



8 INFRASTRUCTURE

INFRASTRUCTURE OBJECTIVES

8.1 The sustainable provision of appropriate infrastructure in development proposals, for major transportation and other projects, is a requirement of the Local Plan.

8.2 Luton is an important focus for road, rail and air travel. The town has a comprehensive bus network and its cycleways are being supplemented by part of the National Cycle Network.

8.3 Traffic congestion is a particular problem that needs to be addressed through the promotion of sustainable transport choices and reducing the need to travel by car.

8.4 The Local Plan seeks to provide the framework for the provision of public utilities and telecommunications. These services are in great demand, but need to be provided without local adverse impact.

8.5 Renewable energy and more sustainable waste management need to be encouraged and are key factors in delivering sustainable development.

8.6 Thus the infrastructure objectives of the Plan are:

Transportation

- **Promoting public transport, cycling and walking in Luton to reduce the need to travel by car, thereby reducing congestion and motorised transport's contribution to greenhouse gases**

Utilities

- **Accommodating the demand for telecommunications, managing waste in a sustainable way, and accommodating future energy needs**

8.7 The following sections on transportation and utilities seek to deliver these objectives through policies that satisfy both Government guidance and local concerns.

TRANSPORTATION

Introduction

8.8 Luton occupies a significant location between London and the South-East and Birmingham and the Midlands. The M1 motorway passes through the western part of the Borough and there are two junctions, one for north and western Luton, the other for the central area and London Luton Airport. The A6 runs north-south and the A505 runs east-west through the town. Both are part of the regional road network. The A505, to the east of the town centre, provides access to London Luton Airport and major development sites, including Kimpton Road (the former Vauxhall car plant), Butterfield and Wigmore.

8.9 The town has a comprehensive local bus service network, and there are also a number of supported daytime services linking nearby towns and villages with Luton. The proportion of journeys made by bus is higher than in most comparable urban areas. In addition to services provided by local bus companies, there are a number of express coach services to and from Luton Bus Station and London Luton Airport, serving regional and national destinations.

8.10 Luton has three railway stations: Luton, Luton Airport Parkway and Leagrave. All are served regularly by Thameslink Rail Ltd., which offers the ability to commute into Luton from nearby towns and villages as well as out-commute to London. Midland Mainline offers longer distance services providing links with London St Pancras, Leicester, Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield.

8.11 London Luton Airport handled approximately 7.5 million passengers, and 27,000 tonnes of airfreight in 2004. Most of the airfreight is transported to and from the Airport by road. The airport has been designated as an Action Area and is the subject of a specific section of this plan.

8.12 Many facilities, schools and local shops in particular, are within walking distance of people's homes; nearly a quarter of residents walk to work or school at least twice a week, and half walk to shops at least once a week (Citizens' Panel Survey, 2000) making walking the second most important means of transport, after the car, for these activities.

8.13 The continuing increase in car travel has meant worsening traffic congestion and pollution, with congestion exacerbated by the densely built-up nature of the town, constrained as it is by environmentally sensitive areas. The M1 motorway operates above its design capacity for most of the day, and is regularly heavily congested, with stationary traffic during morning peak periods. The urban distributor roads are also extremely busy. Several of the busiest roads are important local bus routes and most are residential roads. Congestion is recognised as having an adverse effect on local businesses, particularly those involved in 'just in time' manufacturing and distribution, and is a deterrent to new employment-generating investment.

Government Policy

8.14 The Government set out its policy for transport in the White Paper 'The Future of Transport' (July 2004) which aims to balance

the need for travel with the need to improve the quality of life, thereby contributing to the aims of sustainable development. Land use planning is seen as having a key role in delivering the Government's policy, and PPG13 (Transport) sets the following objectives:

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

Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) reinforces the above guidance.

Structure Plan

8.15 The transport policies of the current Structure Plan seek to integrate all forms of transport, reduce both the need to travel and the distances travelled, prioritise pedestrians, cycling and public transport, and enhance economic opportunities.

8.16 In accordance with Government guidance, the Structure Plan supports and promotes an Integrated and Sustainable Transportation Strategy that aims to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car, and encourage an overall modal shift from the private car to public transport, cycling and walking.

Local Transport Plan

8.17 Local transport policy is set out in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis conurbation. It aims to improve personal mobility, with improved access for goods and services, and with special emphasis on integrated transport solutions to encourage public transport,

cycling and walking. The LTP sets out a clear view on the relative importance of alternative modes in delivering transportation objectives, as follows:

- public transport
- walking
- cycling
- freight access
- taxis
- powered two-wheelers
- private hire vehicles
- cars and through traffic.

8.18 The rationale for making public transport the top priority is that improvements to public transport are more likely to increase social inclusion and achieve a modal shift from the car, rather than improvements to walking and cycling. However, walking remains fundamentally important especially because of its part in any public transport journey.

Transport Strategy

8.19 The LTP incorporates the Luton-Dunstable Transport Strategy. This Local Plan incorporates policies which, when applied to development proposals, will contribute to the implementation of the strategy. They include measures which:

- enable a higher proportion of journeys to be made by public transport, walking and cycling;
- improve public transport accessibility for every member of the community;
- improve the attractiveness, frequency and reliability of public transport services, and support and assist measures to improve the safety and personal security for those using public transport;

- identify, safeguard, improve and extend a network of pedestrian and cycle routes;
- improve integration between different modes of transport;
- promote sustainable freight distribution;
- support traffic management and calming schemes;
- conform with the maximum parking standards appropriate to the location and type of development as set out in Appendix 4 to this plan; and
- improve the environmental quality of transport corridors.

Policy T1

Transport Strategy

Planning permission will be granted for development provided that it:

[A] reduces the need to travel, particularly by private car, and

[B] enables the use of sustainable transport.

8.20 The strategy will be reviewed during the lifetime of this Local Plan. Developers will therefore need to ensure that they have regard to, and comply with, what is the current strategy when the application is submitted.

Location of New Development

8.21 Travel to work figures demonstrate the dominance of car travel and the short distances of the majority of journeys in Luton. The town's radial road pattern and lack of proper ring road, exacerbated by the local topography, means that most road traffic is funnelled into the central area or along a small number of other key routes. The high population

density and compact nature of Luton mean, however, that public transport, walking and cycling can be viable alternatives to the car for many journeys.

8.22 Controlling the location of new development to minimise the need to travel or facilitate journeys by means other than the private car, is an important element of the policies and plans referred to above. PPG13 (Transport) states that, in making decisions relating to jobs, shopping, leisure and services, local planning authorities should:

- consider the availability of public transport and opportunities for walking and cycling;
- relate the density of development to its accessibility by public transport;
- require Transport Assessments to accompany applications for larger developments; and
- ensure maximum use of key sites most accessible by non-car modes.

8.23 National and Regional Planning Policy Guidance (PPG13 and RPG9) encourage local authorities to promote the development of Travel Plans for all major travel generating activities, both existing and proposed. The Borough Council is seeking to raise awareness of the impacts of travel decisions and promote the widespread use of Travel Plans amongst businesses, schools, hospitals and other organisations in order to deliver its transport objectives.

8.24 Policy T2 ensures a greater integration of land use with transportation and seeks to ensure that developments which will have significant transport implications, are well served by public transport.

Policy T2

Location policy

Proposals for development with potential to have significant transport implications will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that either:

- [A] the site is served by public transport with sufficient capacity to meet the potential demand generated by the proposed development; or**
- [B] public transport will be provided to meet the anticipated demand generated by the development.**

Developers will be required to submit Transport Assessments and Travel Plans with such applications which:

- (i) demonstrate that arrangements have been made for the implementation and monitoring of the Travel Plan; and**
- (ii) ensure compliance by occupiers of the development.**

8.25 The criteria which the Borough Council will apply in determining whether a proposed development could potentially have significant transport implications, and whether a Transport Assessment is required, are set out in Appendix 6. The assessment should illustrate accessibility to the site by all means of transport, and the likely distribution of journeys to and from the site by each of these modes. It should also give details of proposed measures to improve access by public transport, walking and cycling, to reduce the need for parking associated with the proposal and to mitigate transport impacts.

8.26 The criteria which the Borough Council will apply in determining whether a Travel Plan is required are set out in Appendix 7. The plan should have measurable outputs, which

relate to targets in the Local Transport Plan, and should set out the arrangements for monitoring the progress of the plan, as well as the arrangements for enforcement in the event that agreed objectives are not met. Wherever possible, the Borough Council will make Travel Plans binding either through conditions attached to a planning permission or through a related planning obligation.

Traffic Implications of New Development

8.27 The Borough Council will seek to minimise additional traffic associated with new development, which can exacerbate existing or cause new problems.

Policy T3

Traffic implications of development

Development will only be permitted if traffic generated by the proposal would not:

- [A] exacerbate road congestion, particularly at peak hours; or**
- [B] cause safety problems for pedestrians, cyclists or other road users, or**
- [C] be likely to cause demonstrable harm to the quality of the local environment.**

Mobility

8.28 Social inclusion is a key objective of the Borough Council and the transportation policies set out in the Local Transport Plan. A number of relevant transport schemes have been implemented including the provision of those listed below, and similar facilities may be required in new schemes:

- improved access to public transport for disabled people and people with mobility difficulties;

- shopmobility schemes;
- convenient parking spaces for people with disabilities; and
- measures to incorporate the needs of disabled people and people with mobility difficulties, into new and improved road, footway and pedestrianisation schemes.

Policy T4

Mobility

The Borough Council will require all new developments, including transport infrastructure, to be accessible to, and useable by, people with mobility difficulties.

Public Transport

Buses

8.29 Buses play an important role in Luton's transport system, but there are problems of punctuality, inadequate frequencies, lack of direct services to required destinations and a lack of buses early in the morning or late at night. In addition, demand forecasts have demonstrated that, without the development of a high-quality public transport system, the underlying trends in income and car ownership will result in a fall in the share of journeys undertaken by bus. Against this background, the Borough Council's Integrated Transport Strategy seeks to maximise bus use as a major contributor towards reducing the overall demand for travel, reducing car dependency, reducing the energy consumed and pollution generated by travel and securing the maximum benefits for local environmental quality, social inclusion and the local economy. The Strategy also acknowledges the important but more limited contribution that rail, taxis and private hire services can make.

8.30 The proposed Translink guided busway system lies at the heart of the Integrated Transport Strategy, taking advantage of the opportunity offered by the former railway branch line between Dunstable and Luton Airport Parkway Station, via Luton town centre. Access points along the busway will allow this express bus corridor to be used by a number of services across the wider Luton-Dunstable conurbation.

8.31 The scheme will incorporate improved passenger facilities and features such as real-time passenger information, improved shelters, level boarding and off-bus ticketing. As such, the Translink scheme will facilitate a step-change in the quality of public transport provision. The greatest impact in terms of the share of journeys undertaken by bus will be felt in the central area and at London Luton Airport. It will make a major contribution to the modal shift targets included in the Airport's Surface Access Strategy. An extension of the network to a Park and Ride site at Junction 10a of the M1 motorway is also proposed in association with development proposals set out in Policy SA1 of this plan, although the precise route has yet to be finalised.

8.32 It is envisaged that the Translink scheme will be delivered by a public-private partnership. The Borough Council will seek planning obligations to secure private sector contributions to the scheme's infrastructure in cases where development proposals are likely to generate additional use of the system, or it is necessary to bring forward planned provision in order to overcome a public transport deficiency which would otherwise lead to a refusal of planning permission under Policy T2.

Policy T5

Translink

The development of a guided busway (the Translink scheme) along the line of the disused Luton-Dunstable railway line as shown on the Proposals Map, and its southern extension, is proposed. Planning permission for development proposals that prejudice implementation of the busway or linkages to it will not be granted.

8.33 Bus priority schemes will also be implemented. These schemes will comprise a combination of bus lanes, traffic signal priority measures, improved bus stops and passenger information, including Real Time Passenger Information Systems. Priorities for action will be identified on the basis of the levels of bus and general traffic, the severity of congestion and the presence of schemes already committed or in operation.

Policy T6

Bus accessibility

All major development, highway and related proposals must:

- [A] be designed to accommodate access by bus; and**
- [B] include:**
 - (i) appropriate infrastructure to support passenger access to buses; and**
 - (ii) traffic management and highway improvements; and**
 - (iii) infrastructure for passenger information.**

8.34 Where developments are sufficiently large, the Borough Council will seek contributions from developers, through Section 106 Agreements, to facilitate access by public transport through infrastructure and/or service enhancements, appropriate to the location and nature of the proposed development.

Trains

8.35 With the introduction of improved rail links with London over recent years, including electrification and the Thameslink scheme, the principal function of Luton's rail services has become to provide access to London for commuters from the town's three railway stations. However, rail services are also important for commuting, business and leisure access into the town, including passenger access to the Airport, locally and regionally. The Strategic Rail Authority's Network Management Statement lists several proposals for the Thameslink and Midland Mainline routes, including the Thameslink 2000 scheme for enhanced capacity and better interchange facilities across London.

8.36 PPG13 (Transport) recognises that quick, easy and safe interchange is essential to integration between different modes of transport and the promotion of more sustainable travel choices. Local authorities are encouraged to identify interchange improvements that need to be made and to seek funding through Local Transport Plans, Rail Passenger Partnerships, public-private partnerships and planning agreements. They should also ensure that the design, layout and access arrangements of interchanges and surrounding development are safe and convenient so as to maximise the walking and cycling catchment population for public transport services.

Policy T7

Transport interchange

The Borough Council will require proposals for development at railway stations and other modal interchanges to make effective provision for pedestrians, cycles, buses and taxis.

Walking and Cycling

8.37 Together with public transport, walking and cycling are the only modes of travel available to people who do not have access to a car. Walking and cycling are also beneficial to people's health.

8.38 PPG13 (Transport) encourages local authorities to promote safer walking and cycling. PPG3 (Housing) requires local planning authorities to place the needs of people before ease of traffic movement in designing the layout of residential developments and to seek to reduce car dependence by facilitating more walking and cycling. The Borough Council has prepared Walking and Cycling Strategies for Luton, which build upon objectives and policies in the LTP, to encourage these activities. The strategies seek to ensure that policies to increase cycling and walking are fully integrated into the Local Plan.

8.39 The Borough Council's town centre strategy seeks to give pedestrians priority over all other modes of transport in the town centre. The pedestrianisation already completed has given the main shopping streets back to people rather than vehicles and has created a more pleasant environment in which people-based activities are now a regular feature. Further improvements will be made to pedestrian circulation within the town centre, with a view to encouraging walking and discouraging the use of cars for short journeys.

8.40 The use of cycles in Luton is currently limited. Improvements to the route network, including completion of the National Cycle Network Route 6 (Milton Keynes to St. Albans) through the town (as shown on the Proposals Map), will be supported by provision of complementary infrastructure, including further secure cycle parking at leisure, recreation, health and shopping centres. The provision of cycle parking will also be required in new developments in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 5 to this plan. Further initiatives to encourage cycle use will include identification of safer routes to schools and encouraging local employers to adopt cycle-friendly initiatives in Travel Plans.

Policy T8

Walking and Cycling

The Borough Council will require new development and highway schemes to take into account the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and the need to promote walking and cycling. New developments will only be permitted if:

- [A] existing pedestrian and cycle routes are protected or equally convenient alternatives provided, where appropriate; and**
- [B] safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian and cycle access is provided within the development and to and from residential areas, local shops, schools, community and leisure facilities and bus stops; and**
- [C] through routes across and/or around major sites are provided where these will deliver improvements to the pedestrian and cycling networks; and**
- [D] a contribution is made to the implementation or enhancement of the strategic footpath or cycling networks as shown in the Borough Council's Walking**

Policy T8 (cont)

and Cycling Strategies; and

- [E] convenient and secure cycle parking is provided in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 5 to this Plan.**

In respect of employment-generating development proposals, the Borough Council may seek planning obligations for the provision of showers and changing facilities for cyclists.

Freight Distribution

8.41 The Government's 'Sustainable Distribution Strategy' (March 1999) states that land use planning can help to promote sustainable distribution including, where feasible, the movement of freight by rail. The Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011 also encourages a shift away from road-borne freight. In accordance with these policies, the Council will seek, wherever possible, to facilitate and achieve a shift in the transport of goods from road to rail. However, road freight is likely to remain at the core of the local distribution system for the foreseeable future, and the Council will seek to implement a Freight Quality Partnership which is consistent with the 'Sustainable Distribution Strategy'.

8.42 The relatively high proportion of Luton's economic activity involving manufacturing and distribution means that there is strong demand for overnight goods vehicle parking in and around the Borough. Additions to the supply of such parking accommodation will be permitted, provided that a need for the facility can be demonstrated; and provided that the site is acceptable in terms of amenity, environmental impact and highway capacity.

Policy T9

Freight

The environmental impact of freight movement will be limited by:

- [A] restricting heavy goods vehicles in the Borough to particular routes and, where appropriate, prohibiting, except for loading and unloading, lorries over 7.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight from residential and other sensitive areas; and**
- [B] restricting operations or deliveries to particular times and/or categories of vehicle, in cases where, in the absence of such controls, there is likely to be harm to residential amenity; and**
- [C] permitting proposals for new lorry parks only if:**
- (i) it is demonstrated that there is a need for the facility; and**
 - (ii) they are located within key employment areas with good access to the strategic road network; and**
 - (iii) they do not cause harm to the environment or residential amenity; and**
 - (iv) there is capacity on the local highway network to accommodate heavy goods vehicles.**

Taxis

8.43 Hackney Carriages (taxis), together with Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs), are a significant part of an integrated transport system, often meeting a demand which cannot readily be met by local bus or rail services. They perform an important role for people with mobility difficulties (Hackney Carriages in Luton are wheelchair accessible), vulnerable travellers (for example, women travelling alone at

night), those carrying heavy luggage, and as a link in a long distance public transport journey. Taxis and PHVs are also one of the main forms of transport available at night and, therefore, make an important contribution to the economic well-being of the town's nightlife. Taxis enable those without their own car to have access to such leisure facilities, and provide a convenient and alternative form of transport. Taxis and PHVs can also have a role to play in the development of Travel Plans (see paragraph 8.26, above).

8.44 The Borough Council is concerned to ensure that the existing capacity of taxi ranks (for Hackney Carriages) is retained at appropriate locations and increased where necessary and particularly in the context of other demands for highway space. Where new developments are likely to generate a significant demand for travel by taxis, either because of the nature of the use or the scale of the development, developers will be required to provide facilities for taxis to pick up and set down passengers.

Policy T10

Taxis

Where development involves the loss of existing taxi ranks, appropriate replacement capacity should be provided. Major new developments may be required to make provisions for access by, and waiting areas for, taxis.

Traffic Management

8.45 Government guidance set out in PPG12 (Development Plans) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 state that development plans should include policies in respect of the management of traffic. PPG13 (Transport) suggests that well designed traffic management measures (i.e. measures which manage the use of existing road space) can

contribute to planning objectives in a number of ways, including:

- reducing community severance, noise, local air pollution and traffic accidents;
- promoting safe walking, cycling and public transport across the whole journey;
- improving the attractiveness of urban areas and allowing efficient use of land;
- helping to avoid or manage congestion pressures which might arise in central areas from locational policies; and
- applying resident parking schemes and other controls to avoid on-street parking in areas adjacent to developments with limited on-site parking.

8.46 New residential areas should be designed to encourage safe traffic speeds and may be car free where there is sufficient access by non-car modes.

Policy T11

Traffic Management

The Borough Council will control and manage traffic on the highway network in order to:

- [A] give priority to local bus services; and**
- [B] promote a safe and convenient environment for pedestrians and cyclists; and**
- [C] improve the quality of the local environment.**

8.47 Luton's Safety Around Schools (SAS) initiative aims, amongst other things, to improve the safety of children on the journey to and from school. Where appropriate, traffic management works such as junction improvements and raised crossings close to schools will be undertaken as part of the

project. As with development proposals at commercial sites, Travel Plans will normally be made a condition of planning permissions for new schools or extensions to existing ones.

Roads

8.48 An essential element of the transportation strategy of the Local Transport Plan is the improvement of roads, and the construction of a limited number of new ones. Most of these roads are not designed primarily to give additional capacity, but rather to overcome existing environmental problems caused by traffic and to facilitate the efficient operation of public transport services.

8.49 The Local Plan is required to safeguard land required for committed motorway schemes. The Highways Agency has published proposals to widen the M1 motorway northwards from the M25. The Borough Council recognises the economic benefits that will result from increasing capacity, including improved access to the Airport. Although details of the widening between Junctions 10 and 13 have not yet been finalised, the Local Plan safeguards land that may be required for the scheme. Works to widen the section of the M1 from Junction 6A to 10 (including Junction 10) are likely to start in 2006. As this section of the widening scheme is at a more advanced stage than the Junction 10 to 13 proposals, the affected areas within Luton (near Junction 10) are safeguarded on the Proposals Map.

8.50 A major scheme identified in the LTP is improvement of the East Luton Corridor, comprising Airport Way (A1081) and Vauxhall Way (A505) between the M1 motorway (junction 10A) and the Hitchin Road/Stopsley Way junction. Improvements are needed to support the expected growth in passengers at the Airport and the extensive employment-generating opportunities which exist in east Luton.

8.51 Completion of the Inner Ring Road will provide an alternative to Guildford Street for through traffic. It will remove from the central area traffic that has no need to be there and which conflicts with the needs of pedestrians, local bus services, cyclists and essential traffic.

8.52 Completion of the Luton East Circular Road (North) between Stopsley and the A6, including a link to Barton Road along the line of Weybourne Drive, will allow the introduction of traffic calming measures to certain routes, the diversion of some traffic away from the town centre, and improve access to the Airport and employment areas along Airport Way (A1081) and Vauxhall Way (A505).

8.53 Outside the Borough boundary, construction of a northern by-pass for Dunstable and Luton is proposed in the Structure Plan. This will relieve several roads within the Borough of much through traffic, particularly along the Icknield Way / Bramingham Road / Leagrave High Street route.

Policy T12

Road Proposals

Land will be safeguarded for the following road building and improvement schemes:

[A] Department for Transport schemes:

(i) M1 route upgrading and junction improvements;

[B] other schemes of strategic importance, including:

(i) East Luton corridor, between junction 10A and Stopsley Way/Hitchin Road, with a new spur to London Luton Airport;

Policy T12 (cont)

(ii) completion of the Inner Ring road;

(iii) Luton East Circular Road (North), including the Weybourne Link;

[C] other schemes, including:

(i) Gipsy Lane / Windmill Road improvement;

(ii) Chapel Street / Windsor Street / Castle Street junction improvement;

(iii) Hitchin Road / Butterfield Green Road / Cannon Lane junction improvement;

(iv) access to Wigmore Employment Area.

Parking

8.54 The availability of car parking has a major influence on the means of transport people chose for their journeys. Car parking also takes up a large amount of space in development, is costly to business and reduces development densities. PPG13 (Transport) states that 'reducing the amount of parking in new development (and in the expansion and change of use in existing development) is essential, as part of a package of planning and transport measures, to promote sustainable travel choices'.

8.55 The Local Plan sets maximum levels of parking for broad classes of development, for the above reasons. PPG13 itself sets maximum standards for a range of major developments, above particular thresholds, which should be applied as a maximum throughout England. PPG3 (Housing) requires local planning authorities to allow for significantly lower levels of off-street parking provision in new residential developments, particularly for those in locations such as town centres where services are readily accessible by

walking, cycling or public transport. A maximum provision of 1.5 spaces per dwelling, on average, is advocated for urban areas. Parking standards based on government guidance are included in Appendix 4 to this plan and these will also generally be applied to smaller developments below the relevant thresholds. Except in respect of parking for disabled people, they will be applied as a maximum unless applicants have demonstrated, through a Transport Assessment, that a higher level of parking is needed. In such cases applicants should show the measures they are taking (for instance in the design, location and implementation of the scheme) to minimise the need for parking.

8.56 The location policy of this Local Plan (Policy T2) seeks to ensure a greater integration of land uses with transportation requirements, by concentrating traffic generating development in areas which are well served by public transport and are accessible by walking and cycling. In areas which are highly accessible by these modes of transport, the Borough Council may in certain circumstances restrict the amount of parking in new developments to levels below the maximum parking standards set out in Appendix 4. It may, for example, permit car-free housing if a demand is demonstrated. In the central area in particular, parking provision will be limited to that required for essential operational purposes only, and in practice this will mean that for many developments no parking will be permitted.

Luton's Parking Strategy is aimed at:

- improving the security and quality of the off-street parking stock;
- managing central area parking to encourage short-stay rather than long-stay parking;
- managing existing on-street parking through effective control and enforcement;

- expanding controls in residential and business areas experiencing problems;
- managing private parking through land use policies and development control; and
- moving long-term commuter car parking to edge of town Park and Ride sites.

Policy T13

Parking

Development will only be permitted where:

- [A] the proposed parking provision is necessary and does not exceed the maximum standards set out in Appendix 4 to this plan unless the applicant has demonstrated that a higher level of parking is needed;**
- [B] private non-residential parking provided in association with new development within the defined central area is limited to that which can be justified for operational purposes only;**
- [C] new car parks or extensions of existing car parks for public use within the defined central area replace or improve the quality of existing car parks, so that there is no net additional provision of public car parking spaces.**

visitors and customers. In all areas, appropriate on-street parking will be provided for disabled people who rely on the use of a vehicle for mobility. The Council will encourage shared access to private parking spaces in and around central Luton.

8.58 Park and Ride has the potential to play an important role in intercepting car journeys at the edge of the urban area and transferring drivers and passengers to public transport, thereby reducing congestion and pollution in the town and reducing the demand for long-stay parking in the town centre. This Local Plan safeguards sites at Stockwood (adjacent to the M1 motorway, junction 10A) and Butterfield for Park and Ride facilities. The latter site will be well placed to intercept car journeys to employment locations in the East Luton Corridor area as well as to the town centre. Further sites around the periphery of the Luton/Dunstable/ Houghton Regis conurbation, but outside the Borough boundary, are being considered by adjoining local authorities. To maximise passenger transfer, significant investment will be made in bus priority measures for the corridors which the Park and Ride sites serve, including, in the case of Stockwood, implementation of the Translink project in accordance with Policy T5.

8.57 Within the central area, parking charges will continue to be set to encourage rapid turnover of on-street spaces, whilst public off-street parking will be maintained at its present level and priced to cater mainly for demand by short-stay users. In an intermediate zone around the central area and in other parking 'hot-spots' elsewhere, the Borough Council will continue to implement controlled parking zones which manage available space in favour of local residents, local businesses, and their

Introduction

8.59 This section deals with telecommunications, public utilities and waste management, all part of the infrastructure required for development. PPG12 states that, in preparing plans, authorities should consider the requirements of the utilities companies for land to enable them to meet the demands that will be placed upon them. It also states that authorities should consider the wider environmental effects of increased demand, both in terms of the additional need for basic resources and of the associated emissions to air, land and water.

8.60 The Structure Plan 2011 states that developers will be expected to contribute to the provision of infrastructure made necessary by their developments to avoid unacceptable costs on the community.

Telecommunications

8.61 The recent increased use of mobile phones has led to an increasing demand for telecom masts. Telecom development is subject to development control but much minor development, such as the installation of some residential satellite dishes, is 'permitted development' under the General Permitted Development Order 1995 and hence does not require planning permission. Telecom code system operators also enjoy a general planning permission, subject to certain exclusions. In these cases, the operator has to make a 'prior approval' application, which allows the authority to consider, within 56 days, the siting and appearance of the proposed development.

8.62 A revised PPG8 (Telecommunications) was published in 2001. This updates guidance to take into account developments in telecom technology and changes in permitted development rights that apply to operators. The Government's policy is to facilitate the growth of telecom systems whilst keeping environmental impacts to a minimum.

8.63 Visual impact is an important consideration in determining applications, particularly close to sensitive sites such as schools and residential areas. Where a mast is due to be installed near a school or college, developers should discuss the proposal with the relevant educational body before submitting the application.

8.64 Operators should explore the potential for mast sharing, and they should also explore the possibility of erecting new masts on existing buildings or other structures. However mast sharing may not always be the optimum solution, as masts with several systems can sometimes look ungainly and actually increase visual intrusion. Good design is vital and developers should look at ways of using camouflage to minimise the visual impact on the environment. Screening and planting can also be used to help blend the apparatus into the landscape. The ODPM's 'Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development' 2002 gives more advice on these matters.

8.65 Concerns have been expressed about the health risks of telecom development. Health considerations can be a material consideration in determining applications. However, if a proposed mobile phone base station meets the

International Commission for Non Ionizing Radiation Protection guidelines for public exposure, this would demonstrate that public health concerns have been addressed.

Policy U1

Telecommunications development

Planning permission will be granted and prior approval proposals will be supported for telecommunication development provided that:

- [A] installations have been designed, sited and appropriately landscaped to minimise their impact on amenity; and**
- [B] the development would not harm the setting of a listed building, or the character of a conservation area, or any other area designated for its landscape, historic or nature conservation importance; and**
- [C] the equipment does not detract from the appearance of the building on which it is proposed to be erected; and**
- [D] the developer has demonstrated that opportunities for sharing sites accommodating existing telecommunication equipment have been fully explored before proposals for new sites are submitted; and**
- [E] the proposed installation complies with the national guidelines in respect of exposure of members of the public to electromagnetic fields.**

Public Utilities Sites

8.66 Land in public utility use includes electricity sub-stations, gas works, telephone exchanges, and water supply and sewerage installations. Existing public utility facilities will be safeguarded, but when these become

surplus to requirements, redevelopment for other uses will be supported, provided that they comply with the relevant development plan policies.

8.67 The Hart Lane Reservoir site may become surplus during the plan period. However, it is a site of nature conservation interest, so this is unlikely to be acceptable for built development.

New Infrastructure Provision

8.68 The provision of appropriate infrastructure is important for all major development. One of the roles of the planning system is to co-ordinate new development with the infrastructure demands. In this policy, infrastructure means water supply (including bore holes), surface water drainage, electricity, gas and sewerage provision.

8.69 Major developments may lead to additional infrastructure needs such as reservoirs, pipelines or treatment works. These demands may have impacts on the environment that may extend beyond the Borough's boundaries. The adequacy of infrastructure can be a material consideration in deciding whether to grant planning permission. Where the lack of adequate infrastructure is likely to result in the delay of an otherwise acceptable scheme, it may be necessary to seek that the developer enters into a legal agreement to fund the necessary facility.

Policy U2

Infrastructure provision in major new developments

Planning permission for major new developments will not be granted unless it can be demonstrated that the infrastructure provision either:

- [A] meets the needs of the development; or**

Policy U2 (cont)

[B] will be provided in time to serve the development.

Renewable Energy

8.70 Renewable energy is defined in PPS22 (Renewable Energy) as energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment, such as energy from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of oceans and from the sun. It also includes the heat from the earth itself and energy from plant and digestible waste materials. These sources can reduce dependence on fossil fuels, reduce harmful emissions to the atmosphere and provide economic benefits.

8.71 Government policy is to stimulate the exploitation and development of renewable energy sources wherever they have prospects of being economically attractive and environmentally acceptable. PPS22 suggests that local authorities should include policies that require a percentage of the energy to be used in new residential, commercial or industrial developments to come from on-site renewable energy developments. The Government's national target is to generate 10% of UK electricity from renewable energy sources by 2010. The Government recently published its 'Energy Review' report, and this recommends an aspirational national renewable energy target of 20% by 2020. Currently only 0.45% of energy in the Eastern Region comes from renewable sources. However, the Government Office for the East of England is now promoting a regional target of 14% of electricity to be produced from renewable energy sources by 2010. It suggests that in Bedfordshire and Luton, this target should be 13%. Considering that Bedfordshire is a relatively small county, this is a challenging target. As sites for such facilities will usually be proposed in rural areas, the potential for

large-scale renewable energy projects in Luton is likely to be limited. Nevertheless, technological advances during the plan period may make these viable in the town.

8.72 The Structure Plan 2011 encourages the exploitation of renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, the combustion of fuel from crops and landfill gas. Combined Heat and Power (CHP) initiatives, as part of new and existing developments, have the potential for providing sustainable, local power sources. In the UK, only 5% of power currently comes from CHP. Even though most CHP schemes are powered by natural gas, these are more environmentally benign than power generated through the national grid.

8.73 However, small-scale proposals such as for photovoltaic (PV) systems on buildings, solar water heating and small wind turbines to power lighting are all viable and desirable within the urban area. PV technology can play a part in delivering renewable technology targets and may be integrated into commercial and domestic buildings for converting solar energy direct into electrical energy. The Technical Annex within the Companion Guide to PPS22 suggests that the determination of planning applications for new buildings incorporating PV should assess the impact that the system would have on visual amenity. The use of PV systems on existing buildings is likely only to require permission if it represents a material alteration of the external appearance of the building. Therefore, the Council will seek to ensure that large new buildings incorporate renewable energy generation equipment.

Policy U3

Renewable energy generation within new buildings

All proposals for new buildings totalling 1,000 square metres

Policy U3 (cont)

floorspace or more will be required to incorporate renewable power generation equipment to provide at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements for those buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that there are overwhelming practical reasons why this is not appropriate.

Policy U4

Renewable energy proposals

Planning permission will be granted for proposals in connection with the generation of renewable energy provided that:

- [A] there would not be an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents and other occupiers; and**
- [B] there would be no significant adverse environmental impacts, particularly on designated areas of landscape or conservation interest, or operational impacts on London Luton Airport.**

Waste and Recycling

8.74 Government planning advice on waste management is described in PPS10 (Planning for Sustainable Waste Management). The planning system has an important role to play in achieving sustainable waste management. The Borough Council is a waste collection and a waste disposal authority. In 2001 a Waste Strategy was produced with the other Bedfordshire local authorities. This provides a foundation for the management and planning of waste in the context of new European and National waste policy. It aims to achieve the fundamental shift in waste management in accordance with the waste hierarchy of minimise, re-use, recycle, thermal treatment and landfill.

8.75 The Borough Council is also a waste planning authority, and has worked closely with Bedfordshire County Council to produce a Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP). The current MWLP was adopted in January 2005.

8.76 There are currently two household waste recycling centres in the town. The site at Eaton Green Road was modernised in 2005 to cater for the increase in waste. The second site at Progress Way opened in 2004 and forms a fundamental part of a new 12 year waste management and recycling contract which commenced in 2004. In order to fulfil the Audit Commission's recommendations the Borough Council would need to identify a site for a third household waste recycling facility during the plan period, although it is not yet clear if a suitable site can be found. However, there are a number of sites that have the potential for further investigation.

8.77 The proportion of household waste recycled in Luton is currently about 20%, and this figure is expected to increase significantly during the plan period. Most locally generated waste is still transported to Bedfordshire, where it is put into landfill sites. However, the Borough Council is working to reduce the dependence on landfill in line with the provisions of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The Borough Council will seek the provision of more recycling facilities, for example, within major new developments that attract large numbers of people. Where appropriate these will be secured through a planning agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

8.78 No policies on waste development have been included in this Plan, as this would duplicate policies in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. All planning applications for minerals and waste development will be considered against the policies in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan, the Luton Local Plan and any relevant Supplementary Planning Documents.