

Appendix A

Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan Draft
Submission Version.

(Note: the appendix is available on request from Carolyn Barnes (221852) or Andrew Robertson (227210) by email or hard copy).



**BEDFORD
DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK**

**BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT
CORE STRATEGY & RURAL ISSUES PLAN**

**CHANGES VERSION
May 2006**

David K Bailey Head of Planning & Housing Services
Bedford Borough Council Bedford Town Hall, St Paul's Square, Bedford
MK40 1SJ

This document is the Borough Council's ~~preferred option for the~~ **Core Strategy & Rural Issues Plan**. It has now been published for consultation purposes and your comments are invited **formally submitted to the Secretary of State and you are invited to make representations on the Plan.**

The **Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan** sets out the long term spatial vision for the Borough and the objectives and policies needed to deliver that vision.

Also available is the '~~Preferred Option~~ Supporting Information' document which sets out how the **Core Strategy & Rural Issues Plan** has been developed.

The consultation period will run from ~~16th January 2006 to 27th February~~ **xxxx to xxxx** 2006. Paper copies of the ~~preferred option of the~~ **Core Strategy & Rural Issues Plan** and the supporting information are available to view at the Town Hall in Bedford and the following local libraries during normal opening hours:

Bedford Central Library, Harpur Street, Bedford
Putnoe Library, Putnoe Street, Bedford
Bromham Library, Springfield Drive, Bromham
Kempston Library, Halsey Road, Kempston
Wootton Library, Lorraine Road, Wootton.

Copies can be obtained from the Town Hall price £2.00 or through the post by sending a cheque payable to 'Bedford Borough Council' for £2.50 to the address below. You can also download the document from the planning website (**www.bedford.gov.uk**)

A response form is available both on-line and in paper format. Comments on the ~~preferred option~~ **Plan** can be returned on-line (via **www.bedford.gov.uk**) or alternatively, please write to David Bailey at the 'FREEPOST' address below.

If you would like use to keep you informed about the progress of the Core Strategy & Rural Issues Plan ie. ~~when it has been submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination and when it has been adopted by the~~ Borough Council, please tell us in your response and provide an address for further correspondence.

If you have any queries about the preferred option or the consultation process, please contact Carolyn Barnes (01234) 221852 or Susan Garbutt (01234) 221853 or e-mail your question to bdf@bedford.gov.uk

David Bailey
Head of Planning and Housing Services
FREEPOST ANG5840
Bedford
MK40 1ZD

No stamp required

CORE STRATEGY

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1. INTRODUCTION

THE BEDFORD DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The next 15 years are set to be a time of change for the Borough. By 2021 the urban areas of Bedford and Kempston and the northern Marston Vale should be very different having experienced a major growth in population, housing and jobs.

The Bedford Development Framework will replace the policies in the adopted Local Plan* during the coming few years. This new approach to policy making was introduced in September 2004 in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Whilst the Bedford Development Framework is being produced, the adopted Local Plan* is 'saved' for a minimum period of three years (until September 2007). The policies in the Local Plan* will not be replaced all at once, as the Bedford Development Framework will be a series of separate documents. Thus, as each document is produced, different Local Plan* policies will be replaced. Eventually, all the policies of the Local Plan* will be replaced.

The Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan is one of the first documents that will be produced as part of the Bedford Development Framework. Appendix C sets out which policies of the adopted Local Plan* the policies in the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan proposes to replace.

WHAT THE CORE STRATEGY AND RURAL ISSUES PLAN IS ABOUT

The purpose of the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan is to set out the long term spatial vision for the Borough, spatial objectives and the spatial policies needed to deliver the vision.

In summary the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan aims to assess:

- Where we are now
- Where we want to be by 2021
- How we can get there.

The Plan does not include site-specific allocations, for example housing or employment sites. These will be contained within other documents that form part of the Bedford Development Framework.

* Throughout this document this symbol indicates that further information about a term is contained in the Glossary.

The other documents in the Bedford Development Framework and their relationship to the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan are listed in the table below.

<i>Document in the Bedford Development Framework</i>	<i>Relationship to the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan</i>
Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan Development Plan Document*	This document will conform with the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan
The Bedfordshire Community Safety Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document*	No relationship – this document will conform with saved Policy BE45 of the adopted Local Plan*
Shopfronts and Advertisements in Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Document*	No relationship – this document will conform with saved Policies TC4 and BE16 of the adopted Local Plan*
Land north of Bromham Road Biddenham Design Code Supplementary Planning Document*	No relationship – this document will conform with saved policy H8 of the adopted Local Plan*
Statement of Community Involvement*	The SCI was adopted on 17 May 2006. Future changes are required to be in conformity with the SCI.

THE PREFERRED OPTION SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

The **submission version** ~~preferred option~~ Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan has been prepared following earlier consultations on the issues which the plan should address, ~~and~~ consideration of possible options for doing this **and the Council's preferred option plan**. It puts forward the Council's ~~preferred options proposals~~ for the purposes of consultation. ~~and explains, where choices could be identified, the reasons for choosing the preferred option.~~

Alongside the **plan**, ~~preferred option~~ the Council has been undertaking a Sustainability Appraisal*. The purpose of the appraisal is to consider the social, environmental and economic impacts of both the alternative options and the preferred approach. The appraisal is available on the Council's website and at the Town Hall and local libraries.

Accompanying the **plan** ~~document~~, the Council **has** also ~~expects to produced~~ a Statement of Consultation. The statement **will** ~~sets~~ out how the community has been involved in the production of the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan and how the document has addressed the comments the Council has

received. ~~The submission document will also be accompanied by a Sustainability Report.~~

HOW YOU CAN MAKE COMMENTS

If you **would like to comment on the plan**, ~~are interested in the future of the Borough please let us have your comments on the preferred options.~~ you can make your comments on the enclosed response form. Comments should be returned by 5.00pm on ~~27th February~~ **xxxxx** 2006 to:

David Bailey, Head of Planning and Housing Services,
Town Hall, St Paul's Square, Bedford. MK40 1SJ

The response form is also available on the Council's website, please visit www.bedford.gov.uk

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Any representations concerning the soundness of the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan will be considered at a public examination by an independent Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The public examination is expected to be held in spring/summer 2007 and the report of the Inspector will be binding on the Council. It is expected that the plan will be finally adopted by the end of 2007.

~~Following consultation on this preferred option document, all comments received will be taken into consideration and a 'submission' document produced. The submission Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State and will be made available for public consultation. The target date for this is July/August 2006.~~

~~The submission Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan will be in a similar format to this preferred option document. The submission document will include:~~

- ~~Spatial vision and objectives~~
- ~~A summary of the requirements of the Regional Spatial Strategy (the East of England Plan and the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy)~~
- ~~The relationship to other parts of the Bedford Development Framework and the saved Local Plan~~
- ~~The impact of other relevant regional and local strategies~~
- ~~The timetable for the production of the document~~
- ~~The spatial strategy~~
- ~~Key Diagram~~
- ~~Proposals Map~~
- ~~Proposals for monitoring.~~

2. THE SPATIAL PORTRAIT

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Bedford Borough is within the East of England region but also adjacent to the East Midlands and the South East regions. It is included within the Milton Keynes and South Midlands growth area. The Borough has a **population** of 150,800 (as estimated in 2004) and covers an area of 476 square kilometres. The Borough includes the county town of Bedford and also a large rural area. In addition to the town of Bedford and the neighbouring area of Kempston, the Borough includes many villages. The largest of the villages is Bromham with a population of almost 5,000 people. Many of the rural parishes of the Borough have several small settlements with a combined population of under 500 people. In total, approximately 66% of the population live in the Bedford/Kempston area, yet this accounts for only 8% of the land of the Borough as a whole.

The population of the Borough has grown from 138,000 to almost 151,000 in the period 1996 to 2004. With over 60 different ethnic groups represented in the area, the Borough is one of the most cosmopolitan in the country. Black and Asian groups make up over 10% of the local population, rising to 15% in Bedford itself and nearly 40% in Queens Park ward, with main ethnic minority languages spoken being Urdu, Bengali (Sylhet dialect), Hindi, and Punjabi. In addition the Borough includes significant Italian, Irish and Polish communities. The population is projected to increase to over 172,000 by 2021. By 2021 the population of over 75s in the Borough is expected to have increased from nearly 8% during 2001-2006 to over 14% in 2016-2021.

The town of Bedford is located to the south of the Borough, other neighbouring smaller towns include Sandy and St Neots to the east, Rushden and Wellingborough to the north. The largest neighbouring towns are Milton Keynes to the west, Northampton to the north, Cambridge to the east and Luton to the south. The proximity of Luton airport and London further to the south create pressures and opportunities, and Bedford's position in the middle of the Oxford to Cambridge arc has the potential to stimulate economic growth through knowledge-based industry. Bedford town centre has a potential regional role for shopping and employment, despite the continued growth of Milton Keynes and Northampton.

The Borough's traditional **economic base** was centred on engineering and related manufacturing but this has declined in recent years. The top employment industries in the Borough are currently education and health, followed by finance and business, wholesale and retail and manufacturing. In 2001, nearly 20% of the residents of the Borough worked in education and health. Most employment sites and centres of excellence in the Borough are located in or near to Bedford, however there are also important sites at

Wyboston, Thurleigh Airfield and Colworth House, Sharnbrook. Potential key future employment sectors are higher-value manufacturing, research and development, computing and related activities, hotel and catering, recreation, cultural, sporting and education. **Agriculture has traditionally been important in the economy of the rural parts of the Borough.**

The distance that residents of the Borough travel to work varies considerably. Those living in the rural wards mostly travel between 0 and 20km to work. However, in all urban wards, the clear trend is that the majority of people travel less than 5km to work. This distance accounts for between 50% and 60% of responses in each urban ward. There is a high level of **commuting** both into and out of the Borough. Nearly 29% of the working age residents commute out of the Borough, though the majority of the Borough's residents both live and work in the Borough. People who commute into the Borough account for 26% of the workers in the Borough. Of those people who commute outside of the Borough to work, the most popular destinations are Mid Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes and London.

In terms of **transport accessibility**, the town of Bedford is linked to the north and south by rail. Both the Midland Mainline and Thameslink rail services serve Bedford. Trains to Milton Keynes are by Silverlink County Marston Vale services. London St Pancras station is approximately 40 minutes away by train. There are no train services to the east or west of the Borough. By road, the A421 is a 'strategic route' from west to east (which runs from the M1 via the south of Bedford to the A1), a portion of which is dual carriageway. Other main roads converge on Bedford from Rushden to the north, Olney and Newport Pagnell to the west, Sandy to the east and Clophill and Shefford to the south. Congestion hotspots in the Borough are the A421 swan roundabout (south-west of Bedford) and A421 Great Barford (east of Bedford).

By far the most popular mode of **travel to work** is the car, accounting for **the journeys of** between 50% and 77% of people. Fewer people in the urban wards travel to work by car, with more preferring to walk and cycle. This corresponds with the statistics for car ownership. An average of nearly 22% of households in the Borough have no access to a car or van. This rises significantly in the urban wards, where in Harpur for example, the figure is nearly 40%.

The main **retail** location in the Borough is Bedford. The town still hosts a traditional market twice a week as well as a gourmet market every Thursday and other specialist markets. The town includes the Harpur Centre as well as pedestrianised shopping streets, both within minutes of the bus station and rail station, although links to both these are in need of improvement.

The Borough has a wealth of **leisure and community facilities**. For a town of Bedford's size, it has a wide choice of facilities. These include Bedford Athletics Stadium, several swimming pools and a number of parks in the urban area (Bedford Park, the Embankment, Priory Country Park, Addison Howard Park, Mowsbury Park and Jubilee Park) as well as Harrold-Odell

Country Park in the rural area. The historic and cultural core of the town includes Bedford Museum, Cecil Higgins Art Gallery and the recently enhanced Castle Mound and Gardens. The Corn Exchange is a multi-purpose venue which hosts a variety of arts and entertainment programmes. These facilities serve both residents and visitors. The Borough attracts around 3m day visitors and 300,000 staying visitors each year.

Bedford includes the campus of De Montfort **University**. The University caters for 3,000 students and over 200 staff based on two campuses within the town. The University specialises in primary and secondary education, sports and leisure and arts and humanities programmes.

Approximately 7% of the Borough's population are school pupils or full-time students. This is higher than the national average of 5% in England and Wales. In the last academic year GCSE results were lower than the national average. Despite this, the level of skills in the adult population is higher than the national average; 25.6% of the Borough's population aged 16-74 have no qualifications, compared to a national average of 29%.

Housing in the Borough reflects the historic nature of the county town. Bedford has a Victorian core but significant expansion in the last fifty years has diversified the nature of housing available. The rural areas have developed at various rates, with the larger villages being located on the most popular transport routes. House prices in the Borough have doubled since 1999, with the average property now costing over £178,000. Neighbouring districts have higher house prices, with the exception of Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire. Despite the national trend for rising house prices, the market for new homes has been relatively weak with fewer homes being built than are planned or already have planning permission.

The River Great Ouse is a prominent feature of the landscape in the Borough ~~and a major attractive feature within Bedford itself.~~ **In particular the Ouse valley gives rise to the distinct character of the villages in the north-west of the Borough. The river is also a major attractive feature within Bedford itself and provides the basis for sporting and leisure activities.** ~~As such,~~ **Because of this** there are areas of the Borough that are at risk of **flooding**. These areas include the centre, east and west of Bedford and parts of the rural area along the route of the River Great Ouse. The Borough prides itself on the wealth of **open spaces** within the urban areas and the attractive **countryside** that surrounds the rural villages. In the south of the Borough however, there are areas of landscape degradation due to the legacy of brickmaking in the Marston Vale. Through the designation of the Forest of Marston Vale the area has become a focus for landscape enhancement. The Borough has seven nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and seven designated Local Nature Reserves. The Borough also contains 26 conservation areas, 1,363 listed buildings, 69 scheduled ancient monuments and 4 historic parks and gardens.

ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

~~This section summarises the key issues in the Borough, as discussed in the issues paper and the responses received following consultation on the paper itself and through stakeholder workshops. Issues include:~~

- ~~• High house prices and a demonstrated need for affordable housing.~~
- ~~• Meeting the targets for housing and employment development as set out in the government's growth agenda.~~
- ~~• The types of jobs available and the need for more diversity.~~
- ~~• Regeneration of the town centre.~~
- ~~• Minimising the use of resources and increasing the use of renewable energy.~~
- ~~• Minimising negative impact on the environment, landscape and heritage.~~
- ~~• Minimising flood risk.~~
- ~~• Infrastructure and service provision. The need for services and facilities to be provided especially in the rural area.~~
- ~~• Addressing traffic congestion.~~
- ~~• Provision of public transport.~~
- ~~• Providing housing in the rural area to meet local needs.~~
- ~~• Protection of the countryside whilst enabling activities and uses that maintain vitality.~~
- ~~• Protecting biodiversity and heritage.~~
- ~~• Provision of leisure, recreation and cultural facilities.~~
- ~~• Social inclusion and meeting community needs.~~

3. THE SPATIAL VISION

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

The Community Plan provides the foundation for the development of the overarching vision for Bedford's Development Framework. This vision is needed to shape the policies which will provide the means of implementation for the spatial aspects of the Community Plan.

The vision has been developed in the context of regional planning guidance but also reflects the aspirations of the community (as stated in the Community Plan).

The Bedford Community Plan

The Community Plan (approved in January 2005) has the overarching aim of:

“Working together to improve health and well being”

In addition, its objective is to improve quality of life for both visitors and those who live and work in the Borough.

The Community Plan has nine key themes:

- Promoting Community Safety
- Providing Housing and Building Communities
- Improving the Environment
- Improving Health
- Strengthening the Economy
- Developing Learning Opportunities and Skills
- Creating Better Transport
- Promoting Leisure
- Including Everyone.

Appendix X sets out the spatial issues which are relevant to the Community Plan themes. Appendix F identifies how the policies of the Core Strategy will contribute towards the delivery of the Community Plan. Regard has also been had to the Bedfordshire Community Strategy. Bedford Borough Council is a member of the Bedfordshire Local Strategic Forum which deals with strategic issues across the County as a whole.

Regional Planning Policy

Regional policy sets the context for development in the region as a whole. The vision **and policies** of this Plan must support and generally conform with regional policy. There are two regional **planning** policy documents that affect

the Borough. The draft East of England Plan includes policies that affect the Borough as a whole by setting a strategy for the location of development and providing guidance for general policies. It also identifies Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale as part of a Growth Area in which future development will be focused. The Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy provides detailed guidance on the development of the identified Growth Area setting a figure for the amount of development and infrastructure improvements expected. The vision of the Plan needs to reflect these two documents and the influences they will have on the future of different areas of the Borough. Further detail on the content of these regional documents is provided in Appendix D.

BOROUGH WIDE SPATIAL VISION

By 2021 Bedford Borough will have become a place where:

“Change is embraced. Growth focused on the Borough’s main urban areas and the Marston Vale has fostered a successful economy and expanding sustainable communities, supported by better social and transport infrastructure. At the same time the town centre has been revitalised, acting as a catalyst for growth and leading to a step change in Bedford’s role and place within the region. Rural communities have been sustained through meeting local needs and remain viable. All of this will have been achieved in ways which ensure that the development and use of land promotes quality of life, health and well being for everyone as well as celebrating our distinctiveness and protecting the Borough’s environmental assets.”

The Borough wide vision is expanded below to cover the specific challenges which need to be addressed.

Town Centre

- Bedford will have reclaimed its role as the county town, building on its distinctive personality.
- It will be a prosperous, bustling, safe place where more people will live and work with a greater quality and range of services and facilities.
- Redevelopment in the Riverside, Castle Lane and bus station areas increasing the quantity and range of retail space, dwellings and leisure facilities will have contributed to the revitalisation of the town centre.

Bedford Growth Area (Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale)

- Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale will be the areas of the Borough that have changed the most.
- The pace of housing delivery in the growth area will have increased.
- An expanded local economy will produce good quality jobs which in turn help strengthen the housing market.

- Bedford will increasingly service the Milton Keynes and South Midlands growth area's knowledge-based economy and become a regional centre for business, arts, creative industries and culture.
- The urban area will have expanded westwards, and to the north and north east with the establishment of high quality neighbourhoods with local facilities and good links to the town centre.
- The Wixams new settlement will be a vibrant, developing, sustainable community, with a new rail connection to London.
- The Marston Vale will fulfil its potential in becoming a centre for green infrastructure and leisure through the Forest of Marston Vale initiative and potentially the concept of the Bedford - Milton Keynes Canal.
- The transport network infrastructure and the quality of public transport services will have improved.
- East-west communications will be much improved with the completion of the Great Barford bypass and improvements to the A421 west of Bedford and the Oxford - Bedford rail link.

The Rural Area

- The rural areas will have stayed rural.
- The villages will have retained their separate, distinctive and varied characters.
- The rural area will be a viable place in which to live and work with a range of services and facilities and increasing housing opportunities to meet local needs.
- The transport network will provide accessibility improved sustainable access to places of work, leisure and shopping.

PLAN OBJECTIVES

In order to deliver the vision of the Plan, a set of objectives has the objectives below have been identified. They objectives have been developed in consultation with the community and provide specific direction to the policies of the Plan. **Appendix C** illustrates which plan policies are derived from which objective.

1. Deliver the planned growth in Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale (current strategic allocations) to achieve a step change in the Borough's role in the region.
2. Ensure future development is based upon sustainable development principles.
3. Provide guidance on where any future growth if required should occur (in the period up to 2021).

4. Provide quality housing to meet current and future needs of all sectors of the community.
5. Foster significant employment growth.
6. Direct retail development to the most appropriate locations.
7. Foster the regeneration of Bedford town centre to enable it to fulfil a greater role within the region.
8. Support the delivery of coordinated transport improvements with the emphasis on non-car modes, improving east-west communications and achieving greater transport interchange.
9. Encourage key rural communities to become more sustainable places to live and work.
10. Achieve high quality design that takes account of character, and local distinctiveness and sustainable design principles, enables access and promotes community safety.
11. Protect and enhance the countryside, biodiversity and geodiversity, and the quality and connectivity of green infrastructure in the Borough with particular emphasis on enhancing the Marston Vale.
12. Minimise the use of energy and encourage greater use of energy from renewable sources.
13. Provide a mechanism for the delivery of infrastructure (including health, education, transport, community, leisure and recreation facilities) in tandem with new development.
14. Protect and enhance the Borough's built and cultural assets and the character of settlements and foster the development of the Borough as a destination for heritage and cultural tourism.
15. Protect the environment by minimising the risk of flooding and the effects of climate change and facilitating improvements in air quality and an increase in the use of renewable sources of energy.
16. Involve the community in the decisions about the planning of the Borough so they can influence and shape such decisions.

4. THE SPATIAL STRATEGY

HOW WE GET THERE

The previous section set out a vision of “where we want to be” by 2021 and suggested some of the key outcomes which we will be looking to achieve. The purpose of this section is to address the question “how do we get there” and to outline the policies needed to realise the plan’s vision and objectives.

The spatial portrait (*Section 2*) describes the kind of place that Bedford is today. It has many strengths: its strategic location; its environment, built and natural; its people and diverse communities; and its compact town centre positioned on one of the region's great rivers. However it also has weaknesses which were highlighted as issues for this plan to address. Relative to the surrounding area, these include a legacy of under investment, a poorly performing local economy, a weak housing market and an infrastructure deficit. Bedford has increasingly been overshadowed by its neighbours with the result that over time its function and role in the region has been eroded.

National and regional planning guidance provide the context for the scope and nature of the change which will take place in the Borough. Public sector investment programmes will help determine the pace of that change.

The draft East of England Plan sets out planning policy for the region and thus the whole of Bedford Borough. A part of the Borough has been designated as being within the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Growth Area, established in the government's Sustainable Communities Plan of 2003. The sub-regional strategy for the Growth Area ~~designates the urban areas of Bedford and Kempston and the northern Marston Vale as the focal point for growth in north Bedfordshire. Most of this area is within Bedford Borough but a small part of the Marston Vale lies in Mid Bedfordshire District. The Bedford Growth Area (the area within which growth locations are to be defined will take place in Bedford Borough) is shown indicated on the Key Diagram. recognises the potential of Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale to accommodate a significant volume of development. Policy CP1 reflects the critical importance of these plans to the planning of the Borough.~~

~~Policies for the location of much more modest levels of development in the rural area beyond the Bedford Growth Area are set out in the draft East of England Plan. The plan directs development towards market towns and thereafter to the larger villages with a good range of services known as key service centres.~~

~~Acknowledging the influence of the two different regional plans which apply to the Borough, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between the preferred~~

locations for development in the Growth Area and the rural areas beyond. The housing requirements for the two policy areas are discrete. The two housing targets will be monitored separately and not collectively and there will be no transfer of requirements between the two policy areas.

The growth agenda offers a new impetus and most importantly the commitment on the part of the government and the council to redress the balance. In the coming years, there is a real opportunity to embrace change and to re-establish the Borough's position and profile in the region.

In spatial terms, this means dramatically expanding the local economy to encourage population growth through in-migration and thereby growing the housing market. The role of the town centre will be strengthened so that it becomes a place where more people choose to live and shop.

In essence the role of the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan is to provide the spatial framework to manage growth positively **and in that context** to promote the sustainability of the borough as a whole (see Policy CP2). The Plan forms part of a suite of strategies including the Council's Community Plan*, Corporate Plan* and economic development strategy "Changing Places", that share this common aim. **Strategic approaches to sustainability and climate change issues, such as flood risk management are also relevant, for example, the Marston Vale Surface Waters Plan.**

The impact of the Borough's response to this challenge will be dependent upon the support of the Regional Economic Strategy, the Regional Housing Strategy and the Regional Transport Strategy which will guide public sector investment; the government's Growth Area Funding programmes; and the efforts of *Renaissance Bedford**, the Local Development Delivery Vehicle established by key stakeholders to champion growth within the designated Growth Area.

Two strategic policies are proposed:

POLICY CP1 - SPATIAL STRATEGY

Sustainable levels, locations and forms of development will be **promoted sought** in accordance with the stated objectives and policies of this Plan and the objectives and policies of the East of England Plan and the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy.

POLICY CP2 - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The development and use of land will ensure that:

- i) Resources and infrastructure are used efficiently with the priority on the re-use of brownfield land; and,
- ii) Biodiversity **and geodiversity** is protected and **scarce natural** resources are

- conserved ~~and enhanced~~; and,
- iii) Climate change, renewable energy and drainage **water resource** issues are properly addressed; and,
 - iv) Buildings and spaces promote the character of townscape and setting of settlements and enhance human health and safety; and,
 - v) The character and quality of local landscapes are **preserved** and where **appropriate** enhanced ~~and not degraded~~; and,
 - vi) **Important** historic and cultural features of ~~acknowledged importance~~ are protected ~~and enhanced~~; and,
 - vii) The use of public transport, **walking and cycling** is encouraged and car use minimised; and,
 - viii) Opportunities for leisure, recreation and tourism are readily available.

The remaining policies are structured under **five** themes. The themes reflect the issues that the plan needs to address and the key elements of the spatial vision and objectives. The **five** themes are:

The Growth Area

This section includes:

- The location of development
- Housing
- Employment

Sustainable rural communities

This section includes:

- The framework for development in the rural area (outside the Bedford Growth Area).
- The provision of housing and employment.
- The provision of housing to meet local needs.

Town centre regeneration and revitalisation

This section includes:

- How the town centre will change.
- The impact the town centre will need to have on the growth area and Borough as a whole.

Distinctiveness and environmental assets

This section includes:

- Accentuating the Borough's positive and distinctive features.
- Quality development to create a sense of place.
- Promoting sustainability in the built and natural environment and protecting our assets.

Delivery and implementation

- Transport and community infrastructure

- Approach to monitoring.

THE GROWTH AREA - THE SCALE AND PACE OF CHANGE AND THE DELIVERY OF INFRASTRUCTURE

WHERE SHOULD GROWTH BE LOCATED IN THE BOROUGH?

Regional Planning Background

The Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy designates the urban areas of Bedford and Kempston and the northern Marston Vale as the focal point for growth in north Bedfordshire. Most of this area is within Bedford Borough but a small part of the Marston Vale lies in Mid Bedfordshire District. The Bedford Growth Area (the area within which growth will take place in Bedford Borough) is shown on the Key Diagram.

~~Policies for the location of much more modest levels of development in the rural area beyond the Bedford Growth Area are set out in the draft East of England Plan. The plan directs development towards market towns and thereafter to the larger villages with a good range of services known as key service centres. Section x.x – x.x looks in further detail at the implications of the East of England Plan for the location of development in the rural area. Key service centres are defined as large villages with a good level of services.~~

~~Acknowledging the influence of the two different regional plans which apply to the Borough CP3 makes a clear distinction between the preferred locations for development in the Growth Area and the rural areas beyond. In the context of this regional advice the Policy CP3 sets out the location for development across the Borough for residential and employment development. It also applies in general terms to other forms of development except where national planning policy guidance states otherwise (in respect of town centre uses see Policy CP16). A search sequence is defined for each of the two policy areas within the Borough. Policy CP4 designates key service centres.~~

THE LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GROWTH AREA

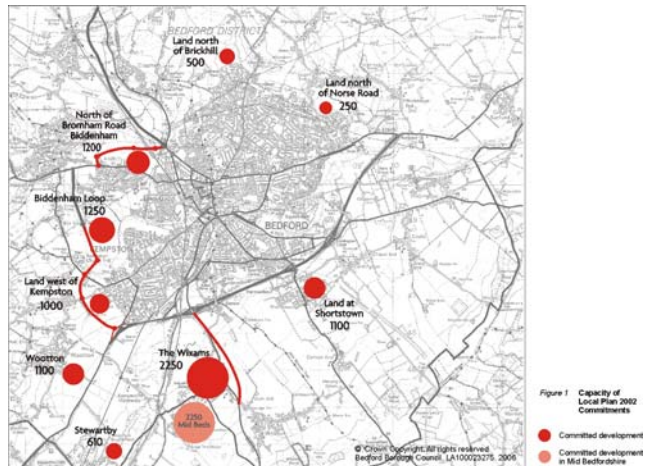
In relation to determining appropriate locations for development in the Growth Area, the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy states that:

- Bedford Town Centre will be the location for a range of development types including retail, cultural and leisure development and a range of office accommodation. Allocations to meet these requirements are identified in the Town Centre Area Action Plan.
- Housing development is expected to take place principally on sites within the Bedford Growth Area that are existing allocations, in order to foster certainty and continuity. These allocations are identified in the Bedford Borough Local Plan* 2002 and include:
 - Sites within the existing urban area

- Sites adjoining the urban area within the urban area boundary
- Defined locations in the Marston Vale at Wootton, Stewartby and The Wixams (see Figure 1).
- There is an expectation that specific economic sectors will be fostered, particularly high value knowledge based industries. To provide for the right quality and type of development and to encourage investment, new sites may be required in sustainable locations.

Figure 1
Local Plan 2002
Site Allocations
Committed Development Sites

Anticipated capacity of local plan 2002 commitments.



In this context, Policy CP3 focuses development within the Growth Area on the urban area (including the town centre) and Growth Area key service centres. The Council's 2002 Local Plan established the urban area boundary as a policy tool. The urban area boundary marks the outer limit of the expansion of Bedford and Kempston. Whilst not within the boundary the settlement of Shortstown which immediately adjoins the urban area is considered in policy terms to be urban. The Shortstown development brief 2003 proposes a development limit for the settlement which will be further considered through an appropriate Development Plan Document.

In Policy CP4 Wootton, Stewartby and The Wixams are identified as key service centres. They are all focal points for the provision of homes, jobs facilities and services. The Wixams is shown "bracketed" reflecting the fact that whilst not yet implemented, The Wixams has the potential to become a key service centre during the plan period. The methodology for the identification of key service centres is set out in Appendix x the Supporting Information. The development limits for Wootton and Stewartby are defined by their Settlement Policy Areas (see para xx). In the case of Wixams a SPA will be defined through an appropriate Development Plan Document.

The land outside of the defined limits of the urban area and the Key Service centres is in policy terms open countryside. The countryside policies CP X Y Z will therefore apply in these areas.

~~The priority given to the Local Plan* allocations reflects the endorsement given by the Local Plan Inspector to sites which together provide substantial~~

~~commitments (primarily for housing) in accordance with national policy and compatible with the regional guidance now in force. The sites allocated in the Local Plan* (2002) within and adjoining the urban area, and at Wootton, Stewartby and The Wixams fit well with the MKSM SRS. These sites must be given the opportunity to play their part in delivering the growth now required in the area. They all have or are near to achieving permission and crucially, they all provide much of the infrastructure which is vital for improving the Borough's strategic accessibility. Previously known as selected settlements (in the adopted local plan) Wootton and Stewartby are carried forward as Growth area key service centres. The Wixams is shown "bracketed" reflecting the fact that whilst not yet implemented the Wixams has the potential to become a key service centre during the plan period.~~

~~Alongside the Local Plan* sites, a further set of strategic sites has been identified in the town centre through the Town Centre Area Action Plan. **These sites have a critical role in promoting the growth of the area** as they will help to revitalise the town centre and contribute to creating the economic drivers needed to address housing market weakness which has been one of the key causes of under delivery in recent years.~~

~~POLICY CP3 - THE LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GROWTH AREA~~

~~Within the Growth Area development will be located:- in accordance with the following hierarchy:~~

- ~~i) On sites defined in the Local Plan 2002 and the Town Centre Area Action Plan~~
- ~~ii) Land within the urban area boundary as defined in the Local Plan 2002~~
- ~~iii) Land adjoining that urban area~~
- ~~iv) Other locations within the Growth Area key service centres (Wootton, Stewartby and The Wixams).~~

~~Within the rural area (excluding the Growth Area) where there is capacity and the absence of environmental or other constraints, limited development may be permitted in accordance with the following hierarchy:~~

- ~~i) On sites defined in the Local Plan 2002~~
- ~~ii) Land within Key Service Centres (see Policy CP4).~~

FOR CLARITY, THE POLICY NOW READS:-

POLICY CP3 - THE LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GROWTH AREA

The locations for growth will be:-

- i) within the urban area boundary
- ii) within the defined limits of Growth Area key service centres

Outside of the areas defined in a) and b) policies RP 1,2,4 and 7 will apply

POLICY CP4 - KEY SERVICE CENTRES IN THE GROWTH AREA

Development will be focused in growth area key service centres in accordance with Policy CP3. The Growth Area key service centres are (will be):

- Stewartby
- Wootton
- (The Wixams).

The rural Key Service Centres are:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| • Bromham | • Oakley |
| • Clapham | • Riseley |
| • Great Barford | • Sharnbrook |
| • Harrold | • Wilstead |

The key service centres are identified on the Key Diagram.

Sequential Approach to the Allocation of Land for Residential and Employment Development in the Growth Area

The sequential approach set out below in Policy CPx will be used to provide a framework for any additional allocations* which may need to be made (through an appropriate Allocations DPD*) in the plan period.

The search sequence for residential development endorses the need to target accessible locations and conserve green field land. Suitable sites in step 1 may include regeneration sites, re-use of employment land (in accordance with Policy CP9), intensification and mixed use development.

Steps 2 and 3 enable the site search to be widened where necessary to land adjoining the urban area and Growth Area key service centres subject to sustainability and environmental considerations.

In relation to employment sites it is recognised that the locational requirements of businesses vary between employment types. These requirements will need to be balanced with a locational approach which seeks to reduce travel to work and targets locations which can be served by energy efficient modes of transport. Suitable sites on previously developed or underused land may include office provision in the town centre, small sites in residential neighbourhoods and reuse of existing employment sites. Urban extension sites will need to be well related to the primary transport network and have or be capable of achieving good connections to the public transport and cycle network.

POLICY CPX - SEQUENTIAL APPROACH TO THE ALLOCATION OF LAND FOR RESIDENTIAL AND EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE GROWTH AREA

Search sequence for residential development

Step 1: previously developed land and underdeveloped land within the existing urban area and growth area key service centres

Step 2: urban extensions.

Step 3: extensions to growth area key service centres.

Priority in the selection of sites in step 2 and 3 will be determined in relation to the following factors.

- The need to make best use of previously developed land.
- The need to conserve and enhance the environmental assets of the borough as set out in policies x-y.
- Access to public transport, cycle and walking networks or an ability to provide new or upgrade existing provision.
- Access to jobs and community and leisure provision.
- Adequacy of infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the development or the ability to provide or upgrade existing infrastructure.
- The impact which the site may have on the delivery of strategic infrastructure needed to strengthen the housing market and increase the rate of housing delivery.

Search sequence for employment development

Step 1: previously developed land and underdeveloped land within the

existing urban area and growth area key service centres

Step 2: urban extensions which are well related to the primary transport network and have or are capable of achieving good connections to the public transport and cycle network.

Step 3: extensions to growth area key service centres which are well related to the primary transport network and have or are capable of achieving good connections to the public transport and cycle network.

Step 4: other growth area locations which satisfy a proven need for a quality or a size of site not available in or on the edge of the urban area or growth area key service centres.

Priority in the selection of sites in step 2 - 4 will be determined in relation to the following factors.

- The need to make best use of previously developed land.
- The need to conserve and enhance the environmental assets of the borough as set out in policies x-y.
- Site suitability in the context of the range and quality of business uses required in accordance with Policy CP9.
- Access to the primary transport network.
- Good access to public transport, cycle and walking networks or an ability to provide new or upgrade existing provision.
- Adequacy of infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the development or the ability to provide or upgrade existing infrastructure.

~~The remaining part of the search sequence as set out in national guidance provides a framework for the identification of any further sites which may be required in the plan period. In the first instance opportunities which arise in the urban area will be considered. Further housing allocations (to be identified through an allocations DPD) on land adjoining the urban area or within growth area Key Centres will only be required if monitoring confirms a need and where such sites would be capable of addressing any non-delivery without prejudice to the key strategic sites.~~

~~Location of development in the rural area~~

~~The draft East of England Plan sets out the approach that is used to assess the suitability of rural settlements for development. This is expressed in the form of a hierarchy in which rural settlements with a good range of local services are considered more sustainable than those that do not. Focusing development on such settlements will reduce the need to travel by private car. Development is taken as including all forms of built development, not just housing.~~

~~The draft East of England Plan also sets out the approach to be taken to defining which settlements are the most sustainable locations for development. To define a hierarchy within the rural area of the Borough, the East of England Plan states development should be focused upon market towns and thereafter in "key service centres". As the Borough does not have any market towns, the Borough has only designated key service centres.~~

~~The key service centres have been identified following public consultation and research into the level of services and facilities in each village, their population, the public transport~~

~~provision in the rural area and the geographical position of each village. The definition of key service centres has also taken account of the settlement hierarchies proposed within the neighbouring local authorities.~~

~~Settlement Policy Areas have been defined to show the extent of the built character of villages throughout the Borough (see Policy CP19).~~

THE SCALE AND PACE OF DEVELOPMENT

HOUSING IN THE GROWTH AREA

The Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy sets targets for the level of housing and employment provision in the period 2001-2021 and provides guidance on the mix and range of housing and employment which needs to be provided.

In total 19,500 dwellings are to be provided in the Bedford, Kempston and northern Marston Vale growth area as a whole, 16,270 of which are to be located in Bedford Borough. The Strategy also expects annual housing completions to rise over the plan period requiring a higher pace of development in the years 2006-2021 (876 dwellings p.a.) compared to the first five years of the plan period (626 dwellings p.a.).

Priority will be given in phasing residential development to delivering existing commitments (as allocated in the Local Plan* 2002) and to the proposals coming forward in the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan. The priority given to Local Plan allocations reflects the endorsement given by the Local Plan Inspector to sites which together provide substantial commitments (primarily for housing in accordance with national policy and compatible with the regional guidance now in force. The sites allocated in the Local Plan (2002) within and adjoining the urban area, and at Wooton and the Wixams fit well with the MKSM SRS. These sites must be given the opportunity to play their part in delivering the growth now required in the area. They all have or are near to achieving planning permission and crucially, they provide much of the infrastructure which is vital for improving the Borough's strategic accessibility. Thereafter, development of housing will be promoted in accordance with Policy CP5 (and Policy RP6 in the rural area) in step with supporting key infrastructure, such as transport, utilities, health, education and environmental infrastructure. The maintenance of a satisfactory relationship between housing provision and job growth in the Borough is also important to prevent an increase in out-commuting from the area.

~~In contrast the scale and pace of development elsewhere in the Borough is expected to be much more modest. The draft East of England Plan proposes 830 new dwellings in the plan period. (This figure will be the subject further testing at the Examination in Public.) The Council's monitoring of housing commitments indicates that the figure for the Borough outside the growth area is likely to be closer to 1250 dwellings. This represents only a small increase in the rural area over the plan period. It would however provide greater scope for the delivery of housing to meet the local needs of the Borough's rural~~

~~communities. The Council supports raising the figure to 1250 dwellings in accordance with its representations to the East of England Plan and this can be finalised once the East of England Plan's panel report is published.~~

~~The housing requirements for the two policy areas are discrete. The two housing targets will be monitored separately and not collectively and there will be no transfer of requirements between the two policy areas.~~

It is vital to ensure that these new dwellings provide a mix of sizes, types and tenures to meet the identified needs of all sectors of the community. The affordable housing element of schemes must reflect housing need in terms of tenure and housing size and mix. On sites of 15 dwellings and above applicants for planning permission will be expected to submit a statement explaining how they have taken account of housing needs (both market and affordable) in devising their proposed mix of tenures and house types.

The mix and range of market housing is an important consideration. As household size and housing preferences continue to change it is important to ensure that new housing reflects these housing requirements. These will be kept under review through housing market assessments in line with national government guidance (currently in draft form).

On the basis of the council's most recent Housing Requirement Study* (2003) the Borough will need to provide in the region of 224 affordable dwellings each year to address housing needs. Households in housing need are defined in the Housing Requirement Study* as those households currently lacking their own housing or living in housing which is unsuitable or inadequate, who cannot afford to buy or rent suitable housing in the open market and who are unable to resolve their situation without assistance.

Those in housing need span a broad range of household types and some groups within the community have particular housing needs including **older people**, those with special needs, the homeless and low income groups. There are also differing requirements in relation to size and type of dwelling and affordability. The greatest need continues to be for social rented accommodation but a range of low cost accommodation and intermediate tenures is also required. Applicants should seek early advice from the Council as to the requirements for affordable housing so that they can be incorporated into market housing layouts.

The government's current threshold for the size of developments above which affordable housing can be sought is 25 dwellings. However, recent government consultation documents have proposed lowering the national threshold to 15 dwellings and allowing a lower threshold to be considered where there is a local justification.

The Borough has a good supply of sites in the Growth Area which will provide affordable housing and no reason therefore to lower the threshold below 15 dwellings. In the rural areas however, once the sites allocated in the Local Plan* are completed, a lower threshold will be needed to help maintain

affordable housing supply alongside measures to enable affordable housing to meet local housing needs (see Policy CP22).

~~In meeting housing needs the Council is also required under the Housing Act 2004 to take account of the needs of travelling people. Such groups have particular locational requirements for alternative forms of residential development. The Council will undertake an assessment of the need for gypsy and traveller accommodation and will review the need to allocate land to meet any proven need when an Allocations and Designations Development Plan Document is prepared.~~

In meeting housing needs the Council is required to take account of the needs of gypsies and travellers and travelling show people. Although government advice specifically excludes travelling show people from the definition of gypsies and travellers, the similarity in the locational requirements of the three groups means that the same policy approach can be adopted.

Local authorities are required to assess the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers to inform the preparation of development plan documents. A sub-regional study across Bedfordshire and Luton is currently being undertaken and is due to report in autumn 2006. Government guidance also states that Regional Spatial Strategies must specify pitch requirements for each Local Planning Authority area based on local accommodation assessments (GTAAs). It is unlikely however that pitch figures will be included in the East of England Plan (RSS14) and an early revision of RSS14 to deal with this issue is expected.

Where a proven need is reasonably evidenced, the location of any gypsy and traveller sites should accord with Policies CP3 and RPX. In principle a sequential approach should be followed in identifying any necessary allocations. It is recognised however that the likelihood of land being available and affordable within the urban area, or Settlement Policy Areas, is limited and, given the current working patterns of gypsies and travellers, it is recognised that countryside locations may also need to be considered.

POLICY CP5 - THE SCALE AND PACE OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE GROWTH AREA

Provision will be made for 16,270 additional dwellings in the Bedford Growth Area between 2001 and 2021 to be phased as follows:

	<i>2001-2005</i>	<i>2006-2010</i>	<i>2011-2015</i>	<i>2016-2021</i>	<i>Total</i>
Bedford Growth Area	3130	4380	4380	4380	16,270
Rural Area	Over this period 830 dwellings will be provided.				

POLICY CP6 – MEETING HOUSING NEEDS

New housing developments will be expected to provide a mix of dwelling size and type to meet the identified housing needs of the community. Larger sites should provide a broad mix of housing suitable for different household types. On smaller sites, the mix of housing should contribute to the creation of mixed communities.

POLICY CP7 – AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE BOROUGH

On sites of 15 units and over (or 0.5 ha and over) and in villages having a population of less than 3,000 on sites of 3 dwellings or more (or 0.1ha and over) the Council will expect the provision of 30% affordable housing.

The policy will apply where a planning application could have been submitted for a larger site within the above policy threshold. Other than in exceptional circumstances, affordable housing provision should be made on-site.

CPxx - ACCOMMODATION FOR GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE

Where the Regional Spatial Strategy identifies a need for additional accommodation for gypsies, travellers or travelling show people, or where there is a proven need reasonably evidenced, planning permission will be granted within or adjoining the urban area or Settlement Policy Areas or, where no such sites are reasonably available, in the countryside, provided that, in relation to all locations the following requirements are clearly satisfied:-

- i) Submission of evidence to justify local need for the scale and nature of the accommodation proposed;
- ii) Satisfactory vehicular access from the public highway;
- iii) Siting and landscaping ensure that any impact upon the character and appearance of the locality is minimised, including impacts on biodiversity and nature conservation;
- iv) Maintenance of amenity for adjoining nearby occupiers of land and property;
- v) Adequate schools, shops and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance and preferably can be reached by foot, cycle or public transport;
- vi) The site or number of pitches is not disproportionate to the scale of any nearby settlement having regard to the presence of local infrastructure, population, size and density.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE GROWTH AREA

A step change in housing delivery will only result from a step change in the local economy of Bedford, as this **is necessary to** strengthen the local housing market. The Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy sets a target of facilitating a net gain of some 11,400 jobs in the Borough as a whole, whilst stating the need to review this figure as part of the preparation of the East of England Plan. (This plan currently indicates that a further 9,000 jobs should be provided in Bedfordshire beyond the growth areas but as yet no allocations have been made to individual districts.) The Borough Council considers the MKSM SRS target to under-estimate both needs and the influence that an expanding economy must have on the delivery of housing growth.

The MKSM SRS looks to Regional Economic Strategies to be the principal strategic means of building prosperity. East of England Development Agency's Regional Economic Strategies establishes the regional priorities for economic development. These are applied at sub-regional by the "Building a Sustainable Economy" the Bedfordshire & Luton Joint Economic Development Strategy* and at local level by "Changing Places" the economic development strategy for Bedford and the Northern Marston Vale. The sub-regional Joint Economic Development Strategy indicates that Bedfordshire's economy needs to grow by 50,000 jobs net during the plan period. **This reflected in "Changing Places" and is regarded as a realistic target by the Borough Council since local economic growth is a key priority and considerable effort will be required to reverse the trends. Apportioning the 50,000 jobs between the individual Districts indicates that Bedford Borough will need to provide in the region of 16,000 additional jobs to 2021**

For more than a decade "declining" industries in Bedfordshire have declined at a faster rate than in adjoining areas whilst "growth" industries have grown at a slower rate. The comparative size of the local economy has thus shrunk in marked contrast to other regional centres. Although the expansion of London Luton Airport would be a major economic stimulant in the south of the County, its impact in Bedford is less certain. **Most employment sites and centres of excellence are located within the Growth Area - in or near to Bedford, however there are also important sites at Wyboston, Thurleigh Airfield and Colworth House, Sharnbrook.**

The principal obstacles to economic growth have been identified as strategic accessibility (the infrastructure deficit which current programmes are beginning to address), the absence of a positive investment profile (which is about marketing and promotion) and the availability of suitable business premises (both in terms of quantity and quality). The promotion of innovation, enterprise and skill development will also be important and **support from local colleges can help in this regard**, but achieving the scale of change required will depend upon the extent that businesses move **to** or expand in Bedford.

Inward investment measures will naturally focus on the high value knowledge based growth industries. However the local economy needs to expanded in all sectors including tourism and there is a need to target more general office and

shop based service industries in order to create a balanced economy and support the renaissance of Bedford Town Centre.

So far, the practice of allocating open-ended employment sites has resulted in mostly warehousing and distribution developments (Class B8) being implemented. Whilst this investment interest is welcomed and it is recognised that this use of the particular sites coming forward is the most appropriate, there are concerns that the market is failing to provide a range of accommodation. This has hampered the expansion of the local economy since quality office (B1) and to a lesser extent smaller industrial (B2) premises remain in short supply. The concern is not so much about the density of jobs created by new warehousing but more about the quality of those jobs, the supply of unskilled labour and the limited potential impact that such jobs would have on strengthening the demand for local housing.

Since the Borough's main business park (Priory Business Park) is now largely developed, the supply of high quality B1 office environments has become critical and in addition to promoting redevelopment within the town centre (focused on the railway station) it is likely that the local planning authority will need to seek out one or two new strategic business sites within the Growth Area.

The Council commissioned a review of employment land in the borough in accordance with guidance issued by the government. The findings of the study support the need for additional quality B1 office space and identify a continuing decline in the B2 and B8 sectors. New B1 space could be provided both through the re-use of existing B2 and B8 sites and the allocation of new quality B1 land. The review also considered the quality of existing employment land and premises and their potential to remain allocated for employment or in continued employment use.

The retention of existing businesses and the space they occupy is also important since over 20ha of employment sites have been lost to other uses in five years (2000-2005). ~~Replacing urban employment sites with peripheral greenfield sites is not sustainable development*.~~

POLICY CP8 - THE CREATION OF JOBS

A minimum of 11,400* **16,000** net additional jobs will be provided in the Borough by 2021. Provision for new jobs will be made in accordance with policies CP3 and RP3 ~~Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan spatial policy hierarchy (see Policy CP3)~~ to support and/or create sustainable communities.

(Note this MKSM SRS target is to be reviewed in the preparation of the East of England Plan)*

POLICY CP9 - EMPLOYMENT LAND

Additional employment land in the order of up to up to 75 hectares will be provided in the Borough to stimulate the local economy. In such allocations the emphasis will be on creating new B1 environments providing a range of quality development opportunities to encourage the development of high value knowledge-based industries and smaller units in both urban and rural areas.

The Council will allocate sites specific to the B1, B2 and B8 classes to achieve a mix and range of sites and a balanced economy.

~~Land in employment use will only be considered for alternative uses where, in relation to sites specifically considered in the employment land study, the study has identified that this is appropriate and, for sites not specifically considered an employment land study, where loss is justified in accordance with the methodology in the employment land study.~~

Land identified allocated for employment and premises currently in employment use existing employment sites will only be considered for alternative uses where this is found to be appropriate justified through the methodology set out in the employment land review process. And where specific community and environmental benefits can be demonstrated and achieved.

For land and premises not specifically addressed in an the employment land review*, loss must be justified by the applicant in accordance with the methodology adopted in that study. Where employment sites are being promoted for other uses on the basis that their redevelopment for employment is not viable, this justification must include detailed evidence to support the viability case.

** not all B1, B2 and B8 sites are covered by the employment land study. The use of a size threshold means that many smaller sites are not specifically mentioned though they may be included as part of a larger cluster.*

SUSTAINABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES

Beyond the urban areas of Bedford and Kempston, the Borough is made up of a large rural area which is home to about a third of the Borough's residents. The Ouse valley is a key determinant of the rural settlement pattern with many of the larger villages being located along its course. Away from the river valley the north-east of the Borough is comparatively much more sparsely populated. In the south of the Borough the landscape and settlement pattern has been strongly influenced by the use of the clays of the Marston Vale for brickmaking.

Although diverse in character the Borough's rural communities face similar challenges. The provision of rural facilities and services and affordable housing for local people are key issues.

The plan's vision is to ensure that the rural area retains its varied character and remains a viable place to live and work.

For the purposes of this plan two policy areas are defined, the Bedford Growth area and the rural area (see para x.x). The rural policy area is defined as the area outside of Bedford and Kempston excluding the south-western part of the Borough which is within the Growth Area. The Growth Area and rural area are shown on the Key Diagram.

The primary purpose of this section is to set out the policies for the rural policy area in particular the location of development and the amount of housing development required in the plan period. It should be noted however that policies RP1, RP2, RP4 and RP7 also apply in the Growth Area in so far as the Growth Area key service centres have defined settlement policy areas and the area outside of the Settlement Policy Areas is in policy terms open countryside. Policies CPxx relating to accommodation for gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople, CP 6 and 7 (housing type and mix) and CP8 and 9 (employment) and also apply in the rural area.

SETTLEMENT POLICY AREAS

The Council's 2002 Local Plan* established Settlement Policy Areas (SPAs) as a policy tool. The Settlement Policy Areas define the extent of the built up character of settlements and distinguish between the built up areas of villages and the surrounding countryside. They promote the sustainability of the rural areas and communities by:-

- Protecting the countryside for its own sake, preventing the coalescence of settlements, ribbon development and the piecemeal extension of villages and promoting rural restraint.
- Focussing development needed to sustain rural communities on the built up areas of villages.

Settlement Policy Areas boundaries are to be re-assessed where required, as part of an appropriate Allocations and Designations Development Plan Document*.

RP1 – SETTLEMENT POLICY AREAS

Settlement Policy Areas are defined for villages with a built-up character. The Settlement Policy Area boundary encloses the main built-up part of the village but excludes undeveloped areas or more loosely knit development.

RP2 – THE COUNTRYSIDE

All land outside the Settlement Policy Areas is defined as countryside where development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE RURAL AREA

The draft East of England Plan states that in determining appropriate locations for development in the rural area:-

- Development should be focused in market towns and thereafter in key service centres. (As the Borough does not have any market towns the focus will be on key service centres).
- Key service centres (defined as large villages with a good level of services) are identified as the settlements most appropriate for accommodating housing and employment needs.
- In other rural settlements the emphasis is on supporting the rural economy and services and meeting local housing needs.

In this context Policy RP3 makes a clear distinction between development in the rural key service centres and other settlements with Settlement Policy Areas. Where residential, employment and retail development occurs within the rural area it will be focused in key service centres. Limited infill development may also be permitted in other Settlement Policy Areas. Only exceptionally will development be permitted outside Settlement Policy Areas. Policy RP4 sets out the circumstances in which exceptions may be justified.

The rural key service centres (Policy RP5) have been identified taking account of:-

- The draft East of England Plan.
- Research into the level of services and facilities in each village, their population and the public transport provision in the rural area.
- The distribution of settlements within the Borough.
- The settlement hierarchies proposed within the neighbouring local authorities.

The methodology is set out in full in the Supporting Information.

RP3 LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE RURAL AREA

Development will be located as follows:-

Residential development

- Limited development will be permitted in key service centres.
- In non-key service centres with Settlement Policy Areas limited infill development will be permitted.

Employment development

- Small scale development will be permitted in key service centres.
- In non-key service centres with Settlement Policy Areas limited development will be permitted where it will sustain or improve the rural economy and does not put undue strain on local infrastructure.

Retail development

- Retail development will be permitted in accordance with Policy CP17.

Rural services and facilities

- The provision of other rural services and facilities will be focussed in key service centres.
- In non-key service centres, rural services and facilities will be permitted where they support the sustainability of local services or communities.

In all cases the nature and scale of development should respect the structure form and character of settlements.

RP4 RURAL EXCEPTIONS

Rural development should be located in accordance with Policies RP3 and CP3 with the following exceptions:

Residential development

- Affordable housing to meet proven local needs in accordance with Policy RP7.
- Agricultural workers' dwellings.
- Replacement dwellings.

Employment development

- Reuse of rural buildings for tourism, commercial, industrial and recreational uses.
- Appropriate farm diversification enterprises.

RP5 – RURAL KEY SERVICE CENTRES

The rural key service centres are:

- Bromham
- Clapham

- Great Barford
- Harrold
- Oakley
- Riseley
- Sharnbrook
- Wilstead

The key service centres are identified on the Key Diagram.

SCALE AND NATURE OF HOUSING IN THE RURAL AREA

The scale of housing development in the rural area is defined in the draft East of England Plan which proposes 830 dwellings are proposed in the draft plan in the period 2001-2021. This figure will be examined through the Examination in Public into the plan. The Council's housing monitoring indicates that the figure for the Borough outside the growth area is likely to be closer to 1250 dwellings. This represents only a small increase in the rural area over the plan period. It would however provide greater scope for the delivery of housing to meet the local needs of the Borough's rural communities. The Council supports raising the figure to 1250 dwellings and has made representations to this effect to the East of England Plan Examination in Public. On this basis a housing target of 1250 dwellings is included in policy RP6. The East of England Regional Assembly has indicated that this can be finalised once the East of England Plan's panel report is published.

Affordable Housing

To improve the provision of affordable housing in the rural areas, the Council will use the following methods:-

- To ensure the provision of more affordable dwellings in smaller settlements, affordable housing will be sought on sites of 3 or more dwellings in settlements of under 3000 population. (On sites of 3 dwellings, 1 affordable dwelling will be sought.) Elsewhere affordable housing will be required on sites of 15 dwellings and above.
- Where affordable housing need is identified for local 'qualifying persons' within a parish or group of adjacent parishes, affordable housing development will be encouraged. 'Qualifying persons' are defined as a person or persons in housing need (as defined in para xx) who live in, or are employed in, or have close local connections with the relevant village or parish or an immediately neighbouring parish.

In addition Parish Councils are advised and encouraged to do two things. Firstly to maintain awareness through regular survey as to the extent and nature of local affordable housing needs. Secondly to manage assist the

management of future housing provided in this manner, explore the potential for creating a village trust or similar vehicle, or establish a relationship with a provider of affordable housing who will work with the parish.

RP6 HOUSING IN THE RURAL AREA

- The rural area of the Borough will provide for a net increase of 1250 dwellings in the period 2001-2021.
- A mix of dwelling type and size will be provided in accordance with Policy CP6.
- Affordable housing will be provided in accordance with Policies CP7 and RP7.

POLICY RP7 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS IN THE RURAL AREA

Exceptionally, permission will be granted for sites providing 100% affordable housing to meet identified local needs. Within the defined area of need and subject to environmental constraints, sites should be identified in accordance with the following search sequence:

- Within a settlement with a Settlement Policy Area.
- Immediately adjoining a settlement with a Settlement Policy Area.
- Within or immediately adjoining a settlement without a Settlement Policy Area.

Permission will only be granted where:-

- i) Local housing need is evidenced by an up to date survey and the number size, design, mix and tenure of the dwellings are all confined to and appropriate to the strict extent of the identified local need, and;
- ii) The site meets the locational criteria set out above, and;
- iii) The development should contribute positively to the character of the village maintain landscape character and not lead to coalescence with other settlements, and;
- iv) The proposed site is well related to the built up area of the settlement and the scale of the scheme is appropriate to the structure, form, character and size of the village, and;
- v) The housing proposed must be capable of management by the Parish Council, Registered Local Landlord, village trust or other similar organisation, and;
- vi) The housing is provided in perpetuity for qualifying local people.

The provision of affordable housing to meet local needs may also be encouraged by the allocation of an exception site for 100% affordable housing.

EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE RURAL AREA

The job target for the Borough is set out in CP8. The locational requirements of employment development will mean that the majority of new jobs and business activity will be focused on the urban area and thus within the Growth Area rather than the rural area. However, it is to be expected that some economic development will occur focussed on key service centres and associated with existing employment locations such as those at Wyboston on the edge of the St Neots urban area, Colworth House Sharnbrook and at Thurleigh Airfield and more generally as farms continue to diversify and redundant agricultural buildings are converted for business use.

In addition it is important to retain existing employment and service uses in order to support the sustainability of the rural area. Where the loss of existing employment uses are proposed permission will only be granted where justified through the BELS methodology as explained in policy CP9.

POLICY XX SUSTAINING THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND SERVICES

The Council will seek to assist the continued viability of the rural economy and support the sustainability of local services by:-

- i) Resisting proposals which would lead to the loss of sites used for industrial/commercial use in accordance with CP9 or other employment generating uses in the countryside or rural settlements
- ii) Restricting the change of use of shops Post Offices and Public Houses where it would impact on local services and communities
- iii) Supporting the retention of local community facilities.

TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION AND REVITALISATION

Bedford Town Centre is the heart of our community and should provide a range of quality shopping and entertainment for residents and visitors and a positive focus for public transport. However, the town centre needs to be far more than this - it is a place where people should live, work and have fun - for most people, the town centre defines what Bedford is.

The town centre is a very accessible location, particularly by public transport, making it a sustainable location for development and especially those forms of development that attract a lot of people to them. Government guidance on town centres is set out in PPS6 *Planning for Town Centres*, which lists the main town centre uses as being:

- retail (shops and restaurants)
- leisure and entertainment (including intensive sport and recreation uses such as cinemas, night-clubs, health and fitness centres and bingo halls)
- offices
- arts, culture and tourism (theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Much has been done in recent years to improve the town centre - improvements to Harpur Street/Lime Street, Castle Mound refurbishment, the establishment of the Bedford Town Centre Co Ltd*, the first ever Business Improvement District*, improved car parks etc. However, compared to other centres it has lagged behind and has not been able to attract significant inward investment. In a commercial sense Bedford has stood still for perhaps as many as ~~thirty~~ fifty years.

With government and regional policy focusing on Bedford's role within the Growth Area there is a compelling need for a major step change in the delivery of an attractive, lively and commercially successful town centre which will take the Borough into the twenty-first century.

AREA ACTION PLAN

In order to provide a proper footing for the renaissance of the town centre, the Council has embarked on the preparation of the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan, which with the Core Strategy & Rural Issues Plan will form part of the formal statutory framework for the planning of the Borough.

Over the next few years the town centre has the opportunity to realise its potential and the Area Action Plan aims to meet this challenge and regenerate the town centre. ~~by:~~ **It contains the following objectives:**

**A More Commercially Active and Competitive Retail Centre
+ A More Structured and Distinctive Centre**

To provide a framework for the regeneration of the town centre.

To sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole whilst promoting reinvestment in the existing retail centre including the High Street.

To create a more diverse and vital mix of uses including a major increase in the town's retail offer.

To achieve the successful integration of new development with the existing town centre.

To strengthen the economy of the town centre and its role as an employment, administrative and educational centre.

A Better Connected Centre

To improve access to the town centre through the provision of new public transport interchanges, new highway infrastructure, public transport priority when feasible, the use of park and ride facilities and improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, taxis and private hire vehicles.. Where and when highway capacity can be increased, priority should be given to modes other than private cars.

To improve the number and quality of the connections within the town centre, and between the centre and the river and railway station.

A More Attractive and Liveable Centre

To achieve a significant growth in town centre living in order to enhance the vitality and viability of the centre.

To provide affordable housing in a managed town centre reflecting the needs of the community with the aim of securing a mixed and balanced town centre community.

To protect, promote and enhance Bedford's natural and built heritage, cultural attractions and role as a tourist destination as an integral part of the strategy to regenerate the town centre.

To achieve high quality urban design with high quality materials and finishes.

A Well Managed Town Centre

To create a town centre which is safe, attractive and in which people will want to live, shop, work and spend their leisure time.

To achieve high quality public realm improvements including provision for management and maintenance.

To ensure that new development and other partner agencies contribute to the delivery of the Council's strategy for the town centre as a whole, including the provision of infrastructure.

- ~~Redeveloping key sites which in turn will act as a catalyst for further investment;~~
- ~~Re-populating the town centre by including significant amounts of housing (including affordable housing);~~
- ~~Expanding the town centre and improving the town's shopping offer to create a strong and integrated retail core;~~
- ~~Using mixed use development to enhance the vitality and viability of the centre;~~
- ~~Expanding the town's tourism potential including the provision of additional hotel accommodation;~~
- ~~Promoting office development and a new business quarter centred on the railway station;~~
- ~~Providing new infrastructure (including a new river crossing) and a mechanism to deliver these by both public and developer contributions.~~
- ~~Improving non-car accessibility including new bus and railway stations, public transport priority where capacity allows, improved pedestrian, and cycle access/parking facilities;~~
- ~~Providing higher quality and safe parking provision targeted at shoppers and visitors rather than long stay parkers;~~
- ~~Promoting better connections within the centre and between the centre, the river and the railway station;~~
- ~~Enhancing the public realm by street improvement, public art and the reduction of traffic in the High Street, St Paul's Square and elsewhere;~~
- ~~Celebrating the town's heritage, civic and cultural assets;~~
- ~~Creating safe, attractive public spaces where people will want to spend their leisure time;~~
- ~~Ensuring that where appropriate, new development incorporates sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy.~~

The approach being taken by the Council as set out in the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan is an essential part of the Council's core strategy for the Borough.

POLICY CP16 - BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE

The regeneration of the town centre will involve significant structural change, infrastructure improvements and mixed use developments that together will ensure the creation of a bustling, prosperous and safe town centre which is a more efficient, vibrant and attractive focus for the Borough and its hinterland.

The town centre is the preferred location for new retail development and other forms of development that attract a lot of people, such as leisure and entertainment, offices, arts, culture and tourism.

RETAIL ISSUES

The town centre's ability to provide a strong retail focus in the borough is crucial to the strategy set out in the Area Action Plan and must be secured in relation to the nature and scale of retail development occurring elsewhere.

The East of England Plan sets out a regional structure of retail centres, with major regional centres as the highest order centres and regional centres at the next level down. Bedford is defined as a regional centre. Local Development Documents* are expected to define the hierarchy of centres below this level that complete the structure of retail provision in their area.

In order to gain a clear and up to date assessment of retailing in the Borough, the Council commissioned a study by GVA Grimley in 2005. This showed the following.

- In terms of trade draw, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Peterborough and Cambridge are Bedford's key competing centres. All these centres are set to enhance their retail offer further, with major new retail schemes planned which will strengthen their role.
- The major threats to the town centre arise from the continued expansion of larger, regional shopping centres and from the existing stock of 'out of centre' retail provision in Bedford.
- Bedford remains a vital and viable centre and has benefited from significant environmental improvements.
- The capacity analysis identifies significant scope for additional convenience goods shopping floorspace of about 6,000 sq.m. net by 2011.
- There is a clear quantitative and qualitative need for about 30,000 sq.m. net of additional comparison goods floorspace by 2011, increasing to about 47,000 sq.m. net by 2016, which should be focused in the town centre.

The Retail Study of 2005 ~~by GVA Grimley undertaken for the Council~~ confirms that Bedford town centre **should** remain s the main focus of retailing in the Borough. In order to maintain and enhance its role, it is important that the Primary Shopping Area of the town centre continues to be the preferred location for new development. **The Primary Shopping Area is defined in the Town Centre Area Action Plan.**

Below this level, the research identifies Kempston as performing the role of a district centre. Below the district centre, the Council has identified key service centres as local centres (small groups of shops). Generally, new retail development needs to be of a scale appropriate for the centre to promote internal competition and linked trips and to ensure consistency with transport networks. The hierarchy is stated in Policy CP17.

The Wixams new settlement is a planned comprehensive development of 4,500 houses located in Bedford Borough and Mid Bedfordshire. The adopted development brief recognises that the settlement has the potential to extend into additional areas of land beyond the settlement core. This settlement is expected to include shopping and other community facilities and thus once this development has taken place, The Wixams will become an important retail centre. The Wixams will therefore become a key part of the retail hierarchy for the Borough, and its status in the policy hierarchy will need to be reviewed as the settlement grows.

POLICY CP17 - RETAIL HIERARCHY

The retail hierarchy is as follows :

- i) Bedford town centre (Regional Centre)
- ii) Kempston (District centre)
- iii) Growth Area Key service centres and other Growth Area local centres (local centres)
- iv) Rural Key service centres (local centres)
- v) Other **defined** retail centres.

The preferred location for **large-scale** new retail development (**in excess of 1,000 square metres net floorspace**) will be the Primary Shopping Area of Bedford town centre. All New retail development **in the centres defined in i) to v) above other defined centres** should be consistent in scale with the size and character of the centre and its role in the hierarchy.

DISTINCTIVENESS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

SENSE OF PLACE

The Council's ambition is to generate a positive and, as far as possible, a distinctive sense of place. A sense of place will differentiate the borough from other areas in terms of character and design quality, creating a strong identity that will influence investment and where people will want to live, work and spend their leisure time.

Creating a sense of place will involve accentuating the Borough's best features, ensuring that design standards of development are consistently high, conserving the built, natural and cultural heritage and linking this with the image-building activities of the Borough Council and Renaissance Bedford*.

The character of the Borough is not such that a single sense of place can be defined or created in terms of the built environment. The urban areas, town centre, and discrete parts of the rural area will be encouraged to establish their own personality with reference to the noteworthy. The scale and form of buildings and spaces, building details, materials, boundary treatments, landscape, access and parking are all elements which contribute to distinctive development. It is important therefore that a starting point for new development should be a thorough understanding of the context within which it will sit.

In certain locations, the immediate setting may give few clues from which to draw inspiration, yet reinforcing an unsatisfactory form of development is not acceptable. In such cases it may be appropriate to look further afield for inspiration.

DESIGNING IN QUALITY

Design quality is also a key factor in creating sustainable development. The Council is committed to achieving good design in all new development and has published a number of development briefs, design guides and design codes for the major development sites in the Borough. These contain urban design principles with which new development is expected to comply. Design codes have been used to ensure that new development draws from local character to create places which are locally distinctive. **Innovation in design is encouraged.**

If new development is to be sustainable, greater emphasis needs to be given to its integration with non-car modes of transport whilst ensuring that buildings and spaces are accessible by all members of the community. Good design

also has a role to play in planning out crime and enhancing community safety and the Council has prepared a design guide to assist that process (the Bedfordshire Community Safety Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document*).

In considering the impact of development on the environment, pollution, air quality, noise, groundwater, light and land contamination will all need to be taken into account and mitigation measures applied where appropriate.

POLICY CP24 - DESIGNING IN QUALITY

All new development should:

- i) be of the highest design quality in terms of both architecture and landscape; and,
- ii) have regard to good practice in urban design; and,
- iii) fully consider the context within which it will sit and the opportunities to enhance the character and quality of an area and local distinctiveness; and,
- iv) ~~respect the character of~~ **preserve and where appropriate enhance** conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments and listed buildings; and,
- v) be fully accessible by all members of the community; and,
- vi) incorporate measures to promote crime prevention and community safety; and,
- vii) address sustainable design principles including renewable energy resources, energy efficiency, recycling, and sustainable construction practices and
 - mitigate against the effects of any pollution including air quality, noise, groundwater, light and land contamination;
 - improve the character and quality of the area.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green infrastructure includes recreation and sports facilities, pathways and routes, natural and historic sites, canals and waterspaces, accessible countryside and other open areas that contribute to the character of towns and villages. It is required to enhance the quality of life for present and future residents and visitors and to deliver 'liveability' for sustainable communities.

Spatially green infrastructure is important in creating and connecting quality environments both in and beyond the urban area and to provide leisure opportunities for Borough Residents and visitors.

The green infrastructure Consortium is a multi-disciplinary group of professionals working in partnership at the county level to assist the development of green infrastructure policy.

In 2006 the consortium commissioned consultants to draw together existing green infrastructure information and produce a strategic green infrastructure plan at the county scale. As a desk exercise, the purpose of the countywide green infrastructure plan is to identify strategic assets and opportunities and inform more detailed green infrastructure planning at the district and borough levels.

Bedford Borough Council has embraced the need for a more detailed understanding of local need for greenspace by appointing consultants to undertake a PPG17/greenspace study. The primary purpose is twofold:

- to develop local standards for open space provision for inclusion in the Bedford Development Framework; and
- to inform a local greenspace strategy that will guide the location and nature of new provision as well as guide investment in and management of existing assets.

In time the opportunity exists to broaden this study to take in additional elements of green infrastructure at the more local level.

The Borough Council supports in principle the Bedford to Milton Keynes canal project along a route that would bring waterway traffic through the town. As well as linking Bedford to the regional waterway network, the canal would represent an additional focus for green infrastructure through the heart of Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale. A concept route is shown on the Key Diagram, which takes account of the provision made for the canal route in the approved masterplan for the Wootton strategic development.

Policy CPXX Green Infrastructure

Existing green infrastructure of both local and strategic importance will be protected from development.

Where appropriate, development will provide green infrastructure in accordance with adopted local standards. Where provision on site is not possible or preferred, a contribution towards off-site provision or where appropriate, enhancement will be required.

Both on site and off site provision/enhancement will be made with regard to the priorities identified in the Council's greenspace strategy.

As a contribution to the greenspace network, tourism and the vitality of the town centre, the creation of the Bedford to Milton Keynes canal will be supported.

Where necessary and appropriate the council will seek the use of planning

obligations to secure a contribution towards the cost of future management and maintenance of green infrastructure.

Green Infrastructure

Spatially, this is important in creating and connecting quality environments both in and beyond the urban area. It is an essential element of infrastructure that supports healthy, sustainable and inclusive communities and improves quality of life.

Green infrastructure includes recreational and sports facilities, pathways and routes, natural and historic sites, canals and water spaces, accessible countryside (MKSM) and other open areas which contribute to the character of towns and villages.

The Borough Council supports in principle the Bedford to Milton Keynes canal project along a route that would bring waterway traffic through the town. As well as linking Bedford to the regional waterway network, the canal would represent an additional focus for green infrastructure through the heart of Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale. A concept route is shown on the Key Diagram, which takes account of the provision made for the canal route in the approved master plan for the Wootton strategic development.

POLICY CP13 – GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The landscape and character of the Borough will be conserved and enhanced. Management measures will be required where new development or activities are proposed in the rural area.

Green infrastructure of both local and strategic importance will be protected from development.

As a contribution to the green space network, tourism and the vitality of the town centre, the creation of a Milton Keynes to Bedford canal will be supported.

Development will be expected to provide appropriate additional new or enhance existing green infrastructure in accordance with the priorities identified in a green space strategy. All residential development will provide green infrastructure **where appropriate** in accordance with the adopted local standards.

Where such provision on site is not possible or appropriate, a contribution towards off-site provision will be required and used in accordance with priorities identified in the greenspace strategy

Environmental and CULTURAL HERITAGE

In addition to ensuring new development of the highest quality, it is also important that the Borough's heritage is protected for its own sake. This includes ancient monuments, listed buildings, historic parks and gardens and conservation areas (and the county Historic Landscape Characterisation database may be of assistance) but also extends to the consideration of other aspects of landscape and cultural heritage.

The Borough has a diverse cultural heritage which in turn makes the Borough the place it is. The area has a rich prehistoric, Roman and medieval heritage which contains nationally important sites of all these periods. Bedford itself is a historic town which grew originally around one of the few crossing points on the River Great Ouse and expanded considerably with the industrial revolution and the coming of the railway. Much of that industrial heritage has disappeared as the town has moved away from heavy industry and manufacturing to service and high-tech industries. Individual communities such as Stewartby (brickmaking), Shortstown (airships), Harrold and Odell (leather working) have strong associations with the Borough's industrial past.

In addition to the historical heritage a significant part of what makes the Borough distinctive is the diversity of its population. This to a large extent reflects the industrial heritage, with people moving to the area to work in local industry throughout the last century. Today there are large Italian, Polish, Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Irish and black Caribbean populations in addition to those that have been here longer. and This is reflected in its Bedford's shopping, places of worship, community facilities, clubs and cultural events.

POLICY CP25 – HERITAGE

Development will be required to protect and where appropriate enhance:

- i) the character of conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, listed buildings and other important historic or archaeological features; and,
- ii) the Borough's environmental and cultural assets including its landscape, in order to underpin sense of place, cultural identity and promote quality of life.

LANDSCAPE

The Borough has a varied landscape character. The clay vale, Greensand Ridge and Ouse valley all contribute to giving the Borough its sense of place. For example, the underlying limestone geology of the Ouse valley gives rise to the distinct character of the stone villages in the north west of the Borough. Landscape character assessment is a tool which can be used to understand the important features that make a landscape distinctive. Landscape Character Assessment is a tool which can be used to understand the important features that make a landscape distinctive. A broad countywide Landscape Character Assessment had been produced and more detailed

Borough and District assessments are being prepared. The more detailed Landscape Character Assessments will identify the features that typify each character area and sub-area in the Borough and as such they will be a key influence on the design and location of new development.

Landscape enhancement is an important issue in the rural area of the Borough where there are smaller villages and the impact of development could have a detrimental impact on the landscape if not appropriately controlled. It is therefore important to consider the impact of development on the landscape at both the macro and micro scale by considering views, the need for screening and the impact on existing landscape features.

The clay vale to the south has in recent times been impacted by the dual activities of mineral extraction and landfill and is now the subject of a major enhancement initiative through its designation as the Forest of Marston Vale. Continued landscape and environmental restoration of the Marston Vale is advocated to improve the area characterised by brick making and mineral extraction. As this area is within the Growth Area, development has the potential to contribute significantly to the enhancement of landscape character. It is expected that detailed policies will be brought forward in other development plan documents to define the area within which development contributions will be sought.

~~Policy CP26 sets down a series of criteria which will be used to consider the impact of new development on the landscape.~~

~~POLICY CP26 – LANDSCAPE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT~~

~~New development should protect and where possible enhance the quality and character of the landscape. All proposals will be expected to satisfy the following criteria:~~

- ~~i) The nature and scale of the development is appropriate within the wider landscape; and,~~
- ~~ii) Long, middle and short distance views are not adversely affected; and,~~
- ~~iii) Important landscape features are preserved and enhanced; and,~~
- ~~iv) Adverse effects on the landscape are mitigated; and,~~
- ~~v) Planting schemes are appropriate in terms of design and the species proposed.~~

~~The Marston Vale will be the focus for landscape enhancement and restoration and the Council will continue to support the Forest of Marston Vale.~~

~~POLICY CP26 - LANDSCAPE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT~~

The landscape and character of the Borough will be conserved and where appropriate enhanced.

The Marston Vale will be the focus for landscape enhancement and

restoration and the Council will continue to support the Forest of Marston Vale.

New development should protect and where appropriate enhance the quality and character of the landscape. The nature and scale of development should be appropriate within the wider landscape.

Management measures will be required where new development or activities are proposed in the rural area.

BIODIVERSITY

~~There has been a dramatic reduction in biodiversity in the East of England over recent years.~~ In the last century there has been a dramatic increase in development and a resultant loss of biodiversity*. Conservation and enhancement of biodiversity* has come to be seen as an essential element of sustainable development. The Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Action Plan and Biodiversity Characterisation provide guidance for securing the future sustainability of the Borough's biodiversity* resource. It is important to protect designated sites (both biodiversity* and earth heritage sites) and where possible reduce the damage to and enhance biodiversity and earth heritage resources.

The sub-region's important environmental and cultural assets, some of which are of national or regional significance, need not only to be protected but also, where appropriate, enhanced and connected in a network of natural areas. This is dealt with in Policy CP13.

POLICY CP27 - BIODIVERSITY

The biodiversity and geodiversity of the Borough and in particular priority habitats, species and geodiversity features, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced.

Where harm to biodiversity and/or geodiversity is likely to be a result of development, appropriate mitigation and/or compensation will be required. Any replacement assets should be of a comparable or enhanced value.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND POLLUTION

Controlling potentially polluting developments and the location of sensitive developments in proximity to existing sources of pollution is a material planning consideration.

As a result of the monitoring of air quality, raised levels of nitrogen dioxide have been recorded in parts of the town centre and on the A421 at Great Barford associated with heavy traffic flows in these areas. This led the Council to declaring three Air Quality Management Areas*. Emissions of sulphur dioxide from the brickworks at Stewartby have resulted in the Council

(with Mid Beds District Council) declaring an Air Quality Management Area* in the Marston Vale.

More globally, there is a need to plan for climate change and to ensure that the buildings and spaces we design today will still function satisfactorily in the future and will neither be affected by, nor exacerbate flooding. In addition, an integral part of sustainable development* is the ~~incorporation of renewable energy, recycling, measures to save energy and the use of sustainable practices in the construction of new buildings.~~ reduction in carbon emissions, which can be achieved by measures to save energy and by incorporating renewable energy. Recycling and the use of sustainable practices in the construction of new buildings are also important in contributing to sustainability. Following a sustainable construction code such as that produced by the Building Research Establishment (BREEAM and EcoHomes) ~~or the Code for Sustainable Homes~~ can help demonstrate the sustainability of development.

The draft East of England Plan provides clear guidance and support for the use of policy to ensure that the effects of climate change are minimised. The plan also includes targets for renewable energy production and the management of waste.

Further detailed guidance on the following policy will be included in a supplementary planning document*. This will explain how the predicted carbon emissions of a proposed building and the effect of energy efficiency measures can be calculated. It may be appropriate to relax these requirements if it can be demonstrated that they would make development unviable or be contrary to other objectives of the Plan.

POLICY CP28 - CLIMATE CHANGE AND POLLUTION

The Council will ~~expect~~ require development to:

- i) Minimise the emission of pollutants into the wider environment; and,
- ii) ~~Where there is a proven need for such development, locate potentially polluting development in areas which minimise the impact on sensitive uses such as housing, schools and hospitals; and,~~
- iii) Have regard to cumulative impacts of development proposals on air quality, in particular in relation to air quality management areas; and,
- iv) Minimise the consumption and use of energy, including fossil fuels by design and choice of materials; and,
- v) ~~Incorporate renewable energy production equipment to provide at least 10% of predicted energy requirements in all new development above a threshold of 1,000 sq m or 50 dwellings~~ Achieve a 10% reduction in predicted carbon emissions (below the normal requirement of the Building Regulations) in all new residential development and above a threshold of 500 sq m in new non-residential development; and,
- vi) ~~Developers are encouraged to~~ Follow a sustainable construction code

such as that produced by the Building Research Establishment (BREEAM and EcoHomes) or the Code for Sustainable Homes and achieve a rating of at least 'very good'; and,

- vii) Utilise sustainable construction techniques; and,
- viii) Incorporate facilities for recycling to minimise the use of water and waste; and,
- ix) Limit any adverse effects on water quality, reduce water consumption and minimise the risk of flooding.

Developers will be expected to submit a sustainability statement and energy audit with proposals for development.

DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION

INFRASTRUCTURE

Aspirations to increase the scale and pace of housing and employment development and achieve sustainable growth cannot be fully realised without a range of supporting infrastructure. Infrastructure can include transport links such as roads, rail links and footpaths, green infrastructure such as sports facilities and open spaces and community infrastructure such as library services, places of worship or village halls.

Alongside contributions achieved through development, public investment from national government is critical to the delivery of infrastructure. Government must fulfil its role in the delivery of infrastructure if growth at the required rate is to be achieved.

Transport Infrastructure

The Borough Council has no direct responsibilities for the condition or provision of transport and the role of this plan is to support the plans, policies and programmes of other agencies.

Strategic transport infrastructure is critical to the implementation of the growth proposals in the Borough. Bedford has suffered poor connectivity to the strategic network, congestion and reliance upon the car. This longstanding infrastructure deficit hampers accessibility, safety and convenience. It also suppresses investment to the disbenefit of the local economy and frustrates public transport improvements. The early implementation of strategic infrastructure projects is therefore critical to the growth agenda.

Bedfordshire County Council promotes more local schemes through the Local Transport Plan*. The emerging plan (*LTP2*) sets out the strategy and programme which seek to prepare for growth, support the economy, **manage transport assets**, manage congestion, enhance access, make travel safer and improve air quality ~~and manage transport assets~~. **It recognises the important role of walking, cycling and public transport.**

POLICY CP10 - STRATEGIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Borough Council will support the early provision of the following strategic infrastructure proposals:

- Great Barford Bypass (under construction)
- A421 improvements west of Bedford including M1 junction 13
- Thameslink 2000
- East-West rail scheme (Oxford to Bedford)

- National Cycle Network routes

Policy CP11 - LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

The Borough Council supports the objectives, strategy and programme set out in the Local Transport Plan (LTP2) *(when finalised)*, and expects that the following projects will be incorporated in the programme and implemented at the earliest opportunity:

- Bedford Western Bypass
- Park and Ride sites and services
- ~~New river crossing – Batts Ford bridge~~
- Bedford town centre ~~road network and system~~ improvements, including river bridge.

The Council will also support the following developer led initiatives:

- A6 realignment in association with the Wixams development
- The Wixams railway station
- The re-provision of Bedford railway station

POLICY CP12 - ACCESSIBILITY

To encourage sustainable modes of transport and reduce reliance on the car, development will be located, designed and include facilities which provide convenient access to local services by foot, cycle and public transport.

Community Infrastructure

The Local Plan* 2002 provides that the major strategic development sites deliver an appropriate range of new or enhanced infrastructure to enable residents to have suitable access to services, facilities and utilities. These requirements are or will be secured through a combination of planning conditions and statutory legal agreements. Other developments arising during the plan period, for example in the town centre, will also need to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to address community needs.

The need to provide community infrastructure may arise when development proposals either individually or cumulatively create a need for additional or improved provision. Developers will be expected to address the impacts of their proposals either through the provision of facilities on site as part of the new development or improve facilities in the surrounding area. Requirements will be related in scale and kind to the development proposed.

Where the combined impact of a number of developments creates the need for new or improved infrastructure the Council will consider pooling contributions to allow the infrastructure to be secured in a fair and equitable way.

Those matters which may give rise to the need for contributions may include but are not limited to:

o Roads, foot and cycleways, public transport facilities and services.	o Community facilities (meeting halls, library services and places of worship)
o Schools/education	o Healthcare facilities
o Green infrastructure	o Affordable housing
o Drainage facilities	o Play provision
o Public art	o Sport and recreation provision
o Public access and rights of way	o Renewable energy initiatives
o The historic environment	o CCTV
o Public realm	o Crime and disorder initiatives

POLICY CP14 - DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

Where implementation of a development would individually or cumulatively create a need to provide additional or improved infrastructure, amenities or facilities or would exacerbate an existing deficiency in their provision, the developer will be expected to make or contribute towards such provision by means of planning condition or legal obligation.

~~The growth proposals represent a step change in the scale and pace of development in the Borough. The effort required to achieve this extends beyond the responsibilities and resources of the Borough Council, for instance in relation to the provision of strategic infrastructure and the effect that the condition of the national economy has on the level of investment activity. In these circumstances, the Council must seek to manage such risks to delivery of the plan that this implies.~~

~~The Council's proposals need to be flexible enough to respond to changing circumstances surrounding the implementation of the strategy. Government now encourages a plan, monitor and manage approach to planning. The plan's objectives and policies will be monitored through an Annual Monitoring Report which will be submitted each year to the Government. These reports will monitor progress against key indicators and targets. The report will reflect the success of the plan and show if targets are being met. As the policies of the plan make a clear distinction between the Bedford Growth Area and the rural area, the monitoring of the policies will also be undertaken on this basis, rather than on a parish basis, as has been the case in the past. Further details are contained in the implementation and monitoring framework which also sets out how the policies will be implemented (Appendix F). If monitoring indicates that targets are not being met, consideration will be given to amending the Local Development Scheme* and reviewing Local Development Documents* as appropriate.~~

PLAN MONITOR AND MANAGE

The identification of part of the Borough as a growth area brings with it a requirement to achieve a step change in the pace of development. The Council is already taking active steps to achieve this as far as it is able by allocating and granting planning permission for sites identified in the Adopted Local Plan* 2002. These sites must now be given the opportunity to play their part in delivering the growth and infrastructure required in the Borough. The effort required to deliver this step change however, extends beyond the responsibilities and resources of the Borough Council, for example in relation to the provision of strategic infrastructure and the effect that the condition of the national economy has on the level of investment activity and the local housing market. In addition landowners and developers must be proactive in bringing forward land and implementing proposals. In this context and to help accelerate the pace of development the government has provided additional resources through the Growth Area Fund and supported the setting up of a Local Delivery Vehicle "Bedford Renaissance* ". The Council welcomes this assistance and is working with Renaissance Bedford to speed delivery of houses and jobs.

The East of England Plan recognises that development in the region will be dependent upon the delivery of essential infrastructure and the maintenance of a satisfactory relationship between housing provision and job growth. In these circumstances it will be particularly important to track the alignment between the delivery of infrastructure, jobs and homes. The Council will adopt a plan, monitor and manage approach to the provision of new development keeping under review progress towards meeting regional targets.

The plan's objectives and policies will be monitored through an Annual Monitoring Report which will be submitted each year to the Government. The Annual Monitoring report will assess the success of the plan and show if targets are being met. In particular it will monitor progress against the key indicators and targets which are set out in the plan's monitoring and implementation framework (see table 2 of Appendix X). Appendix X also sets out how the policies will be implemented (table1). If monitoring indicates that targets are not being met, consideration will be given to amending the Local Development Scheme* and reviewing Local Development Documents* as appropriate.

POLICY CP15 – PLAN MONITOR AND MANAGE

The Council will adopt a plan, monitor and manage approach to the provision of new development. In particular this will include:

~~For housing development~~

- Giving priority to the delivery of existing housing commitments (as allocated in the Local Plan 2002) and the proposals coming forward in the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan and where necessary making further allocations in line with the sequential test outlined in

Policy CPX

- Monitoring the ~~delivery in relation to~~ progress against the requirements of the East of England Plan and the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy.
- Monitoring the provision of strategic infrastructure and the growth of the local economy and the impact this has on the strength of the local housing market.
- Undertaking an Annual Monitoring exercise to indicate the priority to be given to the review/preparation of Local Development Documents.

~~For employment developments:~~

- ~~Monitoring the supply and provision of business premises suitable to secure inward investment.~~
- ~~Monitoring delivery in relation to requirements.~~

APPENDICES

Appendix A **NB MAP TO BE UPDATED!!!!!!!**

KEY DIAGRAM



Appendix B. Background

The Bedford Development Framework

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has introduced a new system for the preparation of development plans. Under the new system there will be two key elements to the Development plan:

- The Regional Spatial Strategy* (RSS) incorporating, in Bedford's case, the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy, prepared by the regional planning body and;
- The Local Development Framework*, to be known locally as the Bedford Development Framework, to be prepared by the Borough Council.

The new system will gradually replace the current regional, county and local plans.

The Bedford Development Framework will be made up of a number of documents. The documents which the Council proposes to prepare by the end of 2007 are set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme* and summarised below:

- *The Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan* - setting out the spatial vision for the Borough as a whole and the objectives and strategic policies to guide development.
- *Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan* - setting out a vision for the town centre along with allocations and policies to implement that vision.
- *Statement of Community Involvement** - giving the Council's approach to involving the community and stakeholders in the production of the Bedford Development Framework.

Both the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan and Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan are termed Development Plan Documents* as they will form part of the new development plan*. Along with the Statement of Community Involvement* they must be prepared in accordance with a process which includes examination by an independent Inspector who will produce a binding report.

In addition, the Development Framework will also include Supplementary Planning Documents* providing detailed guidance on a number of policy areas. Three of these have recently been approved by the Council:

- *The Bedfordshire Community Safety Design Guide* - identifying the design principles which will assist in planning out crime.
- *Land north of Bromham Road Biddenham: Design Guide* - giving detailed guidance for this major site.
- *Shopfronts and Advertisements in Conservation Areas Design Guide* - covering design of shopfronts and adverts in conservation areas.

The final element of the Development Framework is the Annual Monitoring Report which will monitor progress against key indicators and targets and if plans need to be changed the Local Development Scheme* can be adjusted.

The Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan

The purpose of the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan is to provide the basis for decisions about the planning of the Borough by setting out a spatial vision and spatial objectives; from these are developed the policies and proposals required to deliver the vision. In addition to the policies the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan also contains a Key Diagram to illustrate the key features of the plan.

Underlying the process of preparing the plan is a simple set of questions that have helped to structure the plan.

- Where are we now?
What is the Borough like today and what are its key social, physical and economic characteristics? What are the main issues facing the Borough? This analysis forms the basis of the spatial portrait.
- Where would we like to be?
Looking forward to the end of the plan period, how do we hope the Borough will have changed and developed? This forms the basis of the plan's vision and objectives.
- How do we get there?
The plan's policies are the means of delivering the vision.

The stage that the plan has now reached is known as the Preferred Option. It represents the Council's preferred way forward and has been produced following consultation with the community and stakeholders on the issues which the plan should cover and the possible options for addressing these.

The consultations included:

- A number of facilitated workshops for Members of the Citizens' Panel, Stakeholders and elected Council Members held in July to discuss the issues which the plan should address.
- Awareness raising through Bedford News, the Council's website and a leaflet distributed to a range of consultees seeking comments on the issues.
- Consultation on policy options document circulated to Council Members, local councils and other consultees outlining possible policy approaches.
- A specific consultation with Parish Councils on possible policy approaches for the rural areas, in particular the approach to be taken in developing a rural settlement hierarchy.

Appendix C: Table showing relationship between objectives, policies and saved policies

Plan policy		Related objective	Local Plan policy which will be replaced
CP1	Spatial Strategy	All	S1 urban policy
CP2	Sustainable development	2,8,10,11,12,13,14,15,	
CP3	Location of development	1,2,3,9	
CP4	Key service centres	1,9	S7 Rural Settlement Hierarchy
CP5	Scale and pace of housing development	1,4,9	H1 provision of housing land
CP6	Meeting housing needs	4	H32 mix and range of housing type and size
CP7	Affordable housing	4	H31 The provision of affordable housing
CP8	Job creation	1,5	E1 employment land supply
CP9	Employment land	1,5	E12 loss of employment
CP10	Strategic transport infrastructure	8,13	T1 strategic road network
CP11	Local Transport Plan	8	
CP12	Accessibility	8,12	
CP13	Green Infrastructure	11,13	S5 Marston Vale
CP14	Developer Contributions	13	S9 Facilities in tandem with development
CP15	Plan monitor and manage	1,5,8	
CP16	Bedford Town Centre	6,7	
CP17	Retail hierarchy	6	SH2 shopping development in the town centre
CP18	Non key service centres	9	S7 Rural settlement hierarchy
CP19	Settlement Policy Areas	9,11	S6 settlement policy areas
CP20	The Countryside	4,9,11	
CP21	Housing development in the rural area	4,5,9	
CP22	Affordable housing to meet local needs in the rural area	4,9	H30 Local Needs Housing in rural areas
CP23	Employment in the rural area	5, 9	
CP24	Designing in Quality	10,12,14,15	
CP25	Heritage	11,14	
CP26	Landscape protection and enhancement	11	NE14 Area of Great Landscape value
CP27	Biodiversity	11	
CP28	Climate Change	15,12	BE6 Renewable energy

Appendix D: Regional planning policy

RSS - East of England Plan

The Draft East of England Plan was published in December 2004; it is a draft revision to the existing Regional Spatial Strategy*. Following the publication of the draft, the East of England Regional Assembly withdrew its endorsement of the plan principally due to concerns about infrastructure delivery. EERA remains committed to the policy content of the plan, subject to the infrastructure being provided to sustain the level of growth proposed. The plan is due to be finalised in late 2006. Once finalised, the Plan will cross-refer to the relevant Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy policies that affect the region.

The Plan contains planning policy for the whole of the east of England region, which incorporates the six counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk and the unitary authorities of Luton, Peterborough, Southend and Thurrock.

The Plan takes account of European and national planning policy, in particular the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan of 2002 which identified four growth areas. Three of these growth areas are within the East of England region and thus are key aspects of the Plan.

The vision of the document is 'to sustain and improve the quality of life for all people who live in, work in, or visit the region, by developing a more sustainable, prosperous and outward-looking region, while respecting its diversity and enhancing its assets'.

The objectives of the plan are:

1. Increase prosperity and employment growth to meet identified employment needs of the region, and achieve a more sustainable balance between workers and jobs.
2. Improve social inclusion and access to employment and services and leisure and tourist facilities among those who are disadvantaged.
3. Maintain and enhance cultural diversity while addressing the distinctive needs of different parts of the region.
4. Increase the regeneration and renewal of disadvantaged areas.
5. Deliver more integrated patterns of land use, movement, activity and development, including employment and housing.
6. Sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres.
7. Make more use of previously developed land and existing buildings, and use land more efficiently, in meeting future development needs.
8. Meet the region's identified housing needs, and in particular provide sufficient affordable housing.

9. Protect and enhance the built and historic environment and encourage good quality design and use of sustainable construction methods for all new development.
10. Protect and enhance the natural environment, including its biodiversity and landscape character.
11. Minimise the demand for use of resources, particularly water, energy supplies, minerals, aggregates, and other natural resources, whether finite or renewable, by encouraging efficient use, re-use, or use of recycled alternatives, and trying to meet needs with minimum impact.
12. Minimise the environmental impact of travel, encouraging the use of more environmentally friendly modes of transport, and widening choice of modes.
13. Ensure that infrastructure programmes, whether for transport, utilities or social infrastructure, will meet current deficiencies and development requirements; and that the responsible agencies commit the resources needed to implement these programmes and co-ordinate delivery with development.
14. Minimise the risk of flooding.

The Plan includes general policies for the region as a whole, policies relating to sub-regions and regional policies relating to specific topics. The East of England Plan tells us:

- Bedford is a key centre upon which development and change will be focused (SS2).
- Development in rural areas should be focused in market towns and thereafter in key service centres (SS9).
- Bedford/Kempston is a priority area for regeneration (SS11).
- Affordable housing must constitute at least 30% of housing supply (SS13).
- Bedford Borough is within the Bedford/Luton sub-area of the region.
- Job growth in Bedfordshire (in areas not covered by the growth area) will be 9,000 jobs in the period 2001-2021 (E2).
- Bedford is a regional retail centre (E9).
- Housing development in the Borough (outside of the Growth Area) will be 830 dwellings in the period 2001-2021 (H1).
- Bedford Borough is within the Bedfordshire Housing Strategy sub-region.
- Bedford is a regional interchange centre where significant enhancement of public transport will be sought (T2).
- The Plan commits to the duelling of the A421 from Bedford to the M1 2011-2015.

- The Plan proposes to investigate the possibility of an east-west rail link from Bedford to Cambridge 2011-2015.
- The Plan is committed to the Bedford Western bypass in the period 2000-2005.
- The Plan proposes that the Wixams railway station is investigated 2000-2010.
- The Borough is mainly within the landscape character area of the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire claylands.
- In the Growth Area, significant new woodland should be provided (ENV4).
- Developments of over 1,000sqm or 50 dwellings will require an energy consumption statement (ENV8).

The above bullet points are a summary of the key aspects of the Plan as they relate to Bedford Borough; they do not represent a summary of the Plan as a whole and do not cover every topic covered by the Plan.

Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy

The Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy was published in March 2005. It represents an alteration to the existing Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England that was adopted in March 2001.

The strategy covers a sub-region that includes the Growth Areas of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough to the north, Northampton to the west, Milton Keynes, Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale to the east and Aylesbury, Leighton Linlade, Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis to the south.

The purpose of the sub-regional strategy is to:

- Provide strategic guidance on the scale, location and timing of development and associated employment, transport and other infrastructure to 2021 and the necessary delivery mechanisms; and
- To provide a longer-term perspective for the sub-region to 2031 in the form of uncommitted planning assumptions subject to later review.
- Provide guidance for local authorities in the production of their planning documents and other bodies in the production of their plans.

The document sets out new house building figures for parts of Bedfordshire. These figures are to form part of the overall housing figures for the region to be contained within the RSS* (East of England Plan) when it is finalised.

The objectives of the sub-regional strategy are:

1. To achieve a major increase in the number of new homes provided in the area, meeting needs for affordable housing and a range of types and sizes of market housing.

2. To provide for a commensurate level of economic growth and developing skills in the workforce, particularly in the high value, knowledge-based sectors.
3. To locate development in the main urban areas to support urban renaissance, regeneration of deprived areas, recycling of land and sustainable patterns of travel.
4. To ensure that development contributes to an improved environment, by requiring high standards of design and sustainable construction, protecting and enhancing environmental assets (including landscape and biodiversity) and providing green space and related infrastructure (green infrastructure).
5. To meet existing infrastructure needs and provide for requirements generated by new development, by investing in new and improved infrastructure, by planning to reduce the need to travel and by creating a shift to more sustainable mode of travel.
6. To create sustainable communities by ensuring that economic, environmental, social and cultural infrastructure needs are met in step with growth.

The key priorities for Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale are:

- Revitalising the town centre of Bedford and enhancing retail, cultural and leisure facilities.
- Developing the local economy to provide an increase in employment by fostering a range of growth sectors, particularly the knowledge-based sectors.
- Creating a focus for offices in the town centre.
- Securing a higher rate of housing delivery through the implementation of existing commitments.
- Reducing the need to travel by private vehicle, specifically including the revitalisation of Bedford bus station.
- Providing new cultural and heritage facilities and attractions in Bedford and enhancing existing to develop heritage-focused tourism.
- Environmental regeneration of the Marston Vale and enhance green infrastructure.

In terms of implications for Bedford Borough, the Plan tells us:

- Bedford is a major location for growth.
- The role of Bedford as a key centre should be strengthened through economic regeneration and growth.
- In Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale the priorities will be urban renaissance, improved economic performance and harnessing the potential of the northern Marston Vale.

- In Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale, 19,500 new homes are to be provided 2001-2021; the suggested split is 16,270 within Bedford Borough and 3,230 in Mid-Bedfordshire (SP1, BLP1).
- The Growth Area has sufficient land already committed for housing development to meet the requirements identified up to 2021, as a result of existing planning permissions and local plan allocations.
- Achieving high levels of dwelling provision will require accelerated economic performance and the delivery of key local infrastructure (BLP1).
- In Bedford Borough and Mid Bedfordshire District employment growth of 19,800 jobs will be sought; this equates to 11,400 in Bedford Borough and 8,400 in Mid Bedfordshire (although these figures are to be reviewed through the process of finalising the Draft East of England Plan).
- The east-west rail link from Oxford to Bedford will be considered by the Department for Transport Rail Strategy 2007-2016.
- The east-west rail link from Bedford to Cambridge/Stansted will be considered by the Department for Transport Rail Strategy in the future.
- The A421 improvements from the M1 to Bedford are committed for the period 2007-2011.
- The A421 Great Barford bypass is committed for the period 2002-2006.
- New station at The Wixams is under consideration 2002-2011.
- The A6 improvements at The Wixams is committed 2002-2006.
- The Bedford Western bypass (southern section) is committed 2002-2011.
- The Elstow Park and Ride is committed 2002-2006 (*now in operation*).
- The Bedford Western bypass (North Bromham section) to be delivered by developer contributions is under consideration 2007-2011.
- The quality bus corridors are under consideration for 2002-2011.
- The Biddenham Loop Park and Ride is under consideration for 2007-2011.
- The Park and Ride at Clapham is under consideration 2007-2011.

COMMUNITY PLAN*

Community Plan theme	Spatial Issues
Promoting community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing out crime as a means of promoting community safety • Reducing the fear of crime through support for CCTV
Providing housing and building communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering new homes across a range of tenures • Promoting balanced communities and housing markets • Meeting housing needs including special needs • Maintaining the quality of existing residential areas • Utilising empty homes • Keeping jobs and homes in balance • Building in high standards of design and energy efficiency • Ensuring that infrastructure is available to meet the needs of new communities.
Improving the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving the community in improving the environment • Ensuring that new development is based on sustainable principles • Creating a network of green spaces • Protecting the heritage and cultural value of the built environment • Protecting the natural environment, biodiversity and landscape.
Improving health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the development of local health services including GP surgeries.
Strengthening the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing forward sites to encourage companies to locate in Bedford • Supporting tourism related activities • Delivering infrastructure to support the government growth agenda • Improving connections to the strategic transport networks and reducing peak hour congestion in the urban area
Developing learning opportunities and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting access to education, training, education and employment.
Creating better transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating better, more sustainable, integrated transport networks for the Borough of Bedford. • Improve transport networks through for cars bus, rail cycle and walking. • Provide park and ride
Promoting leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting leisure and cultural development • Providing an infrastructure for leisure which in turn helps foster a sense of community.
Including everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating mixed and balanced sustainable communities • Providing the basis for a diverse economy • Providing infrastructure to enable all people to take their place in the community • Consulting widely

Appendix E: Glossary

Air Quality Management Area	An area where it is predicted that any one of the national air quality standards and objectives will not be achieved as required by Part 4 of the Environment Act 1995.
Allocations	Sites specifically identified on the proposals map for development
Bedford Partnership Board (Local Strategic Partnership)	A multi – agency group which brings together representatives from the statutory, voluntary and business sectors in an effort to produce a long term visionary plan for the Borough and its diverse communities
Bedford Town Centre Company Limited	Independent company formed with the object of promoting the prosperity and attractiveness of the town centre and through a subsidiary company managing the programmes associated with Bedford Business Improvement District.
Biodiversity	The variety of life on earth or in a specified region or area.
Business Improvement District	An area of the town centre where businesses have agreed to pay an extra levy on top of business rates to achieve the prosperity and attractiveness of that area of the town centre.
Community Plan	A sustainable community strategy for the Borough as required by the Local Government Act 2000
Core Strategy	The long-term spatial vision and strategy for the area, including the key strategic policies and proposals to deliver that vision.
Corporate Plan	Document setting out the Borough Council's vision for delivering high quality services to its citizens.
Designations	Areas shown on the Proposals Map to which specific policies apply (not allocations)
Development Plan	Under the Planning Acts, this is the prime consideration in the determination of planning applications. Under the new system it consists of all Development Plan Documents and the Regional Spatial Strategy
Development Plan Document (DPD)	Spatial planning document prepared by the planning authority that is subject to an independent public examination. They can cover a range of issues, and will set out the main spatial strategy, policies and proposals of the Council.
Geodiversity	The variety of rocks, fossils, minerals, landforms and soils along with the natural processes that shape the landscape.
Housing Requirement Study	An assessment of housing requirements in the Borough (published 2003)
Joint Economic Development Strategy	Produced by the Bedfordshire and Luton Economic development partnership, a joint strategy to stimulate the local economy and create new jobs in the County.
Local Development Documents (LDDs)	Generic term for documents that can be included in the Local Development Framework. Comprises Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the Statement of Community Involvement.
Local Development Framework (LDF)	A portfolio of Local Development Documents that provides the framework for delivering the spatial strategy of the area.
Local Development Scheme (LDS)	Rolling three-year project plan for the preparation of Local Development Documents
<i>Local Plan</i>	<i>Part of the Development Plan under the old system. Statutory district-wide document prepared under the old system that sets out land use policies and proposals for the area.</i>
Local Transport Plan	Produced by the Local Transport Authority (Bedfordshire County Council), a strategy and action plan for improving local transport provision.
<i>Planning Policy Guidance</i>	<i>Statements of Government policy on a range of issues – being replaced over time by Planning Policy Statements.</i>

Planning Policy Statement	New name for Planning Policy Guidance – see above.
Proposals Map	Illustrates policies and proposals in development plan documents.
Regional Economic Strategy	A framework for improving the Region’s economic performance produced by the East of England Development Agency
Regional Housing Strategy	Sets out the strategic direction for the delivery of housing in the East of England and informs affordable housing investment decisions.
<i>Regional Planning Guidance</i>	<i>Non-statutory guidance under the old system, approved by the Government setting out regional planning policy - being replaced by the Regional Spatial Strategy.</i>
Regional Spatial Strategy	A statutory document under the new system that replaces Regional Planning Guidance setting out regional spatial strategy and policies. New Local Development Documents will have to be in accordance with it.
Regional Transport Strategy	Produced as part of the Regional Spatial Strategy informed by the delivery programmes of the Highways and Rail Authorities.
Renaissance Bedford	An organisation set up to help deliver planned growth in the area.
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	Sets out the approach of the authority to involving the community in the preparation, alteration and review of Local Development Documents and in the consideration of significant planning applications.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	Environmental assessment of policies, plans and programmes required under the European SEA Directive 2001/42/EC
<i>Structure Plan</i>	<i>Part of the old Development Plan system which is now being phased out– It will be largely replaced when the East of England Plan is approved..</i>
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	Statutory documents that expand upon policies or proposals in Development Plan Documents. These replace Supplementary Planning Guidance.
<i>Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)</i>	<i>Non-statutory guidance prepared under the old system to expand upon policies and proposals in the Local Plan or Structure Plan. Being replaced by Supplementary Planning Documents.</i>
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	A social, economic and environmental appraisal of strategy, policies and proposals – required for the Regional Spatial Strategy, all Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. To be undertaken jointly with Strategic Environmental Assessment.
Sustainable Development	“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987)

Note – entries shown in *italics* relate to terms relating solely to the old planning system

Appendix F: Implementation and Monitoring Framework

NB LIST OF POLICIES TO BE UPDATED!!!!!!!!!!!!

This plan has been prepared by the Borough Council for the period 2001 - 2021 having had regard to the likelihood of available resources, the likely costs that may be incurred and the realistic view of what can be achieved in the timescale.

The Borough Council is aware that some policy aims cannot be achieved solely through the grant or refusal of planning permission. Table 1 below identifies which policies will require the coordination of multiple agencies to be achieved and includes delivery mechanisms and anticipated timescales. Some policies are intended to be ongoing throughout the life of the Plan and apply to all development proposals. As such it is not appropriate to set a timescale for their implementation.

Table 1 - Table of policies and related delivery agencies, mechanisms and timescales

Policy	Community Plan theme	Delivery agencies	Delivery mechanisms	Timescales
Policy CP1 – Spatial Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing housing and building communities Strengthening the economy 	All service providers	Service providers' strategies, Allocations DPD	None
Policy CP2 - Sustainable Development Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting community safety Improving the environment Creating better transport Promoting leisure 	Developers, Borough Council, Renaissance Bedford	Allocations DPD, Development Control Policies DPD	None
Policy CP3 - The Location of Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing housing and building communities Strengthening the economy 	All service providers	Allocations DPD	None
Policy CP4 - Key Service Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing housing and building communities Strengthening the economy 	All service providers	Allocations DPD, service providers' strategies	None
Policy CP5 - The Scale and Pace of Housing Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing housing and building communities 	Developers, RSLs, Renaissance Bedford	Allocations DPD	By 2021
Policy CP6 – Meeting Housing Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing housing and building communities 	Developers, RSLs	Development Control Policies DPD	None
Policy CP7 – Affordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing housing and building 	Developers, RSLs, Borough	RSL funding, Housing	None

Policy	Community Plan theme	Delivery agencies	Delivery mechanisms	Timescales
Housing in the Borough	communities	Council, Partners	Corporation	
Policy CP8 - The Creation of Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening the economy 	Developers, Borough Council, Renaissance Bedford, EEDA, BLEDP	Allocations DPD	By 2021
Policy CP9 - Employment Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening the economy 	Developers, Borough Council, Renaissance Bedford, EEDA, BLEDP	Allocations DPD	None
Policy CP10 - Strategic Transport Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating better transport 	Highways Agency, Rail companies, Renaissance Bedford		Great Barford Bypass - 2006 A421 - 2010 Thameslink 2000 - 2013 East-West rail – up to 2011
Policy CP11 - Local Transport Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating better transport 	Developers, Bedfordshire County Council, Renaissance Bedford	Local Transport Plan	Western Bypass - 2009 Park and Ride sites – subject to developer schemes Batts Ford bridge and town centre improvements – up to 2016 The Wixams A6 - 2007 The Wixams rail station – up to 2011 Bedford rail station – up to 2016
Policy CP12 - Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating better transport Including everyone 	Developers, Bedfordshire County Council	Allocations DPD, Development Control Policies DPD	None
Policy CP13 - Green Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the environment Promoting leisure 	Developers, Renaissance Bedford, Bedford Borough Council, Bedfordshire County Council, county-wide green infrastructure consortium	Allocations DPD, Development Control Policies DPD	None
Policy CP14 - Developer Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All themes 	Developers, Borough Council,		None

Policy	Community Plan theme	Delivery agencies	Delivery mechanisms	Timescales
		Renaissance Bedford		
Policy CP15 - Plan, Monitor and Manage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing housing and building communities Strengthening the economy 	Borough Council		None
Policy CP16 - Bedford Town Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All themes 	Developers, Renaissance Bedford	Town Centre Area Action Plan	None
Policy CP17 - Retail Hierarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening the economy 	Developers, Borough Council	Town Centre Area Action Plan, Development Control Policies DPD, Allocations DPD	None
Policy CP18 - Non-Key Service Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the environment 	Developers, Borough Council	Allocations DPD, Development Control Policies DPD	None
Policy CP19 - Settlement Policy Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the environment 	Developers, Borough Council	Allocations DPD, Development Control Policies DPD	None
Policy CP20 - The Countryside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the environment 	Borough Council	Development Control Policies DPD	None
Policy CP21 - Housing Development in the Rural Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing housing and building communities 	Developers, RSLs	Allocations DPD	None
Policy CP22 - Affordable Housing to Meet Local Needs in the Rural Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing housing and building communities 	Developers, RSLs, Borough Council	RSL funding, Housing Corporation	None
Policy CP23 - Employment in a Rural Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening the economy 	Developers	Allocations DPD	None
Policy CP24 - Designing In Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting community safety Improving the environment 	Developers	Development Control Policies DPD	None
Policy CP25 – Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the environment 	Developers	Development Control Policies DPD	None
Policy CP26 - Landscape Protection and Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the environment 	Developers	Development Control Policies DPD	None
Policy CP27 - Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the environment 	Developers	Development Control Policies DPD	None

Policy	Community Plan theme	Delivery agencies	Delivery mechanisms	Timescales
Policy CP28 - Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the environment Improving health 	Developers, all service providers Improving health	Climate Change SPD, Building Regulations	None

Upon adoption, this plan will be monitored on an annual basis through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR will be published each December and cover the previous financial year 1st April - 31st March.

Table 2 sets out how the Council proposes to monitor the effectiveness of the Plan in delivering its objectives. Each of the 16 objectives is to be delivered by a specific policy or policies in the plan. The table below sets out how each objective will be monitored in the AMR by setting a series of indicators. Many of the indicators in the table are already collected by the Council in the AMR. Where new indicators are proposed, they are marked as 'new'. The table also includes any relevant targets and milestones, the progress towards which will also be monitored.

Table 2 - Table of Plan objectives and related policies, indicators and targets

DPD Objective	DPD policies related to that objective	Associated targets	Indicators
1. Deliver the planned growth in Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale (current strategic allocations) to achieve a step change in the Borough's role in the region	CP1 Spatial Strategy CP3 Location of development CP4 Key service centres CP5 Scale and pace of housing development CP8 Job creation CP9 Employment land CP15 Plan, monitor and manage	CP3 target: Locate development according to the hierarchy stated CP4 target: Focus development in key service centres CP5 target: Housing development of 16,270 in the growth area between 2001-2021 CP8 target: Minimum of 11,400 jobs to be provided in the Borough by 2021	L4: Proportion of development within the growth area and rural area C2a: Housing Trajectory L14: Number of jobs created in the Borough
2. Ensure future development is based upon sustainable development principles	CP1 Spatial Strategy CP2 Sustainable development CP3 Location of development	CP3 target: Locate development according to the hierarchy stated	L4: Proportion of development within the growth area and rural area
3. Provide guidance on where future growth, if required, should occur (in the period up to 2021)	CP1 Spatial Strategy CP3 Location of development	CP3 target: Locate development according to the hierarchy stated	L4: Proportion of development within the growth area and rural area
4. Provide quality housing to meet current and future needs of all sectors of the community	CP1 Spatial Strategy CP5 Scale and pace of housing development CP6 Meeting housing needs CP7 Affordable housing CP20 The countryside CP21 Housing development in the rural area CP22 Affordable housing to meet local needs in the rural area	CP5 target: Housing development of 16,270 in the growth area between 2001-2021 CP6 target: Housing mix of size and type CP7 target: 30% affordable housing provision on sites of 15 units or over (0.5ha) and in villages of less than 3000 population, sites of 3 dwellings or over (0/1ha) CP21 target: Increase of 830 net dwellings in the rural area 2001-2021	C2a: Housing Trajectory C2d: Affordable housing completions

DPD Objective	DPD policies related to that objective	Associated targets	Indicators
5. Foster significant employment growth	CP1 Spatial Strategy CP8 Job creation CP9 Employment land CP15 Plan, monitor and manage CP21 Housing development in the rural area CP23 Employment in the rural area	CP8 target: Minimum of 11,400 jobs to be provided in the Borough by 2021 CP21 target: Increase of 830 net dwellings in the rural area 2001-2021 CP23 target: 9,000 jobs in the rural area of Bedfordshire 2001-2021	L14: Number of jobs created in the Borough C2a: Housing Trajectory C1a: Amount of floorspace developed for employment by type New: Jobs created in the rural area
6. Direct retail development to the most appropriate locations	CP1 Spatial Strategy CP16 Bedford town centre CP17 Retail hierarchy		C4a: Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development C4b: Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres
7. Foster the regeneration of Bedford town centre to enable it to fulfil a greater role within the region	CP1 Spatial Strategy CP16 Bedford town centre		L15: Percentage of vacant units within the primary shopping area of Bedford town centre L17: Footfall levels in the town centre
8. Support the delivery of coordinated transport improvements with the emphasis on non-car modes,	CP1 Spatial Strategy CP2 Sustainable development CP10 Strategic transport infrastructure		L3: Level of proposed transport infrastructure set out in the RSS and LTP2 that has been achieved

DPD Objective	DPD policies related to that objective	Associated targets	Indicators
improving east-west communications and achieving greater transport interchange	CP11 Local Transport Plan CP12 Accessibility CP15 Plan, monitor and manage		L23: Mode of transport to work
9. Encourage key rural communities to become more sustainable places to live and work	CP1 Spatial Strategy CP3 Location of development CP4 Key service centres CP5 Scale and pace of housing development CP18 Non key service centres CP19 Settlement policy areas CP20 The countryside CP21 Housing development in the rural area CP22 Affordable housing to meet local needs in the rural area CP23 Employment in the rural area	CP3 target: Locate development according to the hierarchy stated CP4 target: Focus development in key service centres CP5 target: Housing development of 16,270 in the growth area between 2001-2021 CP18 target: Development in the rural area to be confined to within settlement policy areas CP21 target: Increase of 830 net dwellings in the rural area 2001-2021 CP23 target: 9,000 jobs in the rural area of Bedfordshire 2001-2021	New: Level of services in rural area L11: Rural households within 13 minutes walk of an hourly bus service L4: Proportion of development within the growth area and rural area New: Proportion of development in the rural area outside of key service centres
10. Achieve high quality design that takes account of character and local distinctiveness, enables access and promotes community safety	CP1 Spatial Strategy CP24 Designing in quality		L20: Quality of new development in terms of design and landscaping and respecting local character L25: Planning permissions granted with conditions relating to good access provision for disabled people
11. Protect and enhance the	CP1 Spatial Strategy	CP13 target: All development to provide	L18: Amount of open space

DPD Objective	DPD policies related to that objective	Associated targets	Indicators
countryside and the quality and connectivity of green infrastructure in the Borough with particular emphasis on enhancing the Marston Vale	CP2 Sustainable development CP13 Green infrastructure CP19 Settlement policy areas CP20 The countryside CP25 Heritage CP26 Landscape protection and enhancement CP27 Biodiversity	green infrastructure in accordance with adopted local standards	in new housing developments granted planning permission New: Enhancements to the Marston Vale New: Development refused planning permission to protect the countryside. New: % of SSSIs in favourable condition.
12. Minimise the use of energy and encourage greater use of energy from renewable sources	CP1 Spatial Strategy CP2 Sustainable development CP12 Accessibility CP24 Designing in quality CP28 Climate change	CP28 target: Incorporate renewable energy production equipment to provide at least 10% of predicted energy requirements in all new developments above a threshold of 1,000sqm or 50 dwellings	C9: Renewable energy capacity installed by type
13. Provide a mechanism for the delivery of infrastructure (including health, education, transport, community, leisure and recreation facilities) in tandem with new development	CP1 Spatial Strategy CP2 Sustainable development CP10 Strategic transport infrastructure CP13 Green infrastructure		L3: Level of proposed transport infrastructure set out in the RSS and LTP2 that has been achieved New: Completed infrastructure schemes secured from planning permission legal agreements
14. Protect and enhance the	CP1 Spatial Strategy		L7: Listed buildings at risk

DPD Objective	DPD policies related to that objective	Associated targets	Indicators
Borough's built and cultural assets and the character of settlements and foster the development of the Borough as a destination for heritage and cultural tourism	CP2 Sustainable development CP14 Developer contributions CP24 Designing in quality CP25 Heritage		L20: Quality of new development in terms of design and landscaping and respecting local character New: Income from tourism as a % of total GDP
15. Protect the environment by minimising the risk of flooding and the effects of climate change and facilitating improvements in air quality and an increase in the use of renewable sources of energy	CP1 Spatial Strategy CP2 Sustainable development CP24 Designing in quality CP28 Climate change	CP28 target: Incorporate renewable energy production equipment to provide at least 10% of predicted energy requirements in all new developments above a threshold of 1,000sqm or 50 dwellings	C9: Renewable energy capacity installed by type C7: Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality L19: Designated air quality management areas
16. Involve the community in the decisions about the planning of the Borough so they can influence and shape such decisions	CP1 Spatial Strategy		New: Number of respondents to planning consultations

Table 3 sets out how the AMR will monitor the significant environmental, social and economic effects of the implementation of the plan (the significant effects were identified by the Sustainability Appraisal*). Each significant effect also has a related indicator. The purpose of monitoring significant effects is to identify any significant unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage. The table identifies what would be considered a significant unforeseen adverse effect that would trigger mitigation measures to be taken.

Table 3 – Table of significant effects and related indicators and mitigation measures

Significant effect identified by SA	How it will be monitored (indicator in AMR)	When should remedial action be considered	What action should be taken	Who is responsible for action
To reduce car journeys and congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic levels in the town centre • Length of cycle routes • Mode of transport to work • % households in urban area within 400m of 15 minute bus service • Rural households within 13 minutes walk of an hourly bus service 	When annual monitoring of indicator shows a consistent adverse trend that cannot be accounted for by any other external influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review policies in Plan with the aim of better achieving this sustainability objective. • Review Local Transport Plan policies and proposals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedford Borough Council • Bedfordshire County Council
To maintain a high quality environment in terms of air, soil and water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated air quality management areas 	When annual monitoring of indicator shows a consistent adverse trend that cannot be accounted for by any other external influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review policies in Plan with the aim of better achieving this sustainability objective. • Declare AQMAs where needed, monitor and implement action plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedford Borough Council • Bedford Borough Council
To conserve and enhance biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance • % land in SSSIs in favourable condition 	When annual monitoring of indicator shows a consistent adverse trend that cannot be accounted for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review policies in Plan with the aim of better achieving this sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedford Borough Council

Significant effect identified by SA	How it will be monitored (indicator in AMR)	When should remedial action be considered	What action should be taken	Who is responsible for action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in areas of woodland in the growth area 	by any other external influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> objective. Implement biodiversity action plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various (including landowners)
To ensure that everyone has access to a good quality affordable home that meets their needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable housing completion % affordable houses secured on sites of 25 or more 	When annual monitoring of indicator shows a consistent adverse trend that cannot be accounted for by any other external influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review policies in Plan with the aim of better achieving this sustainability objective. Increase grant funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bedford Borough Council Government and Housing Corporation
To maintain and enhance the vitality of the town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centre % vacant units in primary shopping area Traffic levels in the town centre Footfall levels in the town centre 	When annual monitoring of indicator shows a consistent adverse trend that cannot be accounted for by any other external influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review policies in Plan with the aim of better achieving this sustainability objective. Promote town centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bedford Borough Council Bedford Borough Council, Town Centre Company, retailers
To help reduce poverty and social exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % households in urban area within 400m of 15 minute bus service Rural households within 13 minutes walk of an hourly bus service Amount of mobility housing completed Planning permissions granted with conditions relating to good access provision for disabled people Barriers to council 	When annual monitoring of indicator shows a consistent adverse trend that cannot be accounted for by any other external influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review policies in Plan with the aim of better achieving this sustainability objective. Review Local Transport Plan policies and proposals. Increase support for those in need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bedford Borough Council Bedfordshire County Council Government

Significant effect identified by SA	How it will be monitored (indicator in AMR)	When should remedial action be considered	What action should be taken	Who is responsible for action
	services for black and minority ethnic or disabled community			