



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN

| OCTOBER 2008 |



BEDFORD
DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK

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BEDFORD DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN

ADOPTED 8TH OCTOBER 2008

A summary of the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan will be made available in large copy print, audio cassette, Braille or languages other than English on request. If you require the document in one of these formats please contact the Policy Section by calling (01234) 221732, sending an email to bdf@bedford.gov.uk or writing to Planning Services, Town Hall, St Paul's Square, Bedford MK40 1SJ.

The Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan can be purchased from the Town Hall, price £10.00 or through the post by sending a cheque for £12.00 payable to 'Bedford Borough Council' to the address below. The Plan is also available to view on the Council's website (www.bedford.gov.uk/planning) and at local libraries.



BEDFORD
DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK

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FOREWORD

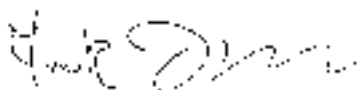
Creating a vibrant, dynamic and successful town centre goes to the heart of the Council's priorities and the Area Action Plan will play a crucial role in providing the policy framework to deliver sustainable growth up to 2021.

This is a time of significant change and opportunity for Bedford town centre. Our growth area status has placed on us the responsibility to deliver the regeneration of the town centre to ensure that it fulfills its role within the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-region.

New homes, jobs, better shopping, cultural and leisure opportunities, improved access and public transport interchange and a rejuvenated High Street are all in the frame.

The Council will work with its partners and stakeholders to deliver this vision and ensure that Bedford will become the heart of the growth area, serving the growing community and competing effectively with other centres in the years ahead.

This is the second of our development plan documents to be adopted and I welcome the plan and take this opportunity to thank those members, officers and community partners who have worked to achieve this important milestone in planning the future of the town centre.



Frank Branston

MAYOR



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The next thirteen years are set to be a time of change for Bedford town centre. By 2021 the town centre should be very different having experienced major redevelopment to create new and improved shopping, leisure and cultural facilities, new housing, jobs, transport interchanges and new public spaces.

The Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan is a key part of the Bedford Development Framework (a set of planning documents which will eventually replace the Local Plan) as it sets out the vision for the regeneration of the town centre. The Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan provides a policy framework to control and facilitate the renaissance of the town centre. The plan is also part of a suite of strategies including the Council's Community Plan and the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-regional Strategy which share this common aim.

The Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan has been prepared following earlier consultations on the issues which the Plan should address, consideration of possible options for doing this, the Council's Preferred Option Plan, and the submission version. It also reflects the outcome of the independent examination process.

In summary the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan aims to assess:

- **Where are we now?**
How is the town centre performing economically compared to other centres such as Milton Keynes, Northampton and Cambridge? What are the main issues facing the town centre?
- **Where would we like to be?**
Looking forward to 2021, what is the Council's vision for the town centre?
- **How do we get there?**
The Plan's policies and proposals are the means of delivering the vision.

Several recent studies have appraised the relative economic performance of the town over the past few years. Key findings are: -

- Compared to other areas in the South East region, Bedford struggles economically;
- Bedfordshire was the only part of the study area that had a gross domestic product below the national average and is slipping further behind national levels;
- Bedford has an ageing economic structure with many of its companies having their roots in the early 20th century - this contrasts with its neighbours such as Milton Keynes, Northampton and Cambridge where modern growth sectors are better represented;
- The town has slipped several places down the retail ranking list and is losing trade to competitor destinations;
- Bedford is showing signs of stagnation in terms of the range, scale and quality of retail and service functions on offer;
- The strong educational tradition in Bedford is an asset;
- Transportation links through Bedford are weak and congested during peak hours; this reinforces negative perceptions of the town;
- Regional north-south road and rail links are generally of a good standard but demand outstrips capacity at peak times. The regional east-west links are however very weak;
- Stagnating economic growth is reflected in the performance of the local property market.

WHERE WE WANT TO BE – THE VISION

There is, however, a real opportunity to reverse this gradual decline. The Sub-Regional Strategy for Milton Keynes and the South Midlands places Bedford at the heart of the key Bedford, Kempston and northern Marston Vale Growth Area. Significant population growth in the borough (and in adjoining areas such as Milton Keynes) is likely to drive up demand for a range of services and increase expenditure in the local economy.

Plans for Bedford town centre must harness this potential growth through significant infrastructure investment and well targeted regeneration initiatives.

Our proposed vision for the town centre is as follows:

BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE TOMORROW

By 2021, Central Bedford will feel very different to how it does today. It will be a destination of choice for customers, visitors and also those people seeking a good night out. It will have reclaimed its role as the county town within a fast growing sub-region supported by a dynamic local economy. It will have a personality of its own, celebrating its natural heritage (including its historic medieval street pattern), culture and riverside location. Importantly it will have emerged from the shadow cast by Milton Keynes and occupy a complementary position providing a distinctive offer. This will be founded upon energetic and flourishing businesses, providing value, good quality and a wide range of shopping, eating and leisure experiences. The town centre will be bustling, prosperous and safe. More people will live in the centre. More people will work in the centre. More people will visit the centre. The evening economy will be attractive to all. Residents will feel proud of their town centre.

Redevelopment will have increased the quantity and range of retail space, together with additional dwellings and leisure facilities. Bedford's shopping will have regained its former glory with fewer cars, better air quality and the streetscene transformed by public art and al fresco eating. A campus of office buildings centred on the new station will be occupied by internationally branded companies and occupiers that have relocated from other cities justifying Bedford's growing reputation as a regional centre. The riverside will be embraced into the town centre with signature buildings, their activities spilling out on to a quayside crowded with rowing boats and canal craft en-route from the Grand Union Canal. The Castle Lane cultural quarter will be buzzing with visitors examining Plantagenet remains and the latest touring exhibitions or sipping cafe latte and watching the swans.

The Western Bypass and an elegant new bridge at Batts Ford will have improved traffic circulation, access from Bedford's catchment will have improved and the gold standard multi-storey car parks will be both safe and busy. Park and ride bus services will have linked with the new railway and bus stations ensuring that passengers have safe and convenient journeys and easy access to all the facilities. Public transport and cycling facilities will have significantly improved and both will have played an important role in reducing congestion. Rail services to London and the Midlands will have become quicker and more frequent, even offering direct links to Paris and Brussels.

HOW WE CAN GET THERE

Following on from the vision statement the plan includes policies and proposals which cover five main themes:

- A more competitive retail and commercially active centre
- A more structured and distinctive centre
- A better connected and more accessible centre
- A more liveable and attractive centre
- A well managed centre.

Key proposals include:

- Provision for up to 47,000 sq.m. net additional comparison and up to 6,000 sq.m. net additional convenience goods retail floorspace within the town centre. The main focus for additional comparison and convenience floorspace will be Bedford Town Centre West.
- Encouraging retail reinvestment in the existing centre and the High Street in particular.
- Redevelopment of a number of key sites including:
 - 1 Bedford Town Centre West - a major mixed use development centred on the existing Bedford bus station. Proposals include new shopping, commercial, leisure uses and housing in conjunction with a new bus station.
 - 2 Castle Lane – new housing, commercial, shopping, heritage and cultural elements to create a new cultural quarter.
 - 3 Riverside Square – new housing, commercial and shopping elements, a grand public square and a new foot/cycle bridge across the river.
 - 4 Shire Hall and the Bank Building site – retention and refurbishment of the Shire Hall and adjoining listed buildings to create a regional justice centre.
 - 5 Bedford Railway Station and adjoining land – the creation of a new office quarter, new housing and a new transport interchange at a relocated station and ticket office adjacent to the Ford End Road bridge.
 - 6 St. Mary's Quarter – any development to be closely integrated with the town centre and to provide a more 'public face' to St. Mary's Gardens.
 - 7 Kingsway Quarter – This includes the Kingsway, St Mary's Street, Cauldwell Street and Melbourne Street. Mixed use development including a range of business, residential, office and public administration uses.
 - 8 Land at Lime Street - mixed use development including shops, offices and housing.
 - 9 Progress Ford, The Broadway – new housing.

- A range of different measures to improve access to the town centre including, improvements to the existing highway network, a new river crossing at Batts Ford, new public transport interchanges and enhanced walking and cycling routes.
- Public car parks will be managed in favour of short rather than long stay users and park and ride services will be extended.
- New housing is proposed on a number of sites to help re-populate the town centre.
- In addition the plan also aims to protect the town's heritage, promote tourism, achieve high quality design along the river corridor, conserve biodiversity, create new public spaces and improve the quality of new shopfronts and advertisements.
- The plan also includes policies on town centre management and amenity.

The Area Action Plan was adopted by the Borough Council on 8th October 2008.

THE VISION

PART ONE

THE VISION

■ INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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 Company, 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 50 years.
- 1.3 With government and regional policy focusing on Bedford's role within the Growth Area (see glossary at Appendix I) 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 us into the twenty first century.
- 1.4 In order to provide a proper footing for the renaissance of the town centre, the Council has embarked on the preparation of this Area Action Plan which is part of the formal statutory framework for the planning of the borough. Under the new planning legislation the Local Plan will, by increment, be replaced by a series of documents. The Area Action Plan supersedes most things that the Local Plan says in relation to the town centre. The Council has also adopted a Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan which as the title suggests sets out the overall strategic direction for the borough.

CONSULTATION

- 1.5 The town centre has been a key priority in recent years and the Council has encouraged wide discussion about its future. There has been a series of exhibitions to raise awareness and test ideas. The Area Action Plan has also been produced following a number of consultation stages and a public examination process.



AREA ACTION PLAN

- 1.6 The first stage was the publication of an issues and options paper. This was published for consultation during March/April 2005 and many constructive comments were received. This was informed by and flowed from the Bedford town centre framework study which was commissioned jointly by the Borough Council and English Partnerships, the East of England Development Agency and Bedfordshire County Council. Together, your views and several studies have assisted the Borough Council to decide what its preferred option should be for the town centre. This was published and detailed comments were invited during October/November 2005. The comments received were carefully considered and these informed the submission version which was submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2006. Following an examination of this plan in April 2008, the Council received the Inspector's Report which proposed a number of minor changes to the plan. The Area Action Plan was adopted on 8th October 2008 in line with the Inspector's proposed changes.
- 1.7 Details of consultations, the issues raised, and how these were addressed at the different stages of the plan are contained in the Statement of Consultation which accompanied the submission version of this plan.
- 1.8 Alongside the Area Action Plan are two further documents which will interest you. The first of these is the **Statement of Community Involvement**. This deals with how the Council consults the public on documents like this Area Action Plan and was adopted by the Council on 17th May 2006. The second document relates specifically to the Town Centre Area Action Plan and is a **Sustainability Appraisal** of the Area Action Plan, testing how the plan performs against the objectives of sustainable development at each stage in the plan making process.
- 1.9 This document explains how the Council thinks the town centre and the remainder of the Plan area should change in the period between now and 2021. It sets out the Council's vision for the town centre and the remainder of the Plan area and turns this into a series of linked objectives and policies. It then looks at different parts of the centre, translating the vision into site specific proposals. The second half of the document deals with implementation and sets out the formal policies against which development proposals will be assessed. A detailed implementation framework is set out in Appendix C.
- 1.10 This document is accompanied by a number of technical documents on the themes of retailing, transport, employment, urban design and flooding. The Area Action Plan also takes account of the government's growth plans for Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale. You can find references to all related material at Appendix A and the documents themselves are available on the Council's website www.bedford.gov.uk/planning by following the links provided. The Plan's relationship with other plans and the regional and sub-regional strategies is set out in Appendix B.

■ VISION

- 2.1 The condition of the town centre has wide implications for the borough and for the Growth Area. The consultants' studies which support the plan, have examined a wide range of factors and made recommendations that inform the planning of the town centre. These studies track the significant changes that the town centre has undergone, not only how the local economy has failed to keep pace and how its position has slipped in comparison with other centres, but also the many initiatives already undertaken. Any vision for the town centre must take account of all these factors and recognise that there is a real need for change.
- 2.2 Drawing together the findings of the analysis of existing conditions and Bedford's enhanced role within the regional and sub-regional growth agenda, the **SWOT analysis** overleaf helps to guide the vision's priorities. From this a **Vision Statement** has been prepared to guide planning policy and proposals.
- 2.3 Based on the analysis of the conditions facing the Bedford area today and the results of the extensive consultation undertaken, the following analysis of strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats has been prepared to guide the creation of the Town Centre Vision.
- 2.4 The vision for the Bedford Town Centre is an attempt to address the issues raised in the background studies and during consultations and as summarised in the SWOT analysis. In particular it seeks to position the area, by 2021, to cater for and benefit from the regional growth agenda and the essential promotion of the town centre's renaissance on a substantive scale. The plan reflects where key stakeholders, including users of the town centre, identify where Bedford needs to be in thirteen years. It expresses the ambitions for the centre but also is realistic about the difficulties of delivering the scale of change required which is substantial.
- 2.5 At the heart of the vision is the need for the centre to declare its identity and celebrate its quality and convenience whilst acknowledging the need for growth. A number of initiatives have contributed to an apparent change of mood in the town centre and as confidence has begun to return, the centre's true potential is only now being recognised. Overwhelmingly, stakeholders see the need for and benefits of change and growth. What is required is the bringing together of the opportunities, resources and processes to deliver a step change in Bedford's role and place within the region. The Borough Council has a key role to play in managing this change.

TABLE 1

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Public sector focus and support
- Historic county town
- Significant asset in the River Great Ouse
- Key educational institutions
- Some elements of the existing built fabric and recent improvements to the public realm - Harpur Street/Lime Street etc
- Strong community interest and support for GVA Grimley Development Framework Study proposals
- Cecil Higgins Art Gallery and Bedford Museum
- Investment in improvements to Castle Mound
- Improvements to the quality of existing parking
- Well positioned taxi rank and private hire drop-off/pick-up area

WEAKNESSES

- Long term economic decline
- Failure to attract significant new retail development
- Failure to diversify the mix of town centre uses and services
- Neutral/negative investment image
- Shopping mundane and ordinary
- Lack of variety in evening economy
- Improving but limited cultural activity
- Poor legibility (the ease by which people can find their way around the town centre)
- Failure to make best use of the River Great Ouse
- Congestion/through traffic in the town centre and an absence of radical approaches to it
- Limited river crossing capacity
- No major visitor attraction

OPPORTUNITIES

- Regional and sub-regional Growth Area focus and funding
- Availability of key development sites
- Development interest
- Riverside environment combined with historic St. Paul's Square
- Vacant premises on High Street
- Quality place making
- Historic associations e.g. John Bunyan
- Multi-cultural population
- Town living opportunities
- Reduce reliance on car travel
- Greater emphasis on cycling as sustainable transport
- Improved bus services including park and ride facilities and enhanced town centre parking
- Improved public transport including access for hackney carriages and private hire vehicles

THREATS

- Continuing competition from other centres and leakage of trade to out of town retail locations
- Growing congestion and reducing air quality
- Unconstrained use of the car leading to worsening accessibility
- Constraints on the improvement of radial routes and the provision of full bus priority measures
- Ineffective public sector delivery capabilities and resources
- Deterioration in parts of the urban fabric and the public realm
- Failure to tackle the barrier to movement created by the river
- Lack of improvement in bus priority service levels

VISION OF BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE

- 2.6 The vision presented in this plan is not new. It echoes the aspirations of people expressed at previous exhibitions and in response to other consultations. It represents a refinement of earlier vision statements for the town centre identified in the Local Plan and the collection of other town centre strategies including the community and corporate plans, reflecting more fully the growth agenda placed upon the town by the government's Sustainable Communities Plan.

BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE TOMORROW

By 2021, Central Bedford will feel very different to how it does today. It will be a destination of choice for customers, visitors and also those people seeking a good night out. It will have reclaimed its role as the county town within a fast growing sub-region supported by a dynamic local economy. It will have a personality of its own, celebrating its natural heritage (including its historic medieval street pattern), culture and riverside location. Importantly it will have emerged from the shadow cast by Milton Keynes and occupy a complementary position providing a distinctive offer. This will be founded upon energetic and flourishing businesses, providing value, good quality and a wide range of shopping, eating and leisure experiences. The town centre will be bustling, prosperous and safe. More people will live in the centre. More people will work in the centre. More people will visit the centre. The evening economy will be attractive to all. Residents will feel proud of their town centre.

Redevelopment will have increased the quantity and range of retail space, together with additional dwellings and leisure facilities. Bedford's shopping will have regained its former glory with fewer cars, better air quality and the streetscene transformed by public art and al fresco eating. A campus of office buildings centred on the new station will be occupied by internationally branded companies and occupiers that have relocated from other cities justifying Bedford's growing reputation as a regional centre. The riverside will be embraced into the town centre with signature buildings, their activities spilling out on to a quayside crowded with rowing boats and canal craft en-route from the Grand Union Canal. The Castle Lane cultural quarter will be buzzing with visitors examining Plantagenet remains and the latest touring exhibitions or sipping cafe latte and watching the swans.

The Western Bypass and an elegant new bridge at Batts Ford will have improved traffic circulation, access from Bedford's catchment will have improved and the gold standard multi-storey car parks will be both safe and busy. Park and ride bus services will have linked with the new railway and bus stations ensuring that passengers have safe and convenient journeys and easy access to all the facilities. Public transport and cycling facilities will have significantly improved and both will have played an important role in reducing congestion. Rail services to London and the Midlands will have become quicker and more frequent, even offering direct links to Paris and Brussels.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

- 2.7 This vision is within grasp, but Bedford must move beyond a certain passivity and complacency about change and refocus its renaissance around the change agenda itself. This will require leadership, determination, public backing and a new sense of confidence that the centre's patent strengths and opportunities outweigh its weaknesses and threats. Investment confidence is essential and has to be nurtured. Demand for retail and office space will need to be bolstered. The town centre needs re-populating to create activity and generate service/leisure demand as these are key drivers of a successful strategy. Clearly, public sector priority and particularly the Government's Growth Area Agenda will be vital in achieving this vision. Renaissance Bedford, the local delivery vehicle (see glossary at Appendix I) for the borough and the East of England Regional Assembly will also have an important role in achieving this vision. Delivery issues are dealt with in more detail in the implementation framework set out in Appendix C.

■ STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Turning the vision into reality will require robust yet flexible guidance in the form of statutory policies and proposals. It will also take imagination and will need to be in conformity with the sub-regional and the emerging regional planning agenda.
- 3.2 At the issues and options stage a number of objectives were put forward and tested as part of the initial Sustainability Appraisal. These were then checked against the regional/sub-regional guidance and the Community Plan 2004 – 2010. The objectives were also reviewed in the light of the issues and options consultation held during March/April 2005 and in response to the comments received on the preferred option during October/November 2005. As a consequence, the objectives were revised and are set down below.

A MORE COMMERCIALY 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.

- 3.3 This section of the Area Action Plan interprets and illustrates the vision and the Plan's objectives, and sets an overall strategic policy. It then explores the opportunities offered by each of the major development sites. These are shown at Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 - INDICATIVE STRATEGY



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- Primary Shopping Area
- Proposed Road
- High Street Initiative
- Key Connections
- Pedestrian Friendly Areas

- Key Areas of Change
- 1 Bedford Town Centre West
- 2 Riverside Square
- 3 Castle Lane
- 4 Railway Station

- 5 Kingsway
- 6 Lime Street
- 7 Progress Ford
- 8 St Mary's
- 9 Shire Hall & Bank Building Site

STRATEGIC POLICY

To regenerate the town centre and remainder of the Plan area by:-

- 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, greater choice of routes, improved pedestrian, cycle, and taxi/private hire vehicles 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 and promoting new cultural facilities;
- Making the most of the river as an asset which can reinforce distinctiveness and provide economic, leisure and development opportunities.
- 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.

- 34 The Borough's adopted Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan makes reference to the town centre. The Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan seeks to realise the full potential of Bedford Town Centre by directing and encouraging development to create bustling, prosperous and safe areas where people will be pleased to live, work and visit and to achieve a town centre which is a more efficient, vibrant and attractive focus for a town and hinterland which is set to grow substantially during the plan period.
- 35 This plan identifies a number of key areas of change. These are set out below and are shown on the Proposals Map.

KEY AREAS OF CHANGE

BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE WEST

- 4.1 The western side of the town centre offers the first real opportunity for major commercial investment to occur in the town centre for many years.
- 4.2 The aim is to create an attractive extension to the primary shopping area of the town centre, providing modern accommodation suited to the dynamic sections of the retail industry. This will improve customer choice increasing Bedford's offer and appeal to the shopper. The Council is encouraging the provision of a major foodstore and a department store together with unit shops of various sizes for multiples and independent retailers. It will be important to ensure that these integrate well with the rest of the centre and that the development as a whole is high quality in terms of the design, materials and finishes used.
- 4.3 The proposed site extends beyond the current rather scruffy bus station and includes the 5 tower blocks, the police station, Allhallows car park and shops fronting Greyfriars, Greenhill and Thurlow Streets.
- 4.4 This scale of development will require the provision of a new 'state of the art' bus station, and multi-storey car park, the building of new leisure facilities and new dwellings.
- 4.5 The development will need to include affordable housing to meet the community's needs and adopt a sensitive strategic approach to the re-housing of existing tenants in the tower blocks. A number of short and longer term highway and public transport improvements will also be required.
- 4.6 This development will be the first really significant investment in the shopping area of the centre for more than 40 years and is well overdue. It is vital to the future of the town centre and the Council will, where necessary, resort to the use of compulsory powers of acquisition to assist site assembly. In consultation with the public, the redevelopment of the bus station received overwhelming support.



CONTENT

General retail
Department store
Food superstore
Cafes
Leisure
Residential units
Affordable dwellings
Parking spaces

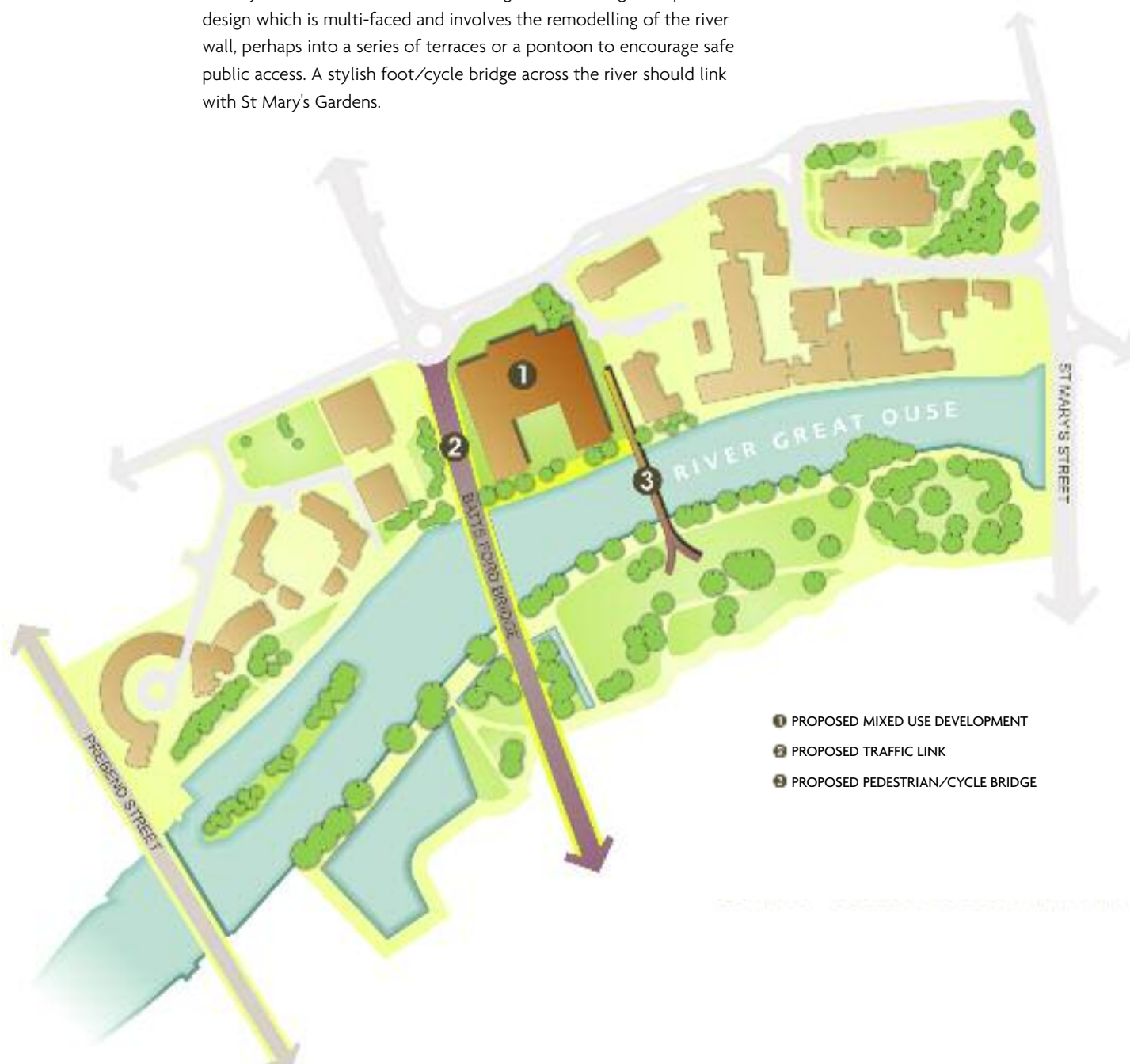
ENABLING WORKS INCLUDING

Junction Improvements
Public realm improvements
Replacement bus station
Reduced bus layover space
Pedestrian/cycle links
Relocation of Police Station



RIVERSIDE SQUARE

- 4.7 The development of the car park at Riverside Square offers a once in a lifetime opportunity to link town and river. It is an unrivalled waterside location which is currently underused and of minimal benefit to the town. A prestige riverside mixed-use development is envisaged that will become a leisure destination and also accommodate a new river crossing and incorporate a grand public square.
- 4.8 The upper floors will be mainly residential bringing people back into the town centre with retail and leisure uses at ground level to create activity and interest. It needs to be a 'signature building' of superior design which is multi-faced and involves the remodelling of the river wall, perhaps into a series of terraces or a pontoon to encourage safe public access. A stylish foot/cycle bridge across the river should link with St Mary's Gardens.



- 4.9 There are many examples of fine waterside buildings across the country. A concept design by Quinlan Terry, commissioned by the Council, explored the effect of an approach based on classical architecture. This was displayed at town centre exhibitions and featured in the local press and gained public approval. The classical theme has been carried forward into the scheme proposed by the Council's preferred development partner MCD.
- 4.10 The scheme would need to safeguard a corridor through to the riverbank sufficient for the construction of the new Batts Ford bridge (see page 26).
- 4.11 Policy priority within this development will focus on the provision of a grand public square for Bedford, a 'signature' building of superior design quality, and a stylish foot/cycle bridge. The scheme must articulate Bedford's growing regional status and be a beacon of excellence for other riverside developments to aspire to.

CONTENT

Residential units
Affordable dwellings
Supporting retail and leisure uses
Grand public square
Pedestrian/cycle bridge to
St Mary's Gardens
Car parking

ENABLING WORKS INCLUDING

Riverfront improvements
Public access
Pedestrian/cycle links
Gardens



CASTLE LANE

- 4.12 This is to become Bedford's cultural quarter through the redevelopment of the Council's surface car parks and integration with an improved Cecil Higgins Art Gallery & Bedford Museum. This is an historic part of Bedford and archaeology and conservation will be a prominent feature of any scheme.
- 4.13 The Council proposes a mixed use redevelopment that creates a new location for town centre living bringing people back into the centre, enhances the setting of historic monuments, provides space for specialist shopping and cafes to encourage a lively street scene, live/work units and, if feasible, improvements to the Swan Hotel.
- 4.14 Given the site's history, significant archaeological investigations will be required and the development will feature a castle archaeological park or trail that preserves, displays and interprets the key findings of this work.
- 4.15 It is important that the scheme links the town centre with the river and for the development as a whole to create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere, where the vehicle penetration is kept to a minimum.
- 4.16 The site was the subject of a RIBA design competition and has featured heavily in town centre exhibitions. It is required that the development of this site will be to a high quality in terms of design, materials and finishes and of a height and scale to signpost the cultural quarter and stamp its renaissance on the urban fabric of Bedford.
- 4.17 Developers should consider the potential to incorporate additional land as part of the proposal, for instance the High Street properties next to the Swan Hotel.



CONTENT

Residential units
 Supporting retail and leisure uses
 Affordable dwellings
 Parking spaces
 Castle park or trail
 Site interpretation/Archaeology
 Park

ENABLING WORKS INCLUDING

Integration of Cecil Higgins Art
 Gallery & Bedford Museum
 Pedestrian /cycle links
 Traffic management
 improvements

BEDFORD STATION

- 4.18 This site offers a key opportunity to achieve a major new office quarter.
- 4.19 It requires investment in rail infrastructure to increase the capacity of the station, to improve both its attractiveness and its connectivity to the town centre by bus, cycle and on foot and provide a public transport interchange. It envisages replacing the station concourse further south, to its original position. When this is considered with the rail land to the west of the tracks it appears to offer the possibility of direct pedestrian and bus access to the station from Queens Park and the Biddenham Loop Park and Ride site. It would also simplify the route to the main shopping areas of the town with benefits for Midland Road businesses. This would be seen as an important gain for all concerned, particularly the travelling public.
- 4.20 The availability of land will enable the provision of a rail/bus hub to speed the arrival/dispersal of commuters by public transport and reduce traffic congestion.
- 4.21 Development is required to achieve this major new office quarter as the rail industry is unlikely to be able to fund such a dramatic remodelling of the station. Accordingly the Borough Council will actively support Network Rail in achieving a comprehensive commercial redevelopment of the block of property including the rail lands and premises to the south of the station forecourt fronting Ashburnham Road and the DIY store. In the context of the Growth Area Agenda, government relocation plans and the future economic vitality of Bedford, there is an urgent need to identify good quality, well connected and centrally located office development sites. When combined with enhanced transport links this will help Bedford to play a key role within the Cambridge-Oxford Arc.
- 4.22 A masterplanning exercise has been commissioned to help drive this proposal forward. This will take technical and commercial considerations into account and generate an outline scheme likely to be acceptable to stakeholders including the rail industry. The exercise may also identify the potential for the site to extend to the south of Ford End Road.

CONTENT

Major office development
Car parking
New station concourse and hub
Residential units
Affordable dwellings

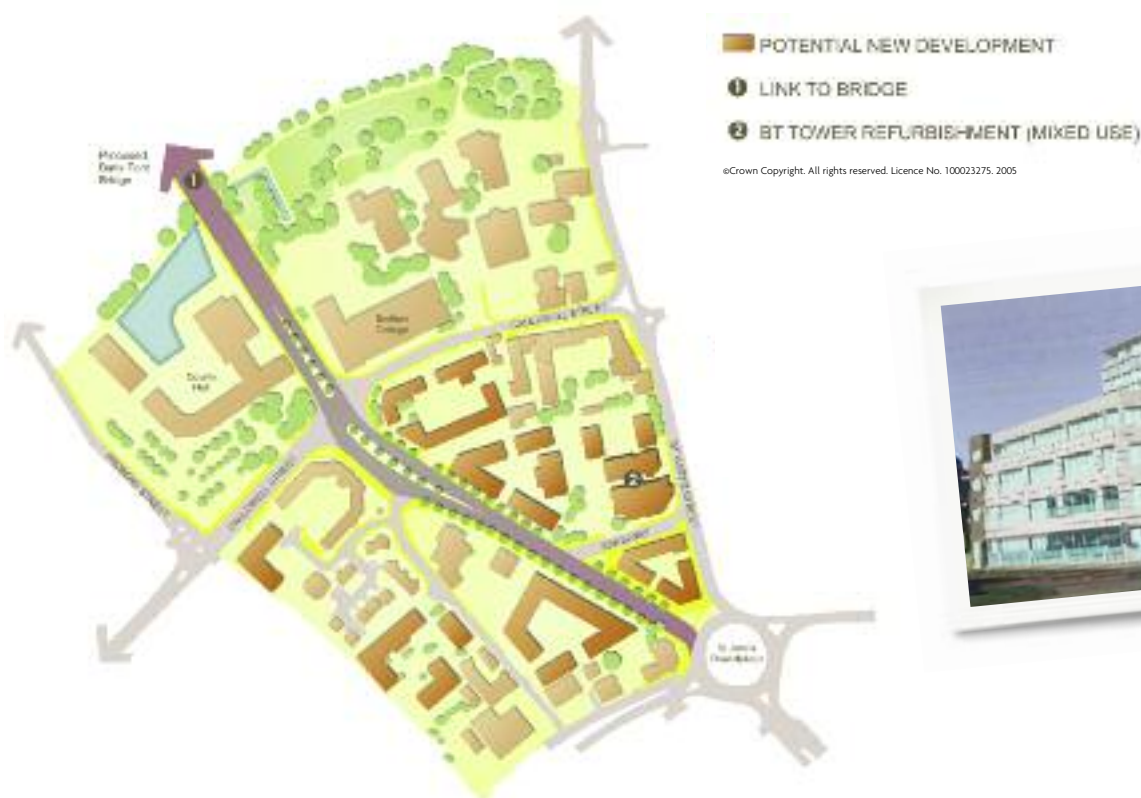
ENABLING WORKS INCLUDING

Bus connection from the west including new pedestrian/cycle bridge.



KINGSWAY QUARTER

- 423 As the southern gateway to a regenerated town centre, Kingsway and the land formed by Cauldwell Street, St John's Street and the Bedford-Bletchley railway line to the west, has the potential to become established as an important office, administrative and residential quarter. Currently it is characterised by a hotchpotch of buildings and uses including extensive areas of surface car parking. This is unattractive and represents a sub-optimal use of land.
- 424 Proposals have come forward for the former British Telecom site which is seen as a key area of change. A scheme providing a suitable mix of residential (including affordable housing) and office space combined with a face lift of the tower and the adjoining building has been encouraged.
- 425 The remainder of the area would benefit from a comprehensive approach to regeneration through both new development and redevelopment opportunities. The aim should be to achieve a more effective use of land, a more cohesive pattern of development, and create more continuous frontages. In addition, there is scope to increase the employment capacity of the Plan area and link with County Hall and Bedford College. The Council will encourage investment by preparing a development brief for this area.



CONTENT

- Office development
- Residential units
- Affordable dwellings
- Pedestrian/cycle links

LIME STREET

- 426 A section of the Lime Street block has scope for redevelopment providing new offices, urban living space, retail and perhaps leisure uses taking advantage of the recent street improvements. This could take the form of a courtyard with new buildings facing onto Harpur and Lime Streets creating an inner area of calm that can be enjoyed by occupiers. Any access arrangements will need to safeguard the pedestrian nature of the street during core shopping hours.



CONTENT

Mixed use development

PROGRESS FORD

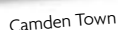
- 427 As a car sales business this site is currently under-used given its town centre location. Similar businesses have relocated in recent years and this suggests that the site has redevelopment potential. Therefore it is proposed for a frontage residential redevelopment bringing people back into the town centre. The existing forecourt and buildings make inefficient use of the site and do not contribute positively to the townscape. A courtyard style development with internal private open space may well be suitable.
- 428 This site has long associations with the motor vehicle and maintaining these connections (including the town's historical link with car production) could be a theme for the development. Bringing this up to date, the potential exists to create an exemplar development equipped perhaps as a design feature with charging bays for electric cars.



CONTENT

Residential units
Affordable dwellings

- [illegible]



Camden Town

ST MARY'S QUARTER

- 4.34 The St. Mary's Quarter lies on the south bank of the river and comprises St. Mary's Gardens, the administrative complex of County Hall and the campus of Bedford College. The latter two areas play an important role in enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre as well as being major employers in the town.
- 4.35 The introduction of the new river crossings will open up this area and create new and enhanced pedestrian/cycle and vehicular links. As a result it will play a more important role as a key gateway into the town centre.
- 4.36 At the present time, the college buildings turn their back on the river frontage and this in turn creates a poor interface between the college and St Mary's Gardens. This is in sharp contrast to the buildings on the northern bank. Redevelopment and new infill will bring about the opportunity to re-orientate buildings to create a more public face to the St Mary's gardens and the river corridor.



SHIRE HALL AND BANK BUILDING SITE

- 4.37 This site includes the Shire Hall which was completed by Alfred Waterhouse in 1881, several listed buildings on the south side of St Paul's Square and the vacant Bank Building site which is an important gateway location on the southern approach to the town centre. The listed buildings have been empty for many years and need to be brought back into use in order to secure their future.
- 4.38 There is scope to expand the existing operation of the courts in order to create a regional justice centre. This will also help to secure the future of the Shire Hall building.
- 4.39 Any scheme will need to be sensitively designed having regard to the heritage issues, the historic fabric and the prominence of the site. It is important that any development fronts on to St Paul's Square, High Street and the river frontage.



■ TRANSPORTATION AND HIGHWAYS

- 5.1 Within an overall strategy of realising greater network efficiency, managing demand and achieving higher levels of modal shift to public transport, issues concerning congestion, ease of interchange, air quality and accessibility will influence the degree to which renaissance can be achieved. The strategy of the Town Centre Area Action Plan attempts to strike the right balance between road based provision and the alternatives offered by public transport, walking and cycling. Key elements include:

HIGHWAY NETWORK ISSUES

- Improvements to the existing network including junction improvements.
- Where feasible, junction improvements should give priority to non-private car modes.
- Provision of a new river crossing at Batts Ford post 2011. The provision of the new river crossing will be pursued as an integral part of a major bid through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) process. This has been identified as a 'Priority Major Scheme' in the County Council's LTP2 submission.
- De-trafficking of St. Paul's Square North and the High Street in the long term.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT OPTIONS

- New bus and rail stations with enhanced interchange facilities.
- Where feasible, give roadspace over to public transport priority.
- Provision of re-routed bus 'loops' to improve circulation and accessibility.
- Expansion of park and ride with facilities in each quadrant of the town in order to reduce congestion within the town centre.
- Promote the greater use of cycling with improved facilities (including parking) and new east-west and north-south routes through the centre in the long term.
- Maximising walking routes with the provision of new pedestrian/cycling crossings over the river.

PARKING

- Managing parking demand through a pricing policy which favours short stay shopper users.
 - Improved 'gold standard' car parking facilities.
- 5.2 Based on this and background studies, this Area Action Plan sets out a number of transport proposals designed to address these issues. The transport implications of individual developments will be assessed both in terms of their overall impact and their immediate connections with the network when planning applications are submitted.

BUS SERVICES

5.3 Bus services need improving to provide better accessibility and integration. The existing bus station is unattractive and the links to the railway station are poor and bus priority access within the radial routes to the town centre is limited and inadequate. To address these issues the Area Action Plan aims to:-

- improve overall accessibility to local bus services by investigating alternative routeing in the central area, reviewing picking up/set down points and the use of through ticketing and real-time information;
- replace the bus station with a new 'state of the art' designed facility;
- relocate bus layover facilities to other locations;
- make improvements at the railway station to provide a high quality interchange and environment for bus and rail passengers;
- develop a network of bus priority routes on key approach corridors linked with park and ride facilities where practical;
- adopt a Quality Bus Partnership approach on key routes to deliver a step change in the bus offer;
- build on the pilot scheme to introduce real time information on routes into the town;
- continue pursuing a programme of bus stop improvements including small bus interchanges in proximity to retail centres;
- Improve cycle/bus interchange facilities where practicable.



PROPOSALS INCLUDING

Replacement bus services
Revised bus routes
Alternative bus layover space
Bus-rail interchange

ENABLING DEVELOPMENT

Bus Station redevelopment
Bedford Railway Station redevelopment

HIGHWAYS

- 5.4 Studies have shown that the highway network in and around the town centre is not particularly robust and although congestion is mostly a peak hour phenomenon, any problems on the network can quickly cause congestion at any time of the day. Furthermore the year on year growth of car travel is increasing the peak periods when congestion is at its worst as well as increasing traffic volumes in the off peak periods. Town centre renaissance will generate increased traffic flows, which will require improvements to the highway network at various key junctions around the town centre. These increased flows coupled with general traffic increases will require a third river crossing to the town centre to be built. However the benefits that will be derived from highway improvements could be compromised by the need to incorporate bus priority measures to improve the public transport alternative offer to car travel.
- 5.5 Transport assessments will be required to accompany planning applications for development of a significant scale. These may indicate that certain highway/public transport improvements are required if the development is to be implemented.
- 5.6 It is likely that a number of highway improvements, particularly junction improvements, will be necessary as development proceeds. The Prebend Street relief road scheme is currently safeguarded. This links Prebend Street with the Ashburnham Road/Midland Road junction. This would provide a significant improvement to the highway network and the opportunity to separate residential properties from existing traffic corridors.
- 5.7 The Western Bypass will reduce the impact of traffic in the town centre, although until the northern section (A428 to A6) is built its full potential cannot be realised. In any case this will not avoid the need for significant highway network improvements, including a third river crossing.
- 5.8 A new river crossing at Batts Ford will be required to incorporate more robust highway and public transport networks that offer improved route choice. This will be pursued as an integral part of a major bid through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) process. The establishment of three river crossings make it possible to strengthen and simplify bus routeing and improve accessibility and priority for public transport into the town centre.



PROPOSALS INCLUDE

Junction improvements at:

2006-2011

High Street/Embankment

Midland Road/Prebend Street/Ford End Road

Cauldwell Street/St Mary's Street and Amptill Road/London Road/ Kingsway

Horne Lane/River Street

Post 2011

A new river crossing at Batts Ford connecting to River Street and Kingsway

Kingsway/Cauldwell Street and River Street/Horne Lane

Horne Lane, River Street and Kingsway - reversion to two-way operation;

Horne Lane and St Paul's Square - introduction of an access restriction point (for eastbound traffic)

Prebend Street relief road

By 2016

Improvements may also be required to the following junctions:-

Bromham Road/Ashburnham Road (further enhancement over and above local authority scheme in the pipeline)

High Street/Dame Alice Street

Revised road layouts in the vicinity of the Bus Station Redevelopment Proposal.

Note precise timing and requirements will be assessed through further studies and travel assessments.

PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING IMPROVEMENTS

- 5.9 Pedestrian links into and within the town centre will continue to be a priority and are important not only to improve accessibility but also to ensure that new development integrates well with existing areas within the core. Walking routes should be attractive with appropriate crossing facilities. Further pedestrian/cycle bridges will be provided in association with development as part of the 'Bedford: A Town of Beautiful Bridges' initiative.
- 5.10 Much of this will be achieved through the design of the new development, but equally, the quality of the public realm must undergo further upgrading. In this regard, environmental works to the north side of St Paul's Square will help extend the pedestrian friendly area and a reduction of traffic in the High Street would improve air quality and encourage retail re-investment. Both of these de-trafficked areas will also be available for cycle use. Radial routes into the town centre will also need upgrading, particularly to the south of the river from the London Road area.
- 5.11 The majority of Bedford's cycle routes converge on the town centre and there is a need to encourage this mode of transport, while avoiding potential conflict with pedestrians. The plan proposes new north-south and east-west cycle routes. In all proposals affecting development of the public realm, the needs of cyclists will be taken into account including the provision of secure cycle storage. There is potential to locate improved cycle parking facilities at the key 'gateways' into the primary shopping area. These are shown on Figure 4. This does not exclude the provision of cycle parking elsewhere within the centre.
- 5.12 Developer contributions will be sought towards improved pedestrian and cycle facilities. See policy TC21.



PROPOSALS INCLUDE

St Paul's Square North and de-trafficking of the High Street in the long term.

A foot/cycle bridge link from Riverside Square to St Mary's Gardens

Future cycle links as shown on Figure 4.

Public Art

TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

- 5.13 Taxis and private hire vehicles provide an important role in the function of the town centre, its evening economy and at transport interchanges.



PROPOSALS INCLUDE

Provision for taxi and private hire vehicles at rail and bus interchanges and in the High Street following de-trafficking

PUBLIC CAR PARKING

- 5.14 The redevelopment of the key areas of change is not expected to reduce existing public off-street spaces for shoppers and visitors to the town centre. The existing provision of 3,928 spaces will increase by about 120 spaces although this depends on the final level of provision at the Bedford Station Quarter. It is anticipated that any net loss of parking spaces will however be compensated by greater use of existing facilities.
- 5.15 Whilst it is anticipated that Allhallows multi-storey car park will be re-provided with a greater capacity as part of the Bedford Town Centre West proposal, surface parking will be lost following the redevelopment of the Riverside Square and Castle Lane sites. Details of existing and future provision are set out in Appendix G.
- 5.16 An appropriate balance has to be struck and the proposals related to these sites together with peripheral park and ride schemes are expected to provide in the order of 5,779 off street spaces available to town centre users. Within the town centre pricing policy will continue to discourage long stay parking. Opening times and tariffs will be geared to assist in demand management, encourage modal shift and shopper car parking. It is important however to recognise that there needs to be sufficient parking within the town centre to maintain its attractiveness and commercial viability.
- 5.17 Retail and leisure developments in the town centre will need to contribute to the cost of providing off-street public car parking spaces.
- 5.18 Priority will continue to be given to bringing all public car parks up to the 'gold standard' to ensure attractive, well used and safe facilities.

PROPOSALS INCLUDE

Bedford Town Centre West: circa 980 spaces (of which 200 will be for residents)*

Elstow Park and Ride 480 spaces

Additional park and ride facilities at Biddenham Loop, Land north of Bromham Road, Biddenham and Cardington Cross.

ENABLING DEVELOPMENT

All retail and leisure schemes

* Provisional figure – to be determined at planning application stage.



CAR
PARKING



PART TWO

THE POLICIES

■ INTRODUCTION

- 6.1 Bedford town centre can be defined as a 'town centre' in terms of government planning guidance. It has a regional role in the shopping hierarchy and accommodates 85,000 square metres of gross retail floorspace. The town performs the role of a county town and is home to the Borough Council, Bedfordshire County Council, NHS Health Trusts, the Harpur Trust schools and Bedford College giving it a strong public sector administrative and educational function. A number of well known commercial employers are also represented.
- 6.2 In recent years, whilst Bedford has seen some growth, this has been at a relatively lower rate than other large towns and cities in the sub-region. Much of the recent private sector investment has gone into out of town locations such as the Interchange Retail Park and Priory Business Park rather than into the town centre. In contrast, the Borough Council has spent over £10m on town centre projects in the past two decades.
- 6.3 Several recent studies have appraised the relative economic performance of the town over the past few years, most notably Roger Tym's Milton Keynes and South Midlands study which has provided the basis for emerging Regional and Sub-Regional Planning Guidance. Key findings are: -
- Compared to other areas in the South East region, Bedford struggles economically;
 - Bedfordshire was the only part of the study area that had a gross domestic product below the national average and is slipping further behind national levels;
 - Bedford has an ageing economic structure with many of its companies having their roots in the early 20th century - this contrasts with its neighbours such as Milton Keynes, Northampton and Cambridge where modern growth sectors are better represented;
 - The town has slipped several places down the retail ranking list and is losing trade to competitor destinations;
 - Bedford is showing signs of stagnation in terms of the range, scale and quality of retail and service functions on offer;
 - The strong educational tradition in Bedford is an asset, the Harpur Trust and local education authority schools are well known - there are, in particular, opportunities arising from further and higher education institutions, such as the University of Bedfordshire and Bedford College;
 - Transportation links through Bedford are weak and congested during peak hours; this reinforces negative perceptions of the town;
 - Regional north-south road and rail links are generally of a good standard but demand outstrips capacity at peak times. The regional east-west links are however very weak.
 - Stagnating economic growth is reflected in the performance of the local property market - demand from retail multiples is relatively low; depressed commercial office and industrial demand leads to limited returns; and residential values are generally lower than surrounding areas which has suppressed interest from some house builders.

- 64 There is, however, a real opportunity to reverse this gradual decline. The Sub-Regional Strategy for Milton Keynes and the South Midlands places Bedford at the heart of the key Bedford, Kempston and northern Marston Vale Growth Area. Significant population growth in the borough (and in adjoining areas such as Milton Keynes) is likely to drive up demand for a range of services and increase expenditure in the local economy (up to 17,570 new dwellings in Bedford borough alone are proposed by 2021 which in crude terms could add around 48,000 – one third – to the existing population). It is vital that steps are taken to attract these incomers to Bedford town centre and influence their shopping patterns from the outset. The provision of local employment opportunities will reduce the need to travel. In addition a strong and vibrant town centre will in itself contribute to growth.
- 65 Plans for Bedford town centre must harness this potential growth through significant infrastructure investment and well targeted regeneration initiatives. Physical investment will be important, but so will efforts to change neutral/negative perceptions of Bedford as a place to invest to one where financial returns are likely to be enhanced over time. Equally, measures to improve economic performance will be as much about a ‘hearts and minds campaign’ to win over investors as the promotion of major regeneration and infrastructure improvements.
- 66 The Government’s Sustainable Communities Plan and the Milton Keynes and the South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy designate Bedford and the northern Marston Vale as a Growth Area. This has the potential to stimulate infrastructure investment, economic growth and improve the quality of life for residents, alongside the development of 16,270 new homes. Appendix B contains a summary of the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy and a regional and sub regional policy audit.
- 67 The Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy recognises the role that Bedford must play in achieving growth objectives and recommends that plans for the town centre should be developed and taken forward in order to enhance its retail, cultural and leisure facilities and achieve the general revitalisation of the town. It also recognises the need for the local economy to expand and the contribution that the town centre should make in providing a significant increase in employment. These are policy directions reflected in this document.
- 68 These proposals will shape the development of the sub-region in which Bedford is a key node of growth. This underlines the special opportunity that now exists to attract new interest and investment in Bedford town centre. The Area Action Plan will act as a vehicle to focus new sources of public and private sector funding aimed at bringing forward development and infrastructure proposals.
- 69 The Council is determined to ensure the success of the regeneration of Bedford town centre and the delivery of new infrastructure to meet the demands produced by this growth. The Area Action Plan is a key means of tackling the opportunities and challenges that these growth plans will bring.

THE BASIS FOR REGENERATION

6.10 In the context of national and regional guidance and a rigorous assessment of the town centre's needs and potential, the policies and proposals contained in the Area Action Plan are presented in five main themes that respond to the opportunities identified. These themes link with the overall objectives to form the basis of the strategy for regeneration of the town centre:-

(i) A more competitive retail and commercially active centre

Critically, there is a need to renew and revive the primary retail area with new shopping development and complementary mixed uses, including offices and leisure facilities.

(ii) A more structured and distinctive centre

A number of 'urban quarters' are proposed to create a focus for the establishment of new and complementary uses. Unsympathetic redevelopment schemes have damaged the urban fabric; there is a need to fill in 'gap' sites, remove unsightly surface car parks with appropriate re-provision and enhance key heritage areas and buildings.

(iii) A better connected and more accessible centre

Improved accessibility both to Bedford and within the town centre is essential if investors' perceptions are to change and emerging development opportunities are to function as part of the town centre. New connections, easier pedestrian movement and better signage are key elements of the strategy.

(iv) A more liveable and attractive centre

There is a need to re-populate the town centre through the provision of good quality housing including a range of affordable homes. The town centre must also make more of its cultural heritage and picturesque qualities. The programme of public realm environmental improvements should be enhanced.

(v) A well managed centre

It is vitally important to draw together the strength of the town centre to enhance its image and reputation. Good management can help build up investor and user confidence by keeping the centre pleasant to use, clean and safe.

6.11 Essentially, the future fortunes of the town centre will depend upon the levels of investment achieved. In addition to guiding development in the town centre, the Area Action Plan will give a new focus upon the town as a whole and act as a catalyst to regenerate the whole of the wider Growth Area.

A MORE COMPETITIVE RETAIL AND COMMERCIALLY ACTIVE CENTRE

- 6.12 In order to gain a clear and up to date assessment of how the town centre is performing the Council commissioned a 'health check' of retailing in the borough in 2005.
- 6.13 On the basis of this study (see Appendix A) the consultants report that:
- 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 still further, with major new retail schemes either under construction or in the pipeline. Collectively, the level of investment planned will strengthen their role and increase their market share from the Bedford catchment area.
 - 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 which has the potential to continue to expand its market share and compete with the traditional town centre offer.
 - Bedford remains a vital and viable centre and has benefited from significant environmental improvements. In retail terms, its strengths are its compact and partly pedestrianised retail core and range of key anchor stores. Its principal weakness in retail terms is the lack of large modern quality units capable of meeting the long term requirements of existing and new retailers.
 - 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 a large modern food superstore in Bedford town centre, in addition to current commitments. There is no need for any further out-of-centre food superstores or expansion of existing facilities.
 - 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.
 - Beyond 2011 the main focus of search for further retail-led mixed use development within the town centre is likely to be within the northern part of the town centre between Dame Alice Street, High Street, Allhallows and Silver Street.
 - A significant growth in the demand for eating and drinking and other leisure facilities within the town centre is also expected.
- 6.14 Clearly, Bedford shopping centre in comparison with rival centres is not competing effectively and has, as a consequence, fallen in the retail rankings. A major new impetus is urgently required of the centre if it is to recover its past position, and in the longer term, grow relative to competitor towns. That impetus needs to build Bedford's offer as distinctive from its larger competitors so it can assume a complementary position in the retail hierarchy. In the light of the growth plans for the borough, it is of paramount importance that the town centre's role in the region is strengthened to enhance its attractiveness to investors and the public.
- 6.15 This strengthened role needs to include an expansion of employment opportunities in the town centre. The stock of good quality well located office space is limited and this acts as an obstacle to the growth of Bedford's economy. Increased levels of commercial activity will draw people to the Plan area and stimulate the local housing market. The town centre offers the most sustainable location for business and leisure development, given its location at the hub of public transport and the convenience of retail and other services. There is scope to provide significant new office floorspace centred on a new railway station. This will enable the town to compete more effectively in attracting companies and government departments/agencies seeking to relocate from London.

- 6.16 The boundary of the town centre in the Area Action Plan is larger than the defined area in the adopted Local Plan which it replaces. The incorporation of this wider area recognises the need to integrate transitional areas rather more effectively in land use, economic, transportation and social terms with the primary shopping area. This facilitates a comprehensive approach to the promotion of major development opportunities and mitigation of their impacts where appropriate. It also has regard to the need to recognise the potential that exists south of the river to create improved linkages from edge of centre sites to existing town centre facilities and to build upon existing assets which are currently under-utilised to enhance the centre's capacity for change. This revised policy boundary gives definition to the sequential test set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 6 - Planning for Town Centres.

POLICIES - DEFINING THE TOWN CENTRE

- Definition of the "town centre" is important in policy terms (PPS6)
- Clusters of town centre uses, retail, leisure, employment and other uses benefit from a central location where public transport systems are focused and the opportunity for non-car travel and multi-purpose trips is maximised.

POLICY TC1 - DEFINITION OF THE TOWN CENTRE

The extent of the town centre for the purposes of PPS6 is shown on the Proposals Map

A number of general policies apply to those parts of the Plan area which lie outside the designated Town Centre (see paragraph 7.1)

POLICIES - IMPROVING THE RETAIL OFFER

- Bedford needs a significant scale of additional comparison retail floorspace in order to increase its market share and provide sub-regional services to its growing hinterland.
- The absence of a large town centre foodstore is a major deficiency within the centre.
- Modern shop units to attract quality retailers are in short supply.
- The first port of call for new retail development will be the town centre followed by the edge of centre.

POLICY TC2 - IMPROVING THE RETAIL OFFER

Provision will be made for up to 47,000 sq.m net additional comparison and up to 6,000 sq.m net additional convenience goods retail floorspace within the town centre. The main focus for additional comparison and convenience floorspace will be Bedford Town Centre West and thereafter the remainder of the Primary Shopping Area.

- A key feature of the town centre is its compactness and it is important to protect the primary shopping area from inappropriate changes of use through the designation of primary and secondary shopping frontages.

The Town Centre Area Action Plan makes provision for a total of 31,200 sq.m. of new retail floorspace on the Bedford Town Centre West, Riverside Square and Castle Lane sites. The Council acknowledges that the Plan does not make allocations for retail development which, on their own, would be sufficient to meet the maximum requirements set out in Policy TC2. However, the allocations which have been made should be seen as the first phase of an on-going process. In this first phase the Council's strategy is to focus efforts on the delivery of these three main sites. Given the lack of significant retail investment in the town centre in the last 30+ years it is imperative that the current window of opportunity is not lost. The development of the three main sites will significantly enhance Bedford's attractiveness for further development.

To take the Plan's town centre regeneration effort forward to 2016 and possibly beyond, the Council will undertake a thorough review of its strategy for the provision of retail floorspace before the end of 2011 in the light of, amongst other things:

- progress on the retail allocations contained in the Town Centre Area Action Plan;
- predictions of additional retail floorspace requirements made in the light of growth in the retail catchment area; and
- the potential for the existing, or an expanded, Primary Shopping Area to deliver any additional requirements for retail floorspace.

As part of the review, the Council will identify sites and opportunities to meet any predicted requirements. Initially, the focus for the search for additional sites and opportunities is likely to be on the existing Primary Shopping Area and the land to the north but, depending on circumstances, it may be that other sites and opportunities for development within the Plan area will also be included.

- Primary shopping frontages will be kept under review as the developments sanctioned by this plan are progressed.

POLICY TC3 - PRIMARY SHOPPING AREA AND PRIMARY SHOPPING FRONTAGES

In accordance with the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan, the preferred location for new retail development will be the Primary Shopping Area as defined on the Proposals Map. Within the Primary Shopping Frontage, changes of use from retail (Class A1) to A2, A3, A4, A5 and other non-retail uses at ground floor level will not be permitted. Redevelopment in such areas will be permitted only in those instances where retail uses (Class A1) are proposed at ground floor level.

- Secondary shopping frontages should provide a complementary retail offer to the primary shopping frontages in order to maintain and enhance the vitality of the town centre. They also provide an important resource for the retention and establishment of small independent retailers.
- There is a need to avoid over concentration of similar uses which detracts from the character of the street.
- Secondary shopping frontages will be kept under review as the developments sanctioned by this plan are progressed.

POLICY TC4 - SECONDARY SHOPPING FRONTAGES

Within the Secondary Shopping Frontages as defined on the Proposals Map, changes of use from retail to non-retail will be considered on their merits subject to the proposal:

- i) having no materially adverse effect on the character and amenity of the area;
- ii) being compatible with adjoining uses and appropriate to a shopping street and a town centre location;
- iii) providing, where appropriate, a suitable ground floor window display and avoiding the creation of a 'dead' frontage;
- iv) avoiding the concentration of similar uses, whose cumulative impact would be to the detriment of either environmental quality, amenity, parking, the street's retailing function or would increase the risk of antisocial behaviour;
- v) making a positive contribution to the diversification of uses within the town centre; and
- vi) being in conformity with other planning policies.

POLICIES - EXPANDING COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

- The town centre accommodates a large number of Bedford's employers.
- The Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy recognises the town centre as a focus for new office development.
- Condition of much of the office stock in the town centre is dated and unattractive.
- Need to encourage inward investment.
- Contribution to achieving economic growth as in 'Changing Places', Bedford's economic vision and strategy.
- Absence of central sites available for office development.

POLICY TC5 - OFFICE DEVELOPMENT

Provision will be made for additional Class B1 floorspace on the edge of the town centre. (see Policies TC13, TC15 and TC16)

POLICY TC6 - OFFICE DEVELOPMENT SITES

Proposals for office development will be determined in accordance with the policies set out in this Area Action Plan and with reference to:-

- access to public transport/walking/cycle routes;
- good connections with the rest of the centre;
- high quality design, materials and landscaping;
- the contribution that development makes to the functioning of the centre.

A MORE STRUCTURED AND DISTINCTIVE CENTRE

- 6.17 The qualities of Bedford town centre should not be under-estimated, notably its compactness, its heritage features reflecting its long history as a county town and its magnificent natural setting on the banks of the River Great Ouse. These are major assets which contrast sharply with the stark and modern retail and leisure facilities provided by modern development in some competitor towns.
- 6.18 In maintaining and developing the recognisable qualities that make Bedford the place it is, the urban structure and character of the town, notably its intricate network of streets and spaces leading to the expansive sweep of the river, need to be understood. These characteristics, reinforced by quality historic buildings, underpin the 'place-making' potential of the town.
- 6.19 The theme of creating distinctiveness runs throughout the Area Action Plan, building on such initiatives as 'Bedford - Town of Markets' and 'Bedford - Town of Bridges'.
- 6.20 Given the importance attached to the objective of upgrading the distinctiveness of the centre and building upon its significant assets, the Area Action Plan seeks to establish a series of bold new urban 'quarters'. They provide a focus for similar/complementary uses, thus creating a critical mass of activity. From an analysis of the urban character, and the availability of sites and property market considerations, six sub-areas have been identified with the greatest potential for regeneration.
- **RETAIL QUARTER** – This represents the area of the town centre where the main shops are located. This area is to be extended and strengthened to accommodate major retail development which in time will encourage re-investment throughout the area including the High Street. In tandem with new retail facilities, new housing opportunities will help to re-populate the town centre and increase its vitality and viability.
 - **CULTURAL QUARTER** – Focused on Castle Lane, the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery & Bedford Museum and Castle Mound and linking through to the High Street. This quarter contains opportunities for enhanced cultural/heritage activities, an archaeological park, new residential apartments, live/work units, specialist and 'lifestyle' shops and restaurants. This eclectic mix of uses will distinguish the area from other quarters of the town and connect with The Embankment.
 - **RIVERSIDE QUARTER** – This provides the opportunity for a prestige development to link town and river generating activity and interest. A residential led development is envisaged with the potential for ground floor high quality eating places and some specialist retail uses that spill out on to walkways and bankside areas. The scheme will allow for the provision of a grand public square for Bedford and a stylish new foot/cycle bridge. This opportunity must articulate Bedford's growing regional status and be a beacon of excellence. This area includes the complex of magistrate courts which are due to be refurbished and enlarged to create a regional justice centre.
 - **ST MARY'S QUARTER** – The concentration of education and administrative uses on the south bank behind St Mary's Gardens is one of the town's key assets. The ongoing development programme at Bedford College should merge with the gardens and embrace the river to create a campus style environment with new buildings complementing those across the river. The scope for creating a mini-marina should be further explored.
 - **STATION QUARTER** – This quarter has significant office development potential which, linked with the re-provision of the station, improved network infrastructure and parking facilities, can resolve the isolation of the existing interchange, generate employment and improve pedestrian flows along Midland Road. The redevelopment could include a residential element and improved bus connectivity.
 - **KINGSWAY QUARTER** – This important southern gateway to the town centre currently appears to be an area in transition. There is scope for a comprehensive approach to development and re-investment in much of the existing stock of commercial premises with the view to creating a vibrant office and administrative quarter. Gaps in frontages and fragmented ownerships need to be addressed and there is some opportunity for mixed-use schemes.

621 The Area Action Plan promotes and reinforces the principal features of these areas, through the following policies.

POLICIES - A MORE STRUCTURED AND DISTINCTIVE CENTRE

NEW RETAIL QUARTER

- Addressing the need for additional comparison and convenience retail floorspace
- Improving bus interchange facilities.
- The need to re-populate the town centre.
- The need to contribute to the provision of housing given that residential units will be lost as a result of redevelopment of the site.

POLICY TC7 - NEW RETAIL QUARTER - BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE WEST

Key principles of development, to be secured by condition and/or legal agreement, will include:

- a high quality development that contributes significantly to the retail offer (up to 30,000 sq.m.) and the distinctiveness of the town centre and integrates well with the existing centre;
- a variety of retail spaces to suit a range of retail requirements;
- mixed development to include commercial, leisure and residential uses (300 units) and off-street car parking;
- provision of revised access arrangements linking River Street with Bromham Road together with appropriate provision for bus, taxi/private hire vehicles, cycle and pedestrian access and drop-off/pick-up points;
- provision of a new bus station;
- re-provision of other public facilities displaced by the development;
- provision of on and off-site highway improvements (see Policy TC20);
- provision of sufficient town centre and residents' car and cycle parking including secure cycle storage;
- provision of affordable housing;
- incorporation of sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy;
- provision of community facilities including public conveniences;
- contribution to High Street improvements.

IMPROVING THE EXISTING SHOPPING AREA

- Countering the potential westward shift in the centre's primary retail pitch.
- Encouraging re-investment in the existing retail areas.
- Helping the High Street to reinvent itself. Maximising opportunities for improvements to the public realm following de-trafficking.

POLICY TC 8 - NEW RETAIL QUARTER - RETAIL REINVESTMENT AND THE HIGH STREET

The main focus for retail reinvestment in the existing centre will be the primary and secondary shopping frontages and the High Street in particular. Within these areas, emphasis will be placed on:

- i) The provision of high quality and distinctive shopfronts and signage;
- ii) The refurbishment of existing buildings which contribute to the character and heritage of Bedford;
- iii) The re-occupation of upper floors for commercial or residential use;
- iv) The provision of improvements to the public realm.

The Council will prepare a strategy with the Bedford Town Centre Company and other partners for the renaissance of the High Street.

NEW CULTURAL QUARTER

- Renaissance within an enhanced heritage and cultural context.
- Development of brownfield land.
- Enhanced visitor attraction.
- Potential for creative enterprises.
- Potential to reflect Bedford's multi-cultural diversity.
- Re-populating the town centre.
- Retail use to support the regeneration of the area as a cultural quarter and to attract visitors into the area.

POLICY TC9 - CULTURAL QUARTER - CASTLE LANE

Key principles of development of the Castle Lane area, to be secured by condition and/or legal agreement, will include:

- i) primarily a residential development (105 units) with commercial, retail (up to 600 sq.m.) and cultural elements;
- ii) the need to interpret and where appropriate preserve/incorporate the archaeology and heritage elements within any scheme;
- iii) provision of on and off-site highway improvements;
- iv) creation of a pedestrian friendly environment with strong links to the High Street and the river;
- v) provision of adequate cycle parking for residents and visitors;
- vi) provision of affordable housing;
- vii) incorporation of sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy.

Commercial elements should have an emphasis on quality A3 provision.

POLICY TC10 - CULTURAL QUARTER - CECIL HIGGINS ART GALLERY AND BEDFORD MUSEUM

A scheme of refurbishment of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery & Bedford Museum in association with the part conversion and part redevelopment of the premises/site for residential (20 units) and ancillary purposes will be promoted by the Borough Council.

NEW RIVERSIDE QUARTER

- Two key sites are Riverside Square and the Shire Hall/Bank building site.
- Policy priority for the Riverside Square site is the creation of a major new public square, combined with a stylish new foot/cycle bridge as integral elements of a scheme of superior design.
- Retail use to support the regeneration of the area as a major waterfront development and new public space, attracting visitors into the area and providing a new destination with strong linkages to the existing centre.
- The Bank building site is an important gateway into the town centre and a prominent site next to the town bridge and adjoining listed buildings. A sensitive approach to design will therefore be needed.

POLICY TC11 - RIVERSIDE QUARTER - RIVERSIDE SQUARE

Key principles of development of Riverside Square, to be secured by condition and/or legal agreement, will include:

- primarily a residential development (155 units) with commercial, and retail (up to 600 sq.m.) elements;
- provision of revised access arrangements via Horne Lane including on and off-site improvements;
- safeguarding sufficient land to accommodate the Batts Ford Bridge and its approaches;
- provision of a stylish new foot/cycle bridge across the river;
- provision of new footpath and cycle routes to connect with existing routes in the town centre and along the river corridor;
- provision of adequate cycle parking for residents and visitors;
- provision of affordable housing;
- incorporation of sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy;
- provision of a grand public square for Bedford.

Commercial elements should have an emphasis on quality A3 provision.

POLICY TC12 - RIVERSIDE QUARTER - SHIRE HALL AND THE BANK BUILDING SITE

Key principles of development of Shire Hall and the Bank building site, to be secured by condition and/or legal agreement, will include:

- the retention and refurbishment of the Shire Hall and adjoining listed buildings incorporating in a comprehensive manner, the Bank building site, to create a regional justice centre;
- any alterations to this important group of buildings (required to accommodate new uses) will need to be fully justified in conservation/heritage terms;
- any alterations to the historic fabric and any new build will be to a high quality. Development of the Bank building site must create a signature building to complement the historic and riverside setting;
- any demolition of the historic fabric to achieve a revised access arrangement must be fully justified having firstly evaluated all reasonable options;
- the provision of built frontages to St. Paul's Square, High Street and the river;
- provision of revised access arrangements via St. Paul's Square including off-site highway improvements;
- safeguarding footpath and cycle routes along the river corridor;
- provision of adequate secure cycle parking for staff and visitors;
- incorporation of sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy.

NEW STATION QUARTER

- Scope to redevelop the railway station and its environs to provide a new office campus, improve interchange facilities and enhance connections between the main shopping area and the station.
- Funding has been secured from the Growth Areas Fund to prepare a detailed masterplan for the Station Quarter. As part of the masterplanning process, the potential for the extension of the Station Quarter into the land to the south of Ford End Road may be considered.

POLICY TC13 - STATION QUARTER - BEDFORD STATION

Key principles of development, to be secured by condition and/or legal agreement, will include:

- i) the creation of a new office quarter and transport interchange with some residential (180 units) elements including affordable housing;
- ii) relocation of the station concourse and ticket office adjacent to the Ford End Road bridge;
- iii) provision of revised access arrangements via Ashburnham Road with appropriate provision for bus, taxi/private hire vehicles, cycle and pedestrian access and drop-off/pick-up points;
- iv) provision of a new forecourt to the railway station;
- v) provision of on and off-site highway improvements including park & ride bus drop-off point accessed from Ford End Road and pedestrian overbridge;
- vi) re-provision of car and cycle parking;
- vii) incorporation of sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy.

ST MARY'S QUARTER

- 6.22 The area south of the river would offer development potential and other benefits as the southern gateway to the town centre, especially if better pedestrian and vehicular links across the river could be achieved. Bedford College is a major institution on the south bank of the river which plays an important role in the vitality of the town centre. At the present time, college buildings tend to turn their back on St. Mary's Gardens and the town centre. Any new buildings should be orientated to provide a more active frontage to the river.

POLICY TC14 - ST MARY'S QUARTER

Land and premises on the south bank of the river will be more closely integrated with the town centre in terms of design aspect and connectivity via the proposed bridges which will provide enhanced pedestrian, cycle and vehicular links. Development proposals in this area will be required to present an active face to St Mary's Gardens, protect and enhance this important river frontage and create a more campus style setting. The potential to incorporate a mini marina to encourage and facilitate river usage will be explored.

KINGSWAY QUARTER

POLICY TC15 - KINGSWAY QUARTER

The land bordering Kingsway and identified on the Proposals Map has been identified for comprehensive, area based regeneration. Within this area, the Borough Council has the following policy objectives:-

- i) to achieve a mixed development quarter comprising a range of business, residential (300 units), office and public administration uses;
- ii) any residential development will include affordable housing;
- iii) to achieve higher density of development and effective use of land through new build and redevelopment opportunities;
- iv) to achieve larger scale buildings (generally between 4 and 6 storeys) and more continuous frontages on either side of Kingsway in order to create a greater sense of enclosure, sense of place, and increase the status of the street within the townscape;
- v) to achieve a higher quality of building design and finishes and a cohesive approach to scale and massing;
- vi) use of planting etc to make Kingsway a more attractive urban boulevard and approach to the proposed Batts Ford Bridge;
- vii) Improve pedestrian/cycle connections between the area and the town centre and the St. John's railway halt;
- viii) incorporation of sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy;
- ix) provision of adequate cycle parking for residents and visitors.

The Borough Council will prepare a development brief in consultation with owners and occupiers of sites and premises within the area.

- 623 Although not within a 'quarter', two other areas have development potential which will contribute to the vision and objectives of the Area Action Plan. These are Lime Street and Progress Ford.

LAND AT LIME STREET

- Former opportunity site in the Bedford Borough Local Plan.
- Any access arrangements will need to safeguard the pedestrian nature of the street during core shopping hours.

POLICY TC16 - LAND AT LIME STREET

Key principles of development, to be secured by condition and/or legal agreement, will include:

- i) mixed use development to include residential (10 units), offices and retail;
- ii) provision of an active frontage to the development;
- iii) vehicular access from Harpur Street;
- iv) provision of affordable housing within any residential element;
- v) incorporation of sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy.

PROGRESS FORD

- Identified in the Bedford Urban Capacity Study.

POLICY TC17 - PROGRESS FORD, THE BROADWAY

Key principles of development, to be secured by condition and/or legal agreement, will include:

- i) residential use (85 units);
- ii) provision of revised access arrangements via Balsall Street East;
- iii) on and off-site highway improvements as required;
- iv) provision of affordable housing;
- v) enhancement of the adjoining public realm;
- vi) incorporation of sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy.

A BETTER CONNECTED CENTRE

- 624 Within an overall strategy of realising greater network efficiency, managing demand and achieving higher levels of modal shift to public transport, issues concerning congestion, ease of interchange, air quality and accessibility will influence the degree to which renaissance can be achieved. The strategy attempts to strike the right balance between access for private cars and the alternatives offered by public transport, taxis, private hire vehicles, walking and cycling.
- 625 Based on this and background studies, the Area Action Plan will set out a number of transport proposals designed to address these issues. The transport implications of individual developments will be assessed both in terms of their overall impact and their immediate connections with the network when planning applications are submitted.

POLICIES - A BETTER CONNECTED CENTRE

- 626 The Area Action Plan pursues a strategy that seeks to satisfy a number of objectives:-

(i) Mitigation of Traffic Impacts

Notwithstanding the effects of encouraging more sustainable travel demand management and diverting unnecessary movement away from the town centre, there will inevitably be increases in traffic flow at certain times of the day and in certain locations. These effects can be mitigated by network improvements. The Borough Council, County Council and Renaissance Bedford have instructed consultants to carry out a further transportation study in order to refine the transport strategy set out in the Bedford Town Centre Development Framework Study and to provide a more detailed assessment of what is needed and when. Policies TC18, TC19 and TC20 set out the current position.

POLICY TC18 - JUNCTION/NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS 2006-2011

The following proposals will be pursued through the Local Transport Plan and other means (including developer contributions where they are required to facilitate the development of specific sites):

- Developer Funded Schemes
- Realignment of Greyfriars
- Midland Road/Greyfriars junction
- River Street/Greyfriars junction
- Improvements to Hassett Street/Beckett Street/Gwynn Street, Brace Street and Bromham Road
- Priory Street to be one-way northbound
- Greenhill Street – closure

LTP/Other Funded Schemes

- Town Centre Traffic Management & Control System
- Ford End Road/Prebend Street junction
- Right turn into the Embankment

- 627 The Bedford Town Centre Development Framework Study Transportation Strategy identified that post 2011 there was a need to increase river crossing capacity and proposed the Batts Ford bridge. A subsequent transportation study has shown that the new river crossing is necessary in conjunction with the completion of the Western Bypass to enable the de-trafficking of the High Street. In addition, when combined with other measures, the bridge has potential to incorporate bus priority links, reduce congestion and to improve accessibility to the town centre for non car modes.
- 628 Further studies will be commissioned to look at the detailed design and feasibility of the new river crossing. This will determine the function of this new link in the network and its role in terms of providing public transport priority rather than providing roadspace for general traffic. Its role in facilitating access by park and ride services to the new bus station will also be assessed.

POLICY TC19 - NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS POST 2011

Successful regeneration activity will require a new river crossing at Batts Ford linking Kingsway to River Street with or without other network improvements including the safeguarded Prebend Street relief road as shown on the Proposals Map. In order to achieve this strategy, a corridor (as shown on the Proposals Map) will be safeguarded to accommodate a new river crossing and approach roads linking River Street and Kingsway. This scheme will be pursued as an integral part of a major bid through the Local Transport Plan process and would also be likely to require:-

- improvements to the Kingsway/Cauldwell Street junction and the River Street/Horne Lane junction;
- reversion of Horne Lane, River Street and Kingsway to two-way operation;
- introduction of an access restriction point at the junction of Horne Lane and St Paul's Square (for eastbound traffic);
- bus priority measures where feasible.

- 6.29 The details of the improvement measures will subsequently need to be worked up as individual planning applications come forward (see also Policy TC41). This is a development control matter that will be managed through the preparation of transport assessments and the negotiation of Section 106 Agreements. Achieving suitable access to the development sites by all modes of transport is a material consideration.

POLICY TC20 - DEVELOPMENT RELATED NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

At this stage it would appear that the Bedford Town Centre West redevelopment will require developer funded improvements as follows:-

- Realignment of Greyfriars
- Midland Road/Greyfriars junction
- River Street/Greyfriars junction
- Improvements to Hassett Street/Beckett Street/Gwynn Street, Brace Street and Bromham Road
- Priory Street to be one-way northbound

Developer funded network improvements may also be required in association with the development of other town centre sites.

(ii) Improvements for Vulnerable Road Users

The Area Action Plan seeks to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists by reducing traffic in certain streets and by providing positive facilities at appropriate locations on links and at junctions including new cycle routes, cycle advance areas and signal controlled crossing points. Striking the right balance in terms of the allocation of road space is important, given Bedford's tight historic street pattern. It is accepted that at certain junctions, there is insufficient space within the public highway to provide dedicated space for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and taxis/private hire vehicles. This will have to be considered on an individual junction basis.

The creation of further pedestrian friendly areas is important but may only be achieved over time in association with junction and network improvements. Key priorities in this regard are:-

- St Paul's Square North; and
- The High Street (post 2011).

It seems unlikely that full pedestrianisation of these areas can be achieved, but measures to reduce the impact of traffic on the environment (i.e. de-trafficking) will be pursued. Both of these areas will also be available for use by cyclists once de-trafficking is in place.

In the case of Midland Road it is likely that Midland Road (West) will experience increased traffic flows until a new river crossing is provided. With no road space for a dedicated cycle lane and narrow footways in a shopping area fitting a cycle lane is not practical. It can however still be used as a route by cyclists albeit on the carriageway.

Following the new river crossing, bus priority measures and cycling lanes can be provided.

A new pedestrian/cycle bridge will be constructed and funded as part of the development of the former Britannia Ironworks site and this is shown on the Proposals Map and Figures 3 & 4. This will further enhance the walking/cycling network.

POLICY TC21 - WALKING AND CYCLE ROUTES

Pedestrian route proposals are shown on Figure 3 and should be well defined, safe and reflect pedestrian desire lines. Active frontages should also be encouraged to reduce any perception of isolation and vulnerability particularly during hours of darkness. Cycle route proposals are shown on Figure 4 and seek to connect sections of cycle route that do not link together as a coherent network.

It also seeks to promote new routes into the edge of the primary shopping area, addressing the current problems of permeability. The following routes will be promoted:-

- Midland Road corridor (for walking and cycling in the long term) including links to the rail and bus stations;
- a north-south spine for pedestrians and cyclists ultimately linking Bus Station redevelopment site via the proposed Landmark Bridge to Kingsway;
- River Street corridor;
- routes along the river;
- an east-west route for pedestrians and cyclists through the Bedford Town Centre West site,
- High Street corridor (once de-trafficking is in place) to provide a north-south route through the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists; and
- The Grove/Newnham Street and Castle Lane*

Developer contributions will be sought for the provision of improved cycle facilities including secure cycle storage at key locations as shown on Figure 4. Contributions will also be sought towards improved pedestrian facilities. In addition to the sites identified in this plan, contributions will also be sought on a pro-rata basis from more modest developments.

*Current no-entry arrangements (westbound) would need to be reviewed to achieve this route.

POLICY TC22 - PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

The Borough Council will, in conjunction with development proposals, seek to improve the number and quality of connections including:

- i) connections within the centre including those between the existing centre and both Castle Lane and Bedford Town Centre West;
- ii) connections between the centre and the river corridor, including where appropriate the provision of new foot/cycle bridges and;
- iii) connections between the centre and the railway station.

(iii) Improvements to Bus Services

The Area Action Plan promotes improvements to public transport provision increasing the attractiveness of such services, and providing the opportunity for service providers to reduce delays to passengers and improve bus reliability.

POLICY TC23 - PUBLIC TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE/SERVICES

Proposals in this regard are as follows:-

Bus Station

- retaining a bus station at, or in close proximity to the existing facility, that acts as a focus for bus passengers and facilitates interchange between services including park and ride and taxis/private hire vehicles. The new facility should benefit from a 'state of the art' design;
- providing a much reduced level of bus layover facilities at the bus station with alternative facilities for layover provided elsewhere;

Serving the Railway Station

- improved bus/rail interchange as part of the Station Quarter development proposals including forecourt improvements at the railway station, park and ride drop-off point, facilities for taxis/private hire vehicles and revised bus routeing;

Service Improvements

- improving overall accessibility to local bus services by improving routeing in the central area (around one or more loops);
- if reallocation of roadspace is practicable, provide further bus priority routes in the town centre and on key approach corridors;
- continue to expand park and ride facilities;
- adopting a Quality Bus Partnership approach on key routes to deliver a step change in the bus offer;
- the use of through ticketing.
- reviewing picking up and setting down points around the town centre.
- introducing real time information on routes into the town;
- an ongoing programme of bus stop improvements, and
- adequate cycle parking at public transport interchanges

Post 2011

The construction of a new river crossing at Batts Ford would simplify bus routeing in the town centre, improve public transport accessibility and make it easier to provide priority bus routes.

(iv) Parking

The Area Action Plan seeks to provide high quality parking provision within the town centre and will itself, and in partnership with others, manage on and off-street provision to favour short stay as opposed to long stay parking whilst ensuring that there is sufficient parking within the town centre to maintain its attractiveness and commercial viability.

The basis of this parking strategy is set out in the Bedford Town Centre Development Framework Study. It explains that in developing the parking strategy for Bedford town centre, an attempt has been made to strike the right balance between provision and management (including the charging regime) and the alternatives offered by public transport, walking and cycling.

The Framework Study identifies the following elements that together will secure the parking strategy:

- Management of the overall parking stock so that the number of spaces available for public use at times of peak demand is in line with newly identified maximum standards for the town centre that are consistent with or tighter than PPG13 maximum standards;
- Recognising the opportunity to control the overall supply of public parking through the redevelopment of existing surface car park sites;
- Increased public car parking charges that are complementary to the transport strategy but at the same time sit comfortably with charging levels in nearby (and competing) town centres;
- A move towards consistent charging across all town centre car parks that are available for public use, with charges set to deter long stay commuter parking;
- Shared parking provision for different land uses in line with PPG13;
- Provision of on-plot parking at less than PPG13 maximum standards with flexible management arrangements offering the potential to tighten standards further over time in line with the success of the town centre;
- Provision of a replacement multi-storey car park on the bus station site that is designed to the 'Gold Standard' of safety and security;
- New park and ride facilities in appropriate locations;
- Provision of conveniently located disabled parking spaces within all car parks;
- Strict on-street parking controls within the town centre and its hinterland.

POLICY TC24 - PARKING

The Borough Council and its partners will:-

- manage the existing stock in terms of capacity, pricing policy and environmental quality;
- promote the provision and use of park and ride;
- allocate sufficient disabled/other parking facilities convenient for the shops;
- consider extending the Controlled Parking Zone.

A MORE LIVEABLE & ATTRACTIVE CENTRE

- 6.30 The Area Action Plan underlines the importance of a high quality environment to the attraction and image of Bedford town centre. Fortunately, in this regard, Bedford has two valuable assets, namely its beautiful river setting and its long heritage that is reflected in many of its buildings. These assets together with the opportunity to re-populate the town centre provide important building blocks for regeneration.
- 6.31 In addition to meeting needs and contributing to growth targets, town centre living adds to its vitality and to the degree to which it welcomes pedestrians after business hours. Realising the potential for housing development in the centre is a prime objective of the Area Action Plan, and there are opportunities for redevelopment and changes of use to achieve this end.
- 6.32 Development schemes will be expected to contribute towards specific environmental improvements in the town centre, including enhancements to landscape, pedestrian routes and signage and public art. These contributions will be secured through planning conditions and/or Section 106 planning obligations. The Borough Council will seek to achieve a fully co-ordinated approach to street furniture, landscape and materials in relation to all major schemes. Applicants' Design Statements submitted as part of their planning application, will be expected to set out their approach to this important aspect of their proposals.

POLICIES - A MORE LIVEABLE & ATTRACTIVE CENTRE HOUSING

- Increasing the residential capacity of the town centre is a key objective.
- Affordable housing will be provided in accordance with the adopted Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan and having proper regard for evidence of need.
- The nature of the town centre and the likely predominance of flats within the schemes means that certain tenures and sizes will be more appropriate than in other locations so as to achieve a mixed and balanced community. The exact type, tenure and size of dwellings that should be provided will be advised, based upon needs assessments/evidence prior to the planning application being submitted.
- If families are to be accommodated in flats, it is recognised that high values of noise insulation must be provided in order that tenants do not adversely impinge upon each other.
- There is scope to bring underused and vacant space above shops back into residential use. In such cases parking requirements should reflect the balance between the mobility needs of residents and reducing the level of car usage in the town centre.
- A strategic overview of all major sites in the town centre will be required to deliver a mixed and balanced community.
- Capacity could be in the order of approximately 1155 residential units depending on precise make up of mixed use developments. Table 2 below gives an indication of residential capacity of each of the key sites. Detailed capacities will be determined through the development control process.

TABLE 2

SITE	RESIDENTIAL CAPACITY	DELIVERY PERIOD
Policy TC 7 - New Retail Quarter - Bedford Town Centre West	300	2010/11 - 2015/16
Policy TC 9 - Cultural Quarter - Castle Lane	104	2007/08 - 2008/09
Policy TC 10 - Cultural Quarter - Cecil Higgins Art Gallery & Bedford Museum	20	2009/10
Policy TC 11 - Riverside Quarter - Riverside Square	155	2008/09 - 2009/10
Policy TC 13 - Station Quarter - Bedford Station	180	2010/11 - 2014/15
Policy TC 15 - Kingsway Quarter	300*	2008/09, 2012/13 - 2016/17
Policy TC 16- Land at Lime Street	10	2011/12
Policy TC 17 - Progress Ford The Broadway	85	2008/09 - 2009/10
Total Capacity	1154	

* Part of this site (the BT Tower site) has a resolution to grant planning permission for residential use in part.

POLICY TC25 - HOUSING MIX

The Borough Council will expect the mix and range of housing types, tenures and sizes to reflect the needs of the community particularly the different client groups requiring housing within the Plan area, and to secure a mixed and balanced community.

POLICY TC26 - LIVING OVER THE SHOP

Within the Plan area, planning permission will be granted for the conversion of vacant space above shops to residential use unless air quality assessment indicates otherwise.

BEDFORD'S HERITAGE

- 633 Bedford town centre has scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, and a medieval street pattern. The Bedford Town Centre Conservation Area is defined on the Proposals Map.

POLICY TC27 - HERITAGE

The Borough Council will protect and where appropriate enhance existing architectural, archaeological and historic features including:-

- i) listed buildings and their settings;
- ii) scheduled ancient monuments;
- iii) buildings which although not listed, form an integral part of the Bedford Conservation Area and its setting;
- iv) street pattern and historic boundaries, spaces between buildings and the public realm.

Development proposals will need to demonstrate how the historical context has been addressed as appropriate. In areas of archaeological potential, archaeological assessment will be required and remains should be preserved in situ. Where this is not justified or feasible excavation, recording and interpretation will be required.

- The attractiveness of the town centre is of economic importance for many reasons not least since it provides a gateway and a focus for visitors to the sub-region. Tourism is a growth industry that contributes significantly to the local economy and is to be encouraged.
- Many of the initiatives set out in this plan will enhance the town's tourism potential e.g. improving the retail offer, establishing a cultural quarter with an enhanced art gallery/museum etc.

POLICY TC28 - TOURISM

To promote tourism in Bedford, the Borough Council will:-

- act to improve the tourist offer by enhancing the range and quality of its visitor attractions;
- encourage the provision of additional, quality visitor facilities, including hotel accommodation and eating establishments.

THE RIVERSIDE

- The river is the prime environmental asset within the town centre.
- It needs to be better integrated with the town centre.
- New bridge links to improve connectivity.
- A specific approach to urban design needed within the river corridor.
- Scope for enhanced public spaces and use of the river as a green corridor for walking and cycling routes.
- Scope for greater river usage

POLICY TC29 - RIVERSIDE FRONTAGES

The Borough Council will seek to integrate the riverside environment with the function of the town centre through the use of higher quality development on river frontage sites, the provision of environmental improvements and new pedestrian/cycle routes including the provision of a stylish new foot/cycle bridge linking Riverside Square with St Mary's Gardens.

POLICY TC30 - RIVERSIDE DEVELOPMENT

Development which adjoins the river corridor should:

- create an active frontage to the river;
- create a strong edge to the development through the use of buildings of significant scale and where appropriate continuous built frontages;
- incorporate new public spaces and linkages with existing spaces and routes (Policy TC11 includes a specific requirement for a grand public square for Bedford);
- maintain and enhance pedestrian and cycle access to the river and between the centre and the river corridor.
- not compromise the land required for the Batts Ford bridge.

BIODIVERSITY

- River and rail corridors represent key linear habitats that extend to and through the town centre.
- Need to conserve and where possible enhance existing habitats and the movement network.

POLICY TC31 - BIODIVERSITY

The Borough Council will, in conjunction with development proposals, seek to conserve and where appropriate enhance biodiversity especially along river and rail corridors.

Where there is expected to be a net loss to biodiversity, compensatory measures will be required.

Proposals for development will need to be accompanied by a biodiversity appraisal to establish the existing biodiversity value of the land and to explain how development proposals will affect and/or enhance that value.

NEW PUBLIC SPACES

- Importance of public space to define sense of place.
- Need to create new/improved public spaces which support wide range of activities.
- A grand public square will be required on the Riverside Square site.
- Public art has a major role in creating identity and enhancing the vitality of the centre. It is important that artists are involved as early as possible in the design process to ensure that opportunities are fully explored.

POLICY TC32 - PUBLIC SPACES

The Borough Council will expect new development to make provision for a high quality public realm including new streets and public squares. Contributions will also be sought, where necessary and appropriate towards public art, interpretation, management and maintenance.

SHOP FRONTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

- Need to improve design quality/overall image.
- Contribution to creating a sense of place.
- Design guidance has been issued. The design guidance relates to both the Plan area and the conservation areas within the borough.

POLICY TC33 - SHOP FRONTS

The Borough Council will expect new shop fronts and advertisements to be designed to the highest standards in terms of:-

- i) their relationship to both the local context and the building of which they form a part;
- ii) the quality and durability of materials used;
- iii) the level and means of illumination.

In considering applications for shop fronts and adverts the Council will have regard to its published Supplementary Planning Document 'Shopfronts and Advertisements in Conservation Areas'.

A WELL MANAGED CENTRE

- 6.34 Town centre management co-ordinates a wide range of services and activities that are vital to improving the image and reputation of the town. The Borough Council recognises that many of the factors which influence the quality of the town centre do not lie within the scope of the planning system. They do, however, sit within the wider remit of the Council and its partners and include the maintenance of streets, car parks and landscaped areas as well as management of events and activities. All these form part of the Council's corporate approach towards the town centre. A high quality environment will only be achieved by working in partnership with the private sector and local community. To achieve this, the Council has actively supported the Bedford Town Centre Company and the successful campaign to establish a Business Improvement District and has carried out extensive consultation on the future of the town centre.
- 6.35 A series of environmental and other improvements have already been implemented and there is a well established programme of events and festivals including speciality markets which are presented throughout the year to help promote and raise the profile of the town. All add to the flavour of an interesting and varied centre. These complement the physical planning measures highlighted elsewhere in this Area Action Plan. The Business Improvement District initiative will enhance the ability to focus upon extra security/safety, street maintenance/cleaning, marketing and other activities which are over and above the level of service previously provided, thus adding significantly to the quality and attractiveness of the town centre. The BED:SAFE initiative established by the North Bedfordshire Community Safety Partnership also contributes to a safer and more attractive town centre with particular emphasis on the impact of licensed premises.
- 6.36 Within this context, developers will be required to contribute towards the objectives of achieving a better managed and more attractive town centre in order to add to, and consolidate Bedford's position as a destination of choice and generally make visiting the town a more pleasurable experience.

POLICIES - A WELL MANAGED CENTRE

- Good town centre management enhances the attractiveness and the vitality of the centre.

POLICY TC34 - TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

The Borough Council will continue, in partnership with local businesses and key stakeholders etc, to support town centre management and the Business Improvement District and will continue to enhance the vitality of the centre through the organisation of events, speciality markets etc.

- Need to consider amenity of existing and future residents.
- Need to promote safety and security.

POLICY TC35 - TOWN CENTRE AMENITY

Where uses are proposed that have the potential to affect the amenity of residents or other users by virtue of noise, security of premises or other disturbance, applicants will be expected to implement or contribute towards measures to mitigate adverse impacts. Such measures may include the improvement or extension of the existing Closed Circuit Television System.

■ GENERAL POLICIES

7.1 The Area Action Plan contains a number of policies that will apply across the Plan area.

REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- Part of the Plan's strategy is to encourage reinvestment in the existing centre. It is recognised that in the lifetime of this plan, individual redevelopment or refurbishment proposals may come forward in addition to the identified sites.
- In recognition of this it is important that the Plan includes a general policy setting down the criteria against which such proposals will be based.

POLICY TC36 - REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Proposals for redevelopment within the Plan area will be considered against the following criteria:

- Whether it is appropriate in terms of scale, quantity and use to the character and function of the town centre;
- The impact of the proposal in terms of traffic generation and any measures proposed to address that impact including green travel plans;
- The extent to which the proposals are accessible by, or can enhance accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;
- The extent to which the proposal supports the regeneration of the town centre and enhances its vitality and viability.
- The quality of the urban design in terms of layout, buildings, public realm and landscape;
- Whether conservation, heritage, biodiversity and green space issues have been properly addressed;
- How the proposal addresses climate change effects, renewable energy, energy conservation measures and sustainable construction techniques;
- The suitability of the development in terms of crime prevention and community safety.

LEISURE USES

- The Plan has identified the potential for leisure uses within a number of the allocated sites to support their regeneration and enhance the attractiveness of the town centre as a destination.
- Leisure uses can also play an important part in supporting and diversifying the evening and night time economy.
- There is a qualitative need to enhance the range of different uses within the town centre including leisure uses. Government guidance supports the location of leisure uses in town centre locations. Given the wide diversity of leisure uses which are appropriate in town centre locations, it is difficult to specify a precise quantum. Policy TC37 sets down the criteria against which leisure proposals will be considered.

POLICY TC37 - LEISURE USES

When considering proposals for leisure and entertainment uses within the town centre, the Borough Council will have regard to the following criteria:

- i) Whether the scale of the proposal is appropriate to a town centre location;
- ii) The impact of the proposals on existing centres;
- iii) The impact of the proposals in terms of traffic generation, anti-social behaviour, crime and where appropriate residential amenity;
- iv) The extent to which the proposal is accessible on foot, by cycle and by public transport.
- v) Whether the proposal will bring about benefits in terms of the regeneration of the town centre and its vitality and viability.

DELIVERY

- Regeneration activity should take a comprehensive approach.
- The timing of development may be of strategic importance.
- Possible Compulsory Purchase Order use at Bedford Town Centre West development already considered by the Borough Council.

POLICY TC38 - COMPULSORY PURCHASE

The Borough Council will consider exercising its powers of compulsory acquisition in circumstances where adequate funding is secured by the promoter of the development and where the development accords with the policies and proposals set out in the Area Action Plan.

URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

POLICY TC39 - URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Appendix E sets out the principles of urban design that will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the Plan area.

DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

- 7.2 In accordance with saved and emerging planning policies, development will, where necessary and appropriate, be required to contribute to the provision of affordable housing, landscaping, highway, public transport improvements and other measures required to mitigate any impacts arising from that proposal. In the view of the Borough Council, given the scale of the development proposed, it is not appropriate to consider the impact of proposals solely at the individual site level. The wider context needs to be addressed, including the town centre as a whole as well as further afield. This is particularly the case with the impact on the existing highway network both within the centre and on the approaches to it.
- 7.3 The individual and cumulative impact of the proposed development sites on the highway network has been assessed at a strategic level. The Area Action Plan indicates how network improvements and other measures such as improving the public transport offer, should be introduced in the short term to increase capacity. However in the period 2011-2016 more substantial measures will be needed to improve the network notably including a new river crossing at Batts Ford with supporting infrastructure linking Kingsway with River Street.
- 7.4 Clearly, improved accessibility and highway capacity will be critical to the successful regeneration and attractiveness of the town centre. This strategy cannot be achieved on a piecemeal basis through localised access improvements linked with individual sites. Instead, a more comprehensive approach is needed in which each development will need to contribute towards resolving wider town centre infrastructure deficits.
- 7.5 In parallel, the Borough Council will seek, in partnership with the County Council, to secure funding from central government through growth area programmes and the Local Transport Plan (LTP) process, including the making of a major LTP bid.
- 7.6 In keeping with the holistic approach to regeneration and the fact that development will individually and collectively have an impact on the existing fabric of the town centre, contributions will also be sought towards the management and maintenance of the centre as a whole. This could include contributions towards street furniture, public art, bus shelters, additional cleansing regimes, extensions to CCTV coverage, other crime and disorder initiatives, etc. In addition, contributions towards community infrastructure including healthcare facilities may also be appropriate.
- 7.7 The government has given notice that it intends to change the basis of the planning obligations system, and has suggested that one way forward might be the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy to be levied on new development in addition to necessary S106 requirements. Such an approach would lend itself to the achievement of developer contributions set out above.
- 7.8 The Borough Council will monitor the government's changes to the planning obligation system. Policies TC7 to TC17 refer to each of the sites allocated in this plan and gives an indication of the range of contributions that each site will be expected to make. Such contributions will be finally determined through the development control process and S106 negotiations.

INFRASTRUCTURE – DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

POLICY TC40 - DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

In order to achieve the comprehensive regeneration of the town centre, developer contributions will be sought from all schemes that have a proven indirect or direct impact on the centre, towards the delivery of key elements of highway and other infrastructure (including where appropriate education and community infrastructure), public transport improvements, environmental improvements, pedestrian and cycling improvements, CCTV and other crime and disorder initiatives, public art and the management and maintenance of the public realm of the centre as a whole.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

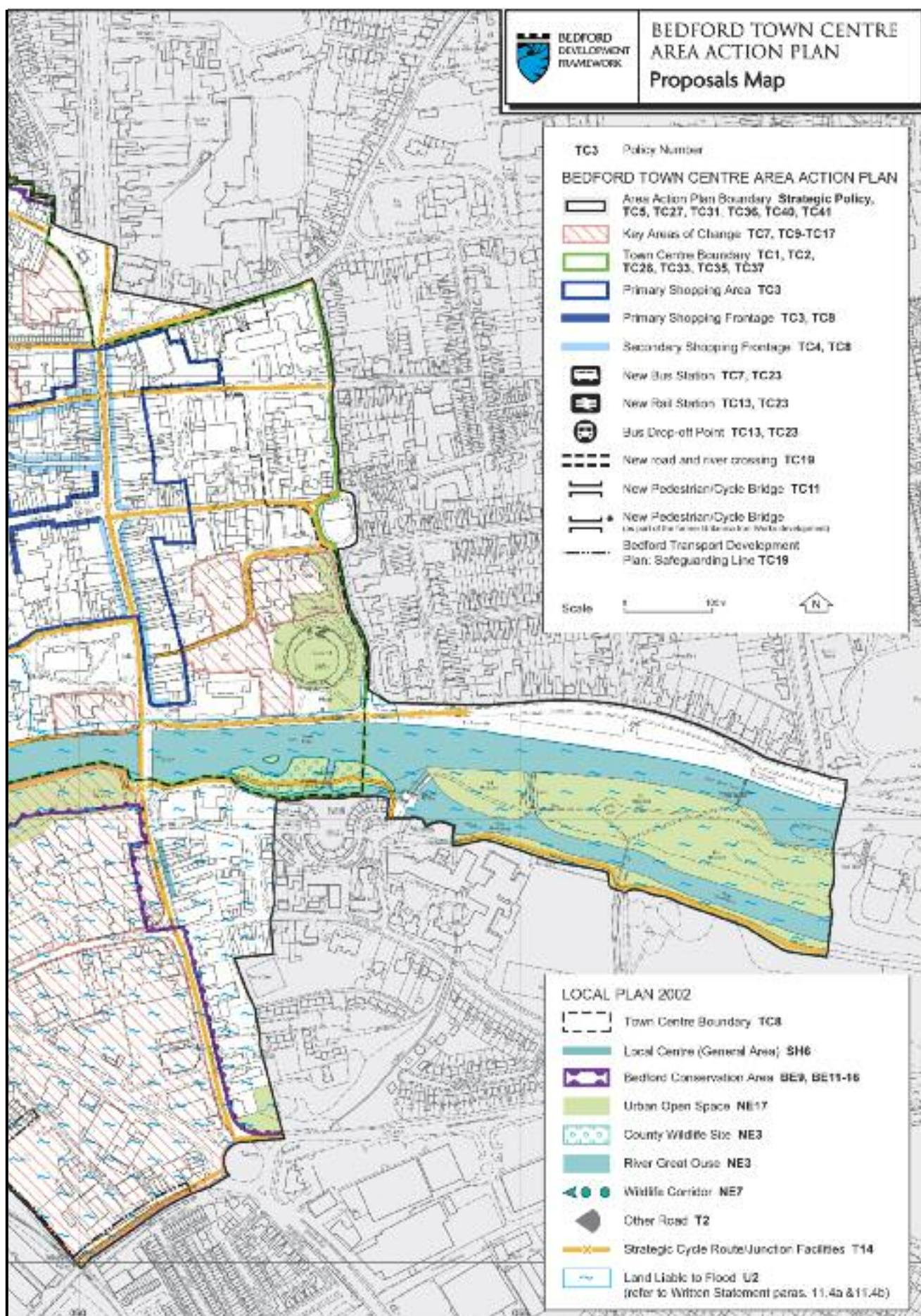
- In order to demonstrate the suitability of individual proposals applicants will be required to submit sufficient supporting information to enable the impact of the proposals to be fully considered.

POLICY TC41 - SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

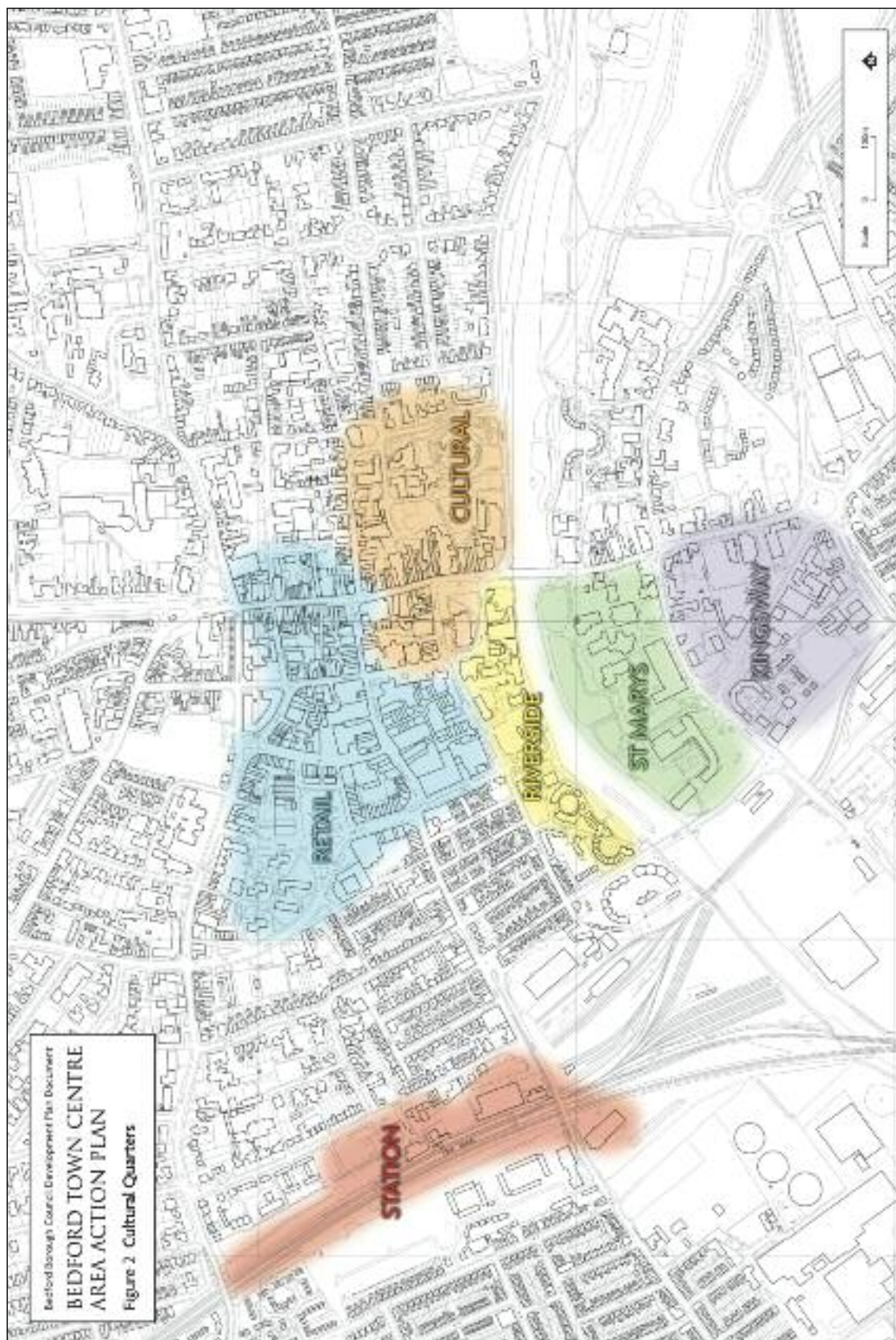
In order to demonstrate the suitability of individual proposals applicants will be required to submit (as deemed appropriate by the Borough Council) the following supporting information with individual planning applications:-

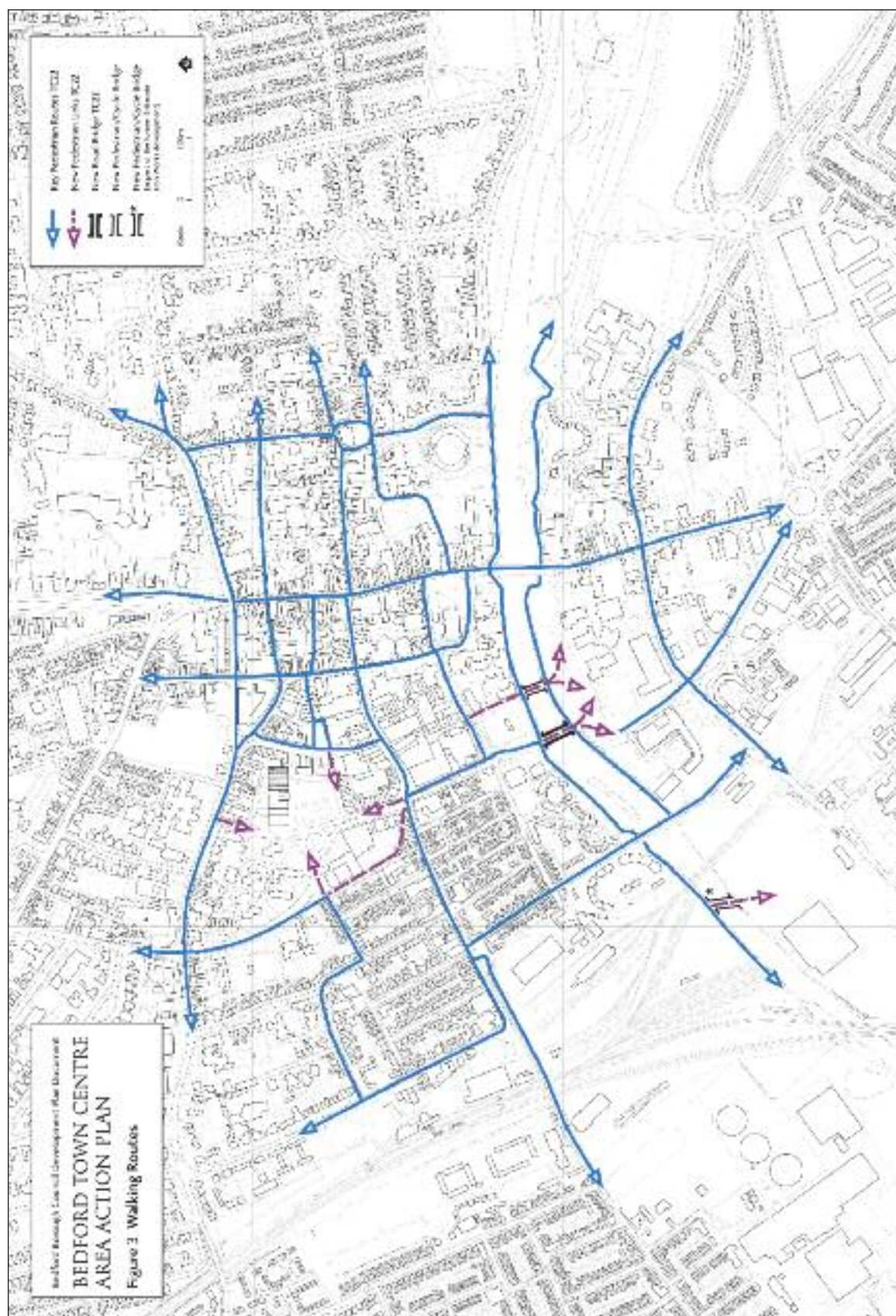
1. Details of the type and quantity of proposed uses.
2. Details of access/restriction arrangements for vehicles and non-car modes including green transport plans and the parking strategy to be employed.
3. Detailed travel assessments to assess the impact of the proposal on the highway network and details of measures to mitigate that impact both within the vicinity of the site and within the wider context of the town centre as a whole. In this respect development will be expected to contribute to the wider transportation and highway strategy for the town centre.
4. Except in the case of extensions to existing premises involving 200 sq.m. or less of additional floorspace, where retail uses are proposed on sites not allocated for retail purposes which lie outside the Primary Shopping Area but within the Plan area, an assessment of need and sequential test of the proposed location will be required in line with the advice contained in PPS6.
5. Where leisure uses are proposed, a statement of compliance with Policy TC37
6. An urban design statement to show how urban design principles have been addressed and how development has responded to a detailed analysis of the local context.
7. Details of how proposals conserve and enhance the town's heritage including any impacts on the conservation area, listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments and other important archaeological remains.
8. A sustainability audit and energy statement to demonstrate how sustainable principles have been applied to methods of construction, recycling, surface and waste water, and renewable energy. A site specific flood risk assessment will also be required.
9. Details of the number, tenure type, mix of housing types and sizes, and 'affordability' of affordable housing provision to meet identified local need.
10. Draft heads of terms outlining the approach to the delivery of key elements of infrastructure.
11. Where residential use is proposed, evidence in relation to air quality to demonstrate that a satisfactory residential environment can be achieved.
12. An appraisal to establish existing biodiversity value of the site and to explain how development proposals will affect or enhance it.

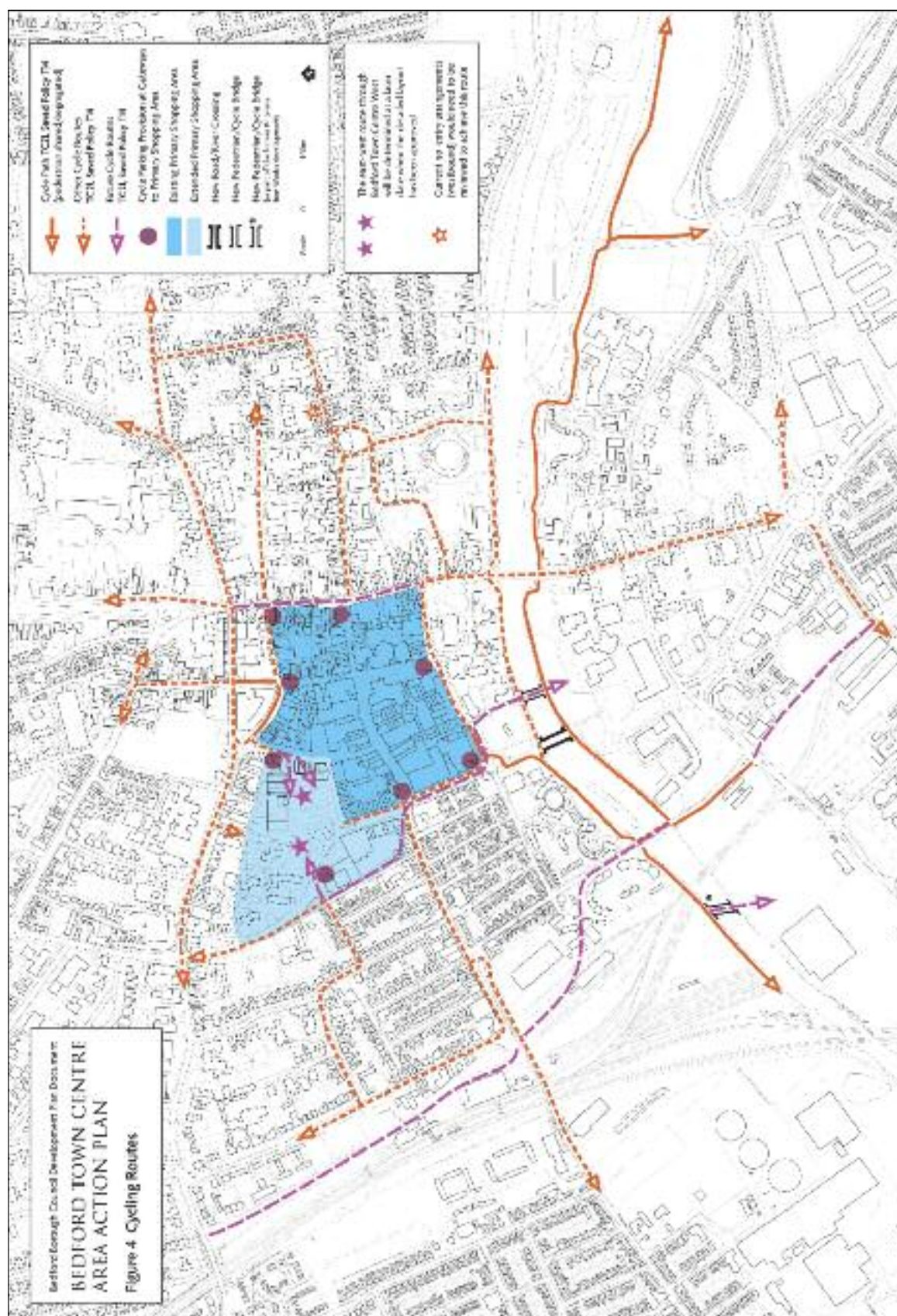
- 7.9 The Council also encourages applicants to take part in pre-application discussions so that when applications are submitted, they stand the best chance of being approved. A project management protocol has also been produced by the Borough Council (in conjunction with Renaissance Bedford) following consultations with the development industry, for major housing developments. This seeks to ensure that the project management and resourcing of these applications at both the Council and developer ends can be agreed between the parties at the outset.



New Council & Local Area at Water Level







APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- A.1 The following documents have provided background information for the preparation of this plan.
- A.2 Bedford Town Centre Development Framework Study March 2005 prepared by GVA Grimley, MVA and Urban Initiatives on behalf of Bedford Borough Council in association with English Partnerships, East of England Development Agency and Bedfordshire County Council.
- A.3 This comprises:
- Bedford Town Centre Development Framework Study March 2005 main document.
 - Bedford Town Centre Development Framework Study March 2005 Technical Document 1 Area Development Guidance.
 - Bedford Town Centre Development Framework Study March 2005 Technical Document 2 Transportation Strategy – Volume 1 and Volume 2 (Appendices).
 - Bedford Town Centre Development Framework Study March 2005 Technical Document 3 Urban Design Strategy.
 - Bedford Town Centre Development Framework Study March 2005 Technical Document 4 Retail Strategy.
 - Bedford Borough Council Retail Study September 2005 produced by GVA Grimley.
 - Bedford Town Centre Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – produced by the consultants WSP on behalf of the Borough Council.
 - Bedford Employment Land Study produced by the consultants Halcrow.

APPENDIX B

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES INCLUDING REGIONAL & SUB-REGIONAL POLICY AUDIT

SUMMARY OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY

- B.1 The most recent revision to the regional spatial strategy is the East of England Plan (RSS14) which was published in December 2004. This has been the subject of an examination in public and is currently scheduled to be published by the government in 2007.
- B.2 The RSS has the following spatial planning vision:

...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, whilst respecting its diversity and enhancing its assets.

B3 In order to achieve this vision, the Plan contains a number of objectives. These 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 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, by reducing the need to travel, encouraging the use of more environmentally friendly modes of transport, and widening the 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.

B4 The starting point for the regional spatial strategy is the aim to achieve sustainable development with development focused in or adjacent to major urban areas where there is good public transport accessibility and where strategic networks (rail, road, and bus) connect. In this respect, Bedford is identified as a key centre on which development and change will be focused.

B5 Thriving, vibrant and attractive town centres are fundamental to the sustainable development of the East of England and these will continue to be the focus for investment, environmental enhancement and regeneration.

B6 In terms of retail hierarchy, Bedford is classified as a regional centre and the strategy proposes that new retail development will be located in existing centres and be consistent in scale with the size and character of the centre and its role in the regional structure.

B.7 Proposals for development within the Bedford Growth Area are contained within the **Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy** which was published in March 2005. It contains a number of objectives and these are listed below:

1. 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 the skills of the workforce, particularly in the high value knowledge-based sectors.
3. Locate development in the main urban areas to support urban renaissance, regeneration of deprived areas, recycling of land and sustainable patterns of travel.
4. 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 greenspace 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 modes of travel.
6. To create sustainable communities by ensuring that economic, environmental, social and cultural infrastructure needs are met in step with growth.

B.8 In order to strengthen the existing role and function of Bedford as a regional centre, key priorities are the revitalisation of Bedford Town Centre and the provision of new employment in the town. Key priorities for Bedford and the northern Marston Vale are identified as:

1. Revitalising the town centre and enhancing retail, cultural and leisure facilities involving a range of redevelopment, refurbishment and environmental improvement projects.
2. Developing the local economy to provide a significant increase in employment, by identifying and fostering a range of growth sectors particularly in high value knowledge based sectors. This includes creating a focus for offices in the town centre through the provision of a range of accommodation.
3. Securing a higher rate of housing delivery principally through the implementation of existing commitments.
4. Reducing the need to travel and achieving a step change in the attractiveness of public transport, walking and cycling. Priorities include revitalising the bus station area and creating improved interchange arrangements including convenient and attractive access to railway stations; providing a cultural quarter near the town centre and an increased range of centrally located overnight accommodation.

■ RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENTS OR SAVED POLICIES

B.9 In accordance with the published Local Development Scheme, the Council has adopted a Core Strategy and Rural Issues Development Plan Document. This sets out a borough-wide spatial vision and includes a policy (Policy CP19) to promote the regeneration of the town centre. It also defines the retail hierarchy (Policy CP20) for the borough and both documents should be read together.

TABLE 3 LOCAL PLAN POLICIES SUPERSEDED BY THE PLAN

TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN POLICY		LOCAL PLAN POLICY WHICH WILL BE REPLACED
	Strategic Policy	BE1 Mixed uses <i>But only in as far as it relates to the Town Centre</i>
TC1	Definition of the Town Centre	TC1 Protecting architectural and historic features
TC2	Improving the retail offer	
TC3	Primary Shopping Area and Primary Shopping Frontages	SH3 Primary shopping frontage TC9 Office use in Primary Shopping Area
TC4	Secondary Shopping Frontages	TC6 Secondary shopping frontages
TC5	Office development	
TC6	Office development sites	
TC7	New Retail Quarter - Bedford Town Centre West	S2 Opportunity sites BE2 Mixed uses in opportunity sites SH4 Pilgrim Square
TC8	New Retail Quarter - retail reinvestment and the High Street	TC3 Environmental improvements
TC9	Cultural Quarter – Castle Lane	S2 Opportunity sites BE2 Mixed uses in opportunity sites
TC10	Cultural Quarter – Bedford Museum/ Cecil Higgins Art Gallery	S2 Opportunity sites BE2 Mixed uses in opportunity sites
TC11	Riverside Quarter – Riverside Square	S2 Opportunity sites BE2 Mixed uses in opportunity sites T13 Pedestrian Routes <i>But only in respect of Batts Ford footbridge</i>
TC12	Riverside Quarter – Shire Hall and the Bank Building site	S2 Opportunity sites BE2 Mixed uses in opportunity sites
TC13	Station Quarter – Bedford Station	
TC14	St Mary's Quarter	
TC15	Kingsway Quarter	
TC16	Land at Lime Street	S2 Opportunity sites BE2 Mixed uses in opportunity sites
TC17	Progress Ford, The Broadway	
TC18	Junction / Network improvements 2006-2011	
TC19	Network improvements post 2011	T2 Local transportation network improvements <i>But only in respect of the Prebend Street Relief Road</i>
TC20	Development related network improvements	

TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN POLICY		LOCAL PLAN POLICY WHICH WILL BE REPLACED
TC21	Walking and cycle routes	
TC22	Pedestrians connections	
TC23	Public transport interchange / services	
TC24	Parking	
TC25	Housing mix	
TC26	Living over the Shop	TC7 Living over the Shop
TC27	Heritage	TC1 Protecting architectural and historic features
TC28	Tourism	
TC29	Riverside frontages	TC5 Riverside enhancements
TC30	Riverside development	TC5 Riverside enhancements
TC31	Biodiversity	
TC32	Public spaces	TC3 Environmental improvements
TC33	Shop fronts	TC4 Shopfronts and advertisements
TC34	Town centre management	
TC35	Town centre amenity	TC10 Town centre amenity
TC36	Redevelopment proposals	
TC37	Leisure uses	
TC38	Compulsory purchase	
TC39	Urban design principles	
TC40	Developer contributions	
TC41	Submission requirements	

Note: the above table presumes that the quarters will NOT be marked on the Proposals Map.

■ IMPACT OF OTHER LOCAL STRATEGIES INCLUDING THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- B.10 The Community Plan for the Borough of Bedford 2004-2010, was produced by the Bedford Partnership Board which is the Local Strategic Partnership for the Borough. The Community Plan has nine key themes. They are:
1. Promoting Community Safety
 2. Providing Housing and Building Communities
 3. Improving the Environment
 4. Improving Health
 5. Strengthening the Economy
 6. Developing Learning Opportunities and Skills
 7. Creating Better Transport
 8. Promoting Leisure
 9. Including Everyone.
- B.11 In devising the policies and proposals of this Area Action Plan the Council has had regard to these and the objectives and actions which flow from them. The intention is to ensure that this Area Action Plan is consistent with and help to deliver the community plan.
- B.12 A fundamental objective of the community plan and of this Area Action Plan is to regenerate Bedford town centre. An integral part of the Plan's strategy to achieve this is the redevelopment of key sites for a mix of uses, combined with transportation improvements, improved connections and high quality urban design.
- B.13 Following receipt of Go-East's response to the preferred option, outside agencies such as utility bodies, health, education and the emergency services were contacted and asked to confirm or otherwise if the Area Action Plan and the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan were consistent with their plans and strategies for the borough as a whole and Bedford town centre in particular.
- B.14 They were also asked to identify if there was any degree of inconsistency, which areas of the Plan would impinge on their respective service areas and how this could be overcome.
- B.15 The Service Manager (Housing) confirmed that the above plans are consistent with both the Bedford Housing Strategy 2004/2007 and the Bedfordshire Sub-Regional Housing Strategy 2005/2010.
- B.16 The only other response was on behalf of the Mobile Operators Association (MOA) seeking inclusion of a policy for telecommunications in one of the Council's local development documents. Whilst this will be considered in due course, it is not appropriate that such a general policy is included in the Area Action Plan.

■ REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL POLICY AUDIT

- B.17 Table 4 sets out the Area Action Plan objectives and shows that these are in general conformity with the draft East of England Plan, the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy and the Bedford Borough Council Community Plan 2004-2010.



TABLE 4 - REGIONAL/SUB REGIONAL POLICY AUDIT

AREA ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES	DRAFT EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN	MILTON KEYNES SOUTH MIDLANDS SUB-REGIONAL STRATEGY (MKSM SR5)	BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLAN 2004-2010	CONSISTENCY OF THE PLAN'S OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES WITH THESE OTHER DOCUMENTS
To provide a framework for the regeneration of the town centre.	Sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres. Make more use of previously developed land and existing buildings, and use land more efficiently, in meeting future development needs. Support for the economy across the region, but particularly focusing on areas with particular need for regeneration. Increase prosperity and employment growth to meet identified employment needs of the region and achieve a more sustainable balance between workers and jobs. Policy SS5 Thriving, vibrant and attractive town centres are fundamental to the sustainable development of the East of England and they will continue to be the focus for investment, environmental enhancement and regeneration.. Policy SS11 identifies Bedford/ Kempston as a priority area for regeneration within the eastern region.	Locate development in the main urban areas to support urban renaissance, regeneration of deprived areas, recycling of land and sustainable patterns of travel.	Objective: To have a borough where the environment is a key component of social and economic development. Action: Ensure that all development contributes to the principles of sustainable development	The strategy for the town centre has regeneration at its heart through the redevelopment of primarily previously developed sites, the promotion of mixed used developments and greater residential use to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre. In addition the plan proposes a number of measures which will improve the environment within the centre. Combined with significant new investment in infrastructure, all of these measures will contribute towards Bedford's renaissance (see Strategic Policy, and Policies TC2, TC7-17, TC18-24, TC26, TC29, TC32, TC33, and TC37). In terms of sustainable development, all of the policies for the key sites include a requirement for the incorporation of sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy (see Strategic Policy, and Policies TC7-17).
		Achieving the revitalisation of Bedford town centre and enhancing retail, cultural and leisure facilities. This will involve completing a range of redevelopment, refurbishment and environmental improvement projects.	Objective: To have a borough which makes more efficient and effective use of resources. Action: Promote the use of sustainable transport systems.	The plan aims to revitalise the town centre by increasing the retail, cultural and leisure offer through the redevelopment of key sites. The plan also seeks to promote the greater use of sustainable transport systems including walking, cycling, public transport and park and ride (see Strategic Policy and Policies TC7-17 and TC21-23).
	Minimise the risk of flooding.		Objective: To have a natural environment where biodiversity landscape and cultural value is understood, protected and enhanced for future generations. Action: Comply with government guidance in relation to development in land liable to flood and promote its multifunctional use for water level management, biodiversity and recreation.	The plan includes a policy (TC31) on biodiversity and refers to the conclusions of the strategic flood risk assessment carried out for the town centre.

TABLE 4

	Developing cultural and heritage focused tourism in Bedford by enhancing existing - and providing new – cultural and heritage facilities and attractions, and by providing a cultural quarter near the town centre and an increased range of centrally located overnight accommodation.	<p>Vision: To promote and encourage a rich variety of arts, leisure and cultural activities for all to derive pleasure, relaxation and fulfilment.</p> <p>Local Priority: Provide sustainable sports, arts, heritage, parks and recreational facilities and activities.</p> <p>Objective: To have a built environment whose heritage and cultural value is understood, protected and enhanced for future generations.</p> <p>Objective: To have a natural environment where biodiversity, landscape and cultural value is understood, protected and enhanced for future generations.</p>	<p>The plan includes a policy (TC31) on biodiversity and establishes a cultural quarter (TC9 &10). Policy TC27 aims to protect and where appropriate enhance the architectural, archaeological and historic features of the centre and tourism is encouraged in Policy TC28.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>This objective and the policies in the plan are consistent with the draft East of England Plan, MKSM SRS and the borough council's community plan.</p>
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.	<p>Sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres.</p> <p>Make more use of previously developed land and existing buildings, and use land more efficiently, in meeting future development needs.</p> <p>Support for the economy across the region, but particularly focusing on areas with particular need for regeneration.</p> <p>Increase prosperity and employment growth to meet identified employment needs of the region and achieve a more sustainable balance between workers and jobs.</p> <p>Policy S55</p> <p>Thriving, vibrant and attractive town centres are fundamental to the sustainable development of the East of England and they will continue to be the focus for investment, environmental enhancement and regeneration.....</p> <p>Policy SS11 identifies Bedford/Kempston as a priority area for regeneration within the eastern region.</p>	<p>Locate development in the main urban areas to support urban renaissance, regeneration of deprived areas, recycling of land and sustainable patterns of travel.</p> <p>Achieving the revitalisation of Bedford town centre and enhancing retail, cultural and leisure facilities. This will involve completing a range of redevelopment, refurbishment and environmental improvement projects.</p>	<p>Objective: To have a built environment whose heritage and cultural value is understood, protected and enhanced for future generations.</p> <p>The strategy for the town centre has regeneration at its heart through the redevelopment of primarily previously developed sites, the promotion of mixed use developments and greater residential use to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre. In addition the plan proposes a number of measures which will improve the environment within the centre. Combined with significant new investment in infrastructure, all of these measures will contribute towards Bedford's renaissance (see Strategic Policy, and Policies TC2, TC7-17, TC18-24, TC26, TC29, TC32, TC33, and TC37).</p> <p>In addition, Policy TC8 focuses reinvestment in the existing centre including the provision of high quality shopfronts and the refurbishment of existing buildings. The need to protect Bedford's heritage is addressed in Policy TC 27.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>This objective and the policies in the plan are consistent with the draft East of England Plan, MKSM SRS and the borough council's community plan.</p>

AREA ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES	DRAFT EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN	MILTON KEYNES SOUTH MIDLANDS SUB-REGIONAL STRATEGY (MKSM SRS)	BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLAN 2004-2010	CONSISTENCY OF THE PLAN'S OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES WITH THESE OTHER DOCUMENTS
To create a more diverse and vital mix of uses including a major increase in the town's retail offer.	Sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres.	Achieving the revitalisation of Bedford town centre and enhancing retail, cultural and leisure facilities. This will involve completing a range of redevelopment, refurbishment and environmental improvement projects.	<p>Priority: To improve access to primary health and hospital services and information about health and those issues which affect health.</p>	<p>The strategy for the town centre has regeneration at its heart through the redevelopment of primarily previously developed sites, the promotion of mixed used developments and greater residential use to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre (see Strategic Policy, and Policies TC2, TC7-17, and TC26).</p> <p>The plan aims to revitalise the town centre by increasing the retail, cultural and leisure offer through the redevelopment of key sites (see Strategic Policy and Policies TC7-17).</p> <p>Whilst the plan does not make a specific allocation for healthcare facilities within the town centre, it does indicate that contributions to healthcare facilities may be appropriate.</p>
		<p>Developing the local economy to provide significant increase in employment, by identifying and fostering a range of growth sectors, particularly in high value knowledge-based sectors, with appropriate effort going into business support and skills development.</p> <p>To provide for a commensurate level of economic growth and developing the skills of the workforce, particularly in the high value knowledge-based sectors</p> <p>This will include creating a focus for offices in the town centre, through the provision of a range of accommodation.</p>	<p>Vision: To improve the economic well being of Bedford borough's existing and future residents by achieving higher levels of growth in the local economy than would otherwise occur – making a difference to prosperity.</p> <p>Vision: The Bedford Partnership Board has adopted a clear vision to guide the strengthening of the local economy. This requires a business development strategy that champions Bedford's Economy by encouraging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local firms to invest in the borough • more businesses to move to the borough • investment in our workforce <p>Objective: To encourage Bedford's business community to reinvest, stay competitive and expand its markets, products and workforce.</p> <p>Objective: To encourage companies to locate their business in the borough.</p> <p>Objective: To ensure that Bedford's labour force is of a sufficient size and appropriately skilled to encourage investment and the participation of all in employment.</p> <p>Actions include: Town centre renaissance, hotel and tourism development, seek infrastructure improvements, the provision of suitable employment sites and increasing the labour supply.</p>	<p>The plan aims to revitalise the town centre by increasing the retail, cultural and leisure offer through the redevelopment of key sites (see Strategic Policy and Policies TC7-17).</p> <p>In addition it seeks to strengthen the local economy by the creation of a new office quarter focused on the railway station and by identifying the potential for offices at some of the other key sites (see Strategic Policy and Policies TC5-6, TC13, TC15 and TC16). These will provide a range of different business locations which may be attractive to the high value knowledge based employment sectors.</p>

				<p><i>Vision:</i> To promote and encourage a rich variety of arts, leisure and cultural activities for all to derive pleasure, relaxation and fulfilment.</p>	<p>The plan aims to revitalise the town centre by increasing the retail, cultural and leisure offer through the redevelopment of key sites (see Strategic Policy and Policies TC7-17). It also seeks to establish a cultural quarter (TC9 &10).</p> <p><i>Conclusion</i> This objective and the policies in the plan are consistent with the draft East of England Plan, MKSM SRS and the borough council's community plan.</p>
To achieve the successful integration of new development with the existing town centre.	Deliver more integrated patterns of land use, movement, activity and development, including employment and housing.				<p>The proposed business quarter focused on the railway station is consistent with the Draft East of England Plan (see Strategic Policy and Policy TC13).</p> <p>In identifying the key areas of change, the plan considers the need to achieve integration in terms of walking and cycling routes, links to the existing centre and public transport interchanges. By way of example, the proposals for Castle Lane seek to transform what is essentially a backwater into a new cultural quarter which is integral to the existing and expanded town centre.</p> <p><i>Conclusion</i> This objective and the policies in the plan are consistent with the draft East of England Plan.</p>

AREA ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES	DRAFT EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN	MILTON KEYNES SOUTH MIDLANDS SUB-REGIONAL STRATEGY (MKSM SRS)	BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLAN 2004-2010	CONSISTENCY OF THE PLAN'S OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES WITH THESE OTHER DOCUMENTS
<p>To strengthen the economy of the town centre and its role as an employment, administrative and educational centre.</p>	<p>Support for the economy across the region, but particularly focusing on areas with particular need for regeneration.</p> <p>Increase prosperity and employment growth to meet identified employment needs of the region and achieve a more sustainable balance between workers and jobs.</p> <p>Policy SS11 identifies Bedford/Kempston as a priority area for regeneration within the eastern region.</p>	<p>Developing the local economy to provide significant increase in employment, by identifying and fostering a range of growth sectors, particularly in high value knowledge-based sectors, with appropriate effort going into business support and skills development.</p> <p>To provide for a commensurate level of economic growth and developing the skills of the workforce, particularly in the high value knowledge-based sectors</p> <p>This will include creating a focus for offices in the town centre, through the provision of a range of accommodation.</p>	<p>Vision: To improve the economic well being of Bedford borough's existing and future residents by achieving higher levels of growth in the local economy than would otherwise occur – making a difference to prosperity.</p> <p>Vision: The Bedford Partnership Board has adopted a clear vision to guide the strengthening of the local economy. This requires a business development strategy that champions Bedford's economy by encouraging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local firms to invest in the borough • more businesses to move to the borough • investment in our workforce <p>Objective: To encourage Bedford's business community to reinvest, stay competitive and expand its markets, products and workforce.</p> <p>Objective: To encourage companies to locate their business in the borough.</p> <p>Objective: To ensure that Bedford's labour force is of a sufficient size and appropriately skilled to encourage investment and the participation of all in employment.</p> <p>Actions include: Town centre renaissance; hotel and tourism development; seek infrastructure improvements, the provision of suitable employment sites and increasing the labour supply.</p>	<p>The plan aims to revitalise the town centre by increasing the retail, cultural and leisure offer through the redevelopment of key sites (see Strategic Policy and Policies TC7-17). In addition it seeks to strengthen the local economy by the creation of a new office quarter focused on the railway station and by identifying the potential for offices at some of the other key sites. (see Strategic Policy and Policies TC5-6, TC13, TC15 and TC16). These will provide a range of different business locations which may be attractive to the high value knowledge based employment sectors.</p> <p>The plan also recognises the role of Bedford College within the town centre and provides guidance for development opportunities within the St Mary's quarter (see Policy TC14).</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>This objective and the policies in the plan are consistent with the draft East of England Plan, MKSM SPS and the borough council's community plan.</p>

<p>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.</p>	<p>Deliver more integrated patterns of land use, movement, activity and development, including employment and housing.</p> <p>Minimise the environmental impact of travel, by reducing the need to travel, encouraging the use of more environmentally friendly modes of transport and widening choice of modes.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Reducing the need to travel by private vehicle by integrating land use and transport planning, achieving a step-change in the attractiveness of public transport, including through quality bus corridors and park and ride schemes, improving the attractiveness of walking and cycling, and implementing travel demand management measures.</p> <p>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 modes of travel.</p> <p>Priorities will include revitalising the Bedford bus station area and creating improved interchange arrangements, including convenient and attractive access to railway stations.</p>	<p>Objective: To have a borough which makes more efficient and effective use of resources.</p> <p>Action: Promote the use of sustainable transport systems.</p> <p>Objective: To have an enhanced and diverse network of green spaces and access corridors.</p> <p>Action: Improve pedestrian and cycle access across the network throughout the borough.</p> <p>Vision: To create better, more sustainable, integrated transport networks for the borough of Bedford.</p> <p>Local priorities: Rectify incomplete or poor transport networks for car, LGV, bus, rail, cycle and walking modes. Provision of park and ride system.</p> <p>Local priorities: Provision and encouragement of use of more sustainable, convenient transport modes.</p> <p>Local priorities: Improve poor transport interchanges and access to Bedford town centre.</p> <p>Local priorities: Improve access to fringe areas around Bedford town centre.</p>	<p>The plan seeks to promote the greater use of sustainable transport systems including walking, cycling, public transport and park and ride. (see Strategic Policy and Policies TC21-23). In addition, it supports further bids through the Local Transport Plan process to support a range of improvements for the town centre including a new river crossing. The plan also seeks to improve the bus and railway stations and interchange facilities. The Bedford bus station is identified as a key area of change (see Policies TC7, and TC18-20).</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>This objective and the policies in the plan are consistent with the draft East of England Plan, MKSM SRS and the borough council's community plan.</p>
<p>To improve the number and quality of the connections within the town centre, and between the centre and the river and railway station.</p>	<p>Deliver more integrated patterns of land use, movement, activity and development, including employment and housing.</p> <p>Minimise the environmental impact of travel, by reducing the need to travel, encouraging the use of more environmentally friendly modes of transport, and widening choice of modes.</p>	<p>Reducing the need to travel by private vehicle by integrating land use and transport planning, achieving a step-change in the attractiveness of public transport, including through quality bus corridors and park and ride schemes, improving the attractiveness of walking and cycling, and implementing travel demand management measures.</p> <p>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 modes of travel.</p> <p>Priorities will include revitalising the Bedford bus station area and creating improved interchange arrangements, including convenient and attractive access to railway stations.</p>	<p>Objective: To have an enhanced and diverse network of green spaces and access corridors.</p> <p>Action: Improve pedestrian and cycle access across the network throughout the borough.</p> <p>Vision: To create better, more sustainable, integrated transport networks for the borough of Bedford.</p> <p>Local priorities: Rectify incomplete or poor transport networks for car, LGV, bus, rail, cycle and walking modes. Provision of park and ride system.</p> <p>Local priorities: Provision and encouragement of use of more sustainable, convenient transport modes.</p> <p>Local priorities: Improve poor transport interchanges and access to Bedford town centre.</p> <p>Local priorities: Improve access to fringe areas around Bedford town centre.</p>	<p>The plan seeks to promote the greater use of sustainable transport systems including walking, cycling, public transport and park and ride. (see Strategic Policy and Policies TC21-23). In addition, it supports further bids through the Local Transport Plan process to support a range of improvements for the town centre including a new river crossing. The plan also seeks to improve the bus and railway stations and interchange facilities.</p> <p>The Bedford bus station is identified as a key area of change (see Policies TC7, and TC18-20).</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>This objective and the policies in the plan are consistent with the draft East of England Plan, MKSM SRS and the borough council's community plan.</p>

AREA ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES	DRAFT EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN	MILTON KEYNES SOUTH MIDLANDS SUB-REGIONAL STRATEGY (MKSM SRS)	BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLAN 2004-2010	CONSISTENCY OF THE PLAN'S OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES WITH THESE OTHER DOCUMENTS
<p>To achieve a significant growth in town centre living in order to enhance the vitality and viability of the centre.</p> <p>and</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Meet the region's identified housing needs, and in particular provide sufficient affordable housing.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Key theme: Providing Housing and Building Communities</p> <p>Vision: Ensuring the availability of sufficient, suitable and affordable good quality homes and to create sustainable communities in which people want to live.</p> <p>Standard: The product range for meeting people's housing aspirations needs to meet different household needs and affordability criteria needs to be linked to a range of incomes.</p> <p>Standard: Within new developments planning of affordable homes will require a range of tenure applications in addition to owner occupation and social rented housing e.g. market and sub market rented, shared equity and low cost market sales.</p> <p>Standard: Within these tenures the objective will be to provide housing for key workers, housing for people with disabilities and/or support needs, affordable homes for people on lower incomes having full regard to both urban and rural housing needs/expectations.</p>	<p>The plan promotes residential use on a number of key sites, either as the primary use or as part of mixed use schemes. These also make provision for affordable housing. It also expects schemes to include a mix and range of house types, tenures and sizes to reflect the needs of the community. Living over the shop' schemes are also encouraged (see Strategic Policy and Policies TC7-17, and TC25-26).</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>This objective and the policies in the plan are consistent with the draft East of England Plan, MKSM SRS and the borough council's community plan.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Protect and enhance the built and historic environment and encourage good quality design and use of sustainable construction methods for all new development.</p> <p>Protect and enhance the natural environment, including its biodiversity and landscape character.</p>	<p>Developing cultural and heritage focused tourism in Bedford by enhancing existing – and providing new – cultural and heritage facilities and attractions, and by providing a cultural quarter near the town centre and an increased range of centrally located overnight accommodation.</p> <p>Achieving the revitalisation of Bedford town centre and enhancing retail, cultural and leisure facilities. This will involve completing a range of redevelopment, refurbishment and environmental improvement projects.</p>	<p>Objective: To have a natural environment where biodiversity, landscape and cultural value is understood, protected and enhanced for future generations.</p> <p>Action: Comply with government guidance in relation to development in land liable to flood and promote its multifunctional use for water level management, biodiversity and recreation.</p> <p>Vision: To promote and encourage a rich variety of arts, leisure and cultural activities for all to derive pleasure, relaxation and fulfilment.</p> <p>Local Priority: Provide sustainable sports, arts, heritage, parks and recreational facilities and activities.</p> <p>Objective: To have a built environment whose heritage and cultural value is understood, protected and enhanced for future generations.</p> <p>Objective: To have a natural environment where biodiversity, landscape and cultural value is understood, protected and enhanced for future generations.</p>	<p>The plan seeks to protect and where appropriate enhance the architectural, archaeological and historic features of the town centre, promote tourism, enhance the quality of the riverside environment and conserve and where appropriate enhance biodiversity (see Strategic Policy and Policies TC27-31). It also seeks to establish a cultural quarter (TC9 &10).</p> <p>The plan refers to the conclusions of the strategic flood risk assessment carried out for the town centre.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>This objective and the policies in the plan are consistent with the draft East of England Plan, MKSM SRS and the borough council's community plan.</p>

To achieve high quality urban design with high quality materials and finishes.	Protect and enhance the built and historic environment and encourage good quality design and use of sustainable construction methods for all new development.	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 greenspace and related infrastructure (green infrastructure).	Existing and new homes should meet the highest standards in terms of design, including energy efficiency and, where appropriate, meet the needs of people with disabilities.	<p>The plan contains a number of urban design principles which will be a material consideration when planning applications are determined (Policy TC39). Applicants are also required to submit an urban design statement to show how these principles have been addressed and how development has responded to a detailed analysis of the local context (Policy TC 41).</p> <p>In terms of sustainable development, all of the policies for the key sites include a requirement for the incorporation of sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy. (see Strategic Policy, and Policies TC7-17)</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>This objective and the policies in the plan are consistent with the draft East of England Plan, MKSM SRS and the borough council's community plan.</p>
To create a town centre which is safe, attractive and in which people will want to live, shop, work and spend their leisure time.	Sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres. Policy S55 Thriving, vibrant and attractive town centres are fundamental to the sustainable development of the East of England and they will continue to be the focus for investment, environmental enhancement and regeneration.....	Achieving the revitalisation of Bedford town centre and enhancing retail, cultural and leisure facilities. This will involve completing a range of redevelopment, refurbishment and environmental improvement projects.	<p>Vision: To promote and encourage a rich variety of arts, leisure and cultural activities for all to derive pleasure, relaxation and fulfilment.</p> <p>Local Priority: Provide sustainable sports, arts, heritage, parks and recreational facilities and activities.</p> <p>Vision: Working together for safer communities.</p> <p>Priorities include: Drugs and alcohol issues, violent crime, quality of life, environmental crime, and anti-social behaviour.</p>	<p>The strategy for the town centre has regeneration at its heart through the redevelopment of primarily previously developed sites, the promotion of mixed used developments and greater residential use to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre. In addition the plan proposes a number of measures which will improve the environment within the centre. Combined with significant new investment in infrastructure, all of these measures will contribute towards Bedford's renaissance (see Strategic Policy, and Policies TC2, TC7-17, TC18-24, TC26, TC29, TC32, TC33, and TC37).</p> <p>The plan also seeks to establish a cultural quarter (TC9 &10).</p> <p>Policies TC34 and 35 deal with town centre management and amenity issues including extensions to the existing CCTV system.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>This objective and the policies in the plan are consistent with the draft East of England Plan, MKSM SRS and the borough council's community plan.</p>

AREA ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES	DRAFT EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN	MILTON KEYNES SOUTH MIDLANDS SUB-REGIONAL STRATEGY (MKSM SRS)	BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLAN 2004-2010	CONSISTENCY OF THE PLAN'S OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES WITH THESE OTHER DOCUMENTS
To achieve high quality public realm improvements including provision for management and maintenance.	Protect and enhance the built and historic environment and encourage good quality design and use of sustainable construction methods for all new development.		<p>Vision: To protect and improve the environment within the borough of Bedford through sustainable development and management.</p> <p>Activity Area: Promote the attractiveness of Bedford.</p> <p>Action: Pride in Bedford – Bedford – Festival Town.</p> <p>Town centre events programme.</p> <p>Town centre renaissance.</p> <p>Town centre public space improvement programme.</p> <p>To have an enhanced and diverse network of green spaces and access corridors.</p> <p>Vision: Working together for safer communities.</p> <p>Priorities include: Drugs and alcohol issues, violent crime, quality of life, environmental crime, and anti-social behaviour.</p>	<p>The plan seeks to create a series of new public spaces and high quality public realm. In addition the de-trafficking of St. Paul's Sq. North and the High Street will provide opportunities for environmental enhancement. The policy for Riverside Square includes a requirement for a grand public square for Bedford. The opportunity to create new public spaces along the river corridor is also highlighted (see Strategic Policy and Policies TC11, TC30 and TC32).</p> <p>Policies TC34 and 35 deal with town centre management and amenity issues including extensions to the existing CCTV system.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>This objective and the policies in the plan are consistent with the draft East of England Plan and the borough council's community plan.</p>
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.	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.	<p>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 modes of travel.</p> <p>To create sustainable communities by ensuring that economic, environmental, social and cultural infrastructure needs are met in step with growth.</p>		<p>The plan makes provision for a range of different infrastructure to be secured through development contributions and the Local Transport Plan. Further details are set out in the Implementation Framework. Policy TC40 sets out the Council's approach to developer contributions and their scope.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>This objective and the policies in the plan are consistent with the draft East of England Plan and MKSM SRS.</p>

APPENDIX C

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

- C1 The town centre is a key corporate and community priority. This Area Action Plan will need to play a full role in achieving a dramatic change in the fortunes of Bedford Town Centre. Much has been accomplished in the last few years to raise expectations and to foster investor confidence and such work will need to continue if the Vision is to be realised. The pace at which change occurs will be influenced by prevailing market conditions and inevitably there is greater certainty about delivery in the earlier part of the plan period than in the later part. With this caveat, the framework attempts to set out how the Area Action Plan's policies and proposals will be delivered, by whom and by when.

PROGRAMME FOR DELIVERY

- C2 The Area Action Plan comprises both general and site specific policies. General policies are reactive as they set the approach to be taken when planning applications are received. Specific policies are dynamic in that they propose the development and use of particular sites. Implementation issues are considered below by theme. Details are shown on Table 5.

A MORE COMPETITIVE RETAIL AND COMMERCIALLY ACTIVE CENTRE

The Strategic Policy and Policies TC1 to TC6 are general policies which will be implemented through the development control process as and when proposals arise. The effectiveness of these policies will depend upon the scale of development activity and will be assessed through monitoring. The retail floorspace provision target set out in Policy TC2 has not been fully allocated in the Plan. The Plan concentrates on the delivery of three key sites expected to deliver 31,200 sq.m. of retail floorspace. If monitoring indicates that the amount of additional retail floorspace allocated on the three sites is not likely to be delivered in line with predictions and, in any event, before the end of 2011, the Council will undertake a thorough review of its strategy for the provision of retail floorspace to consider the reasons behind any failure of provision, any need for additional floorspace and the extent of the Primary Shopping Area in order to take the regeneration effort forward to 2016 and possibly beyond.

A MORE STRUCTURED AND DISTINCTIVE CENTRE

Policies TC7 to TC17 relate to specific sites and proposals that will be implemented in accordance with the programme set out in table 5 and as below.

TC7: BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE WEST

This is a major redevelopment project to be implemented and funded by a private sector developer. The scheme is the subject of formal development agreements and a planning application was submitted during 2006. The Borough Council has resolved to use CPO powers to assist land assembly if required. Highway implications are dealt with at TC20 below.

TC8: NEW RETAIL QUARTER, RETAIL INVESTMENT AND HIGH STREET INITIATIVE

The re-establishment of a successful retail presence in the High Street will require the collective action of the Borough Council, Bedford Town Centre Company, Renaissance Bedford and Bedfordshire County Council as highway authority. The Borough Council will prepare a strategy in consultation and encourage private sector participation using grant aid where appropriate. The potential to reduce traffic levels and improve air quality will be pursued. Action needs to be taken when Bedford Town Centre West is under construction to maximize impact.

TC9: CASTLE LANE

This redevelopment project is to be implemented and largely funded by a private sector developer. The scheme is the subject of a formal development agreement and a planning application was submitted during 2006. Growth Area Funding (£2.7m) has been earmarked to assist project viability due to archaeological site constraints.

TC10: CECIL HIGGINS ART GALLERY & BEDFORD MUSEUM

A major refurbishment scheme is being promoted by the Borough Council using Council (£2m), Growth Area (£2.5m) and Heritage Lottery (£4.5m) funds together with private sector donations. The scale of the project is dependent upon the outcome of the HLF bid in September 2006. The residential element of this project would be implemented separately.

TC11: RIVERSIDE SQUARE

This is an important redevelopment project to be implemented and funded by a private sector developer. The scheme is the subject of a formal development agreement and a planning application was submitted during 2006.

TC12: SHIRE HALL AND BANK BUILDING SITE

Various schemes for the refurbishment of these buildings have been discussed over the years and HM Court Services is undecided as to whether the Magistrates' Courts should be refurbished or relocated. The policy will become operative when proposals come forward from government. In these circumstances no implementation programme is offered.

TC13: BEDFORD STATION QUARTER

Consultants have been contracted to explore development options through a masterplanning process with the view to achieving an attractive outline planning permission for the site and generating market interest in redevelopment. A planning application was submitted in 2008.

TC14: ST MARY'S QUARTER

Bedford College and Bedfordshire County Council are encouraged to bring forward proposals to create an active face to the river. Bridging proposals are contained within Policies TC11 and TC19.

TC15: KINGSWAY QUARTER

The Borough Council will prepare a development brief in order to encourage the private sector to bring forward further proposals.

TC16: LAND AT LIME STREET

The redevelopment potential of this site was recognised by the Local Plan 2002 but as yet no proposals have been received.

TC17: PROGRESS FORD

The site has been marketed and a preferred developer appointed. It is likely that an application will be submitted during 2006 and that redevelopment could commence in 2007.

■ A BETTER CONNECTED AND MORE ACCESSIBLE CENTRE

- C3 The implementation of Policies TC18 and TC19 rely upon the highway authority (Bedfordshire County Council - to be Bedford Unitary from April 2009) and the success it has in raising public and private funds. Policy TC20 relates to TC7. Policies TC21 to TC23 provide the basis for introducing service and network improvement as and when the opportunity arises either as part of development proposals or publicly funded schemes. Policy TC24 is a matter for the highway authority and the Joint Parking Board and will need to be kept under review during the plan period. The Council will monitor rates of infrastructure delivery and traffic levels within the Plan area. Where additional network capacity is unlikely to be delivered within the plan period, the strategy of this plan will need to be reviewed. Any such review will also take into account any subsequent review of the East of England Plan (RSS14).

TC18: JUNCTION & NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS 2006 -2012

The installation of a new traffic management and control system will be implemented first, followed by the other elements of this policy. These projects will be funded by the County Council unless developer contributions are indicated following travel assessments.

TC19: NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS POST 2012

The LTP2 includes Bedford Town Centre Improvements (inc River Bridge) as a major £25m scheme for implementation in 2011/12

TC20: DEVELOPMENT RELATED NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

Certain highway works will be required as part of the Bedford Town Centre West site and will be developer funded.

■ A MORE LIVEABLE AND ATTRACTIVE CENTRE

Policies TC25 to TC33 are general policies which will be implemented through the development control process as and when proposals arise. The effectiveness of these policies will depend upon the scale of development activity and will be assessed through monitoring.

■ A WELL MANAGED CENTRE

Policies TC34 and TC35 are general policies which will be implemented through the development control process as and when proposals arise. The effectiveness of these policies will depend upon the scale of development activity and will be assessed through monitoring.

■ GENERAL POLICIES

Policies TC36 to TC41 are general policies which will be implemented through the development control process as and when proposals arise. The effectiveness of these policies will depend upon the scale of development activity and will be assessed through monitoring.

FUNDING

- c4 The implementation of the Area Action Plan is heavily dependent on the necessary public and private funds becoming available at the right time. Overall, the funding climate is positive. The market has strengthened in recent years with the result that a number of developers are actively pursuing both commercial and residential schemes in the town centre. The regeneration of Bedford town centre is now public policy at national and regional level which means that projects will receive added priority in the programmes sponsored by central Government and government agencies.
- c5 Funding has also been made available locally by the Borough Council (£7.7m since 1995 and £2.2m in the current capital programme) and by the town centre business community who in 2005 voted for a Business Improvement District which is generating £0.5m per year for town centre promotion and management purposes.
- c6 Table 5 indicates the source(s) of funding related to individual policies and proposals contained in the Area Action Plan. Where the funding source is shown as 'private' the policy/proposal is regarded as requiring to be financed through development (Policy TC40 refers).

PROJECT DELIVERY

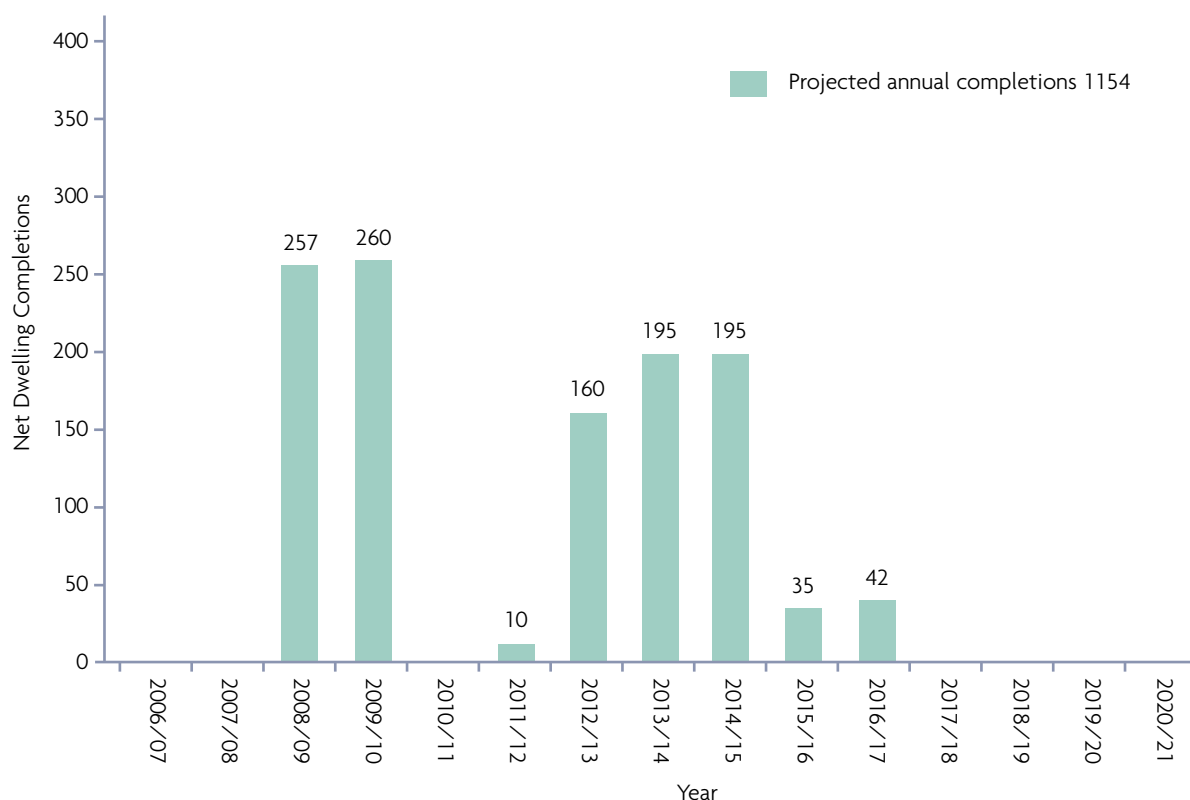
- c7 Table 5 also indicates the delivery agent(s) related to individual policies and proposals contained in the Area Action Plan. The role and responsibilities of the statutory authorities are clear and locally there is a good track record of working in partnership. Renaissance Bedford (LDV) has a particular role in championing the town centre in public sector funding rounds/opportunities and in providing technical support to projects like Bedford Station Quarter (Policy TC14).
- c8 Delivery of the Area Action Plan will require a dedicated resource. A team will be required that can draw upon skills in the fields of planning, regeneration, surveying, design, marketing and project management. This will be achieved, in the most part, through redirection of existing resources within the partner authorities.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- c9 Town centre regeneration is an ongoing process that the Borough Council has driven forward for several years and engagement with the public and other stakeholders has been central to these efforts. Three full scale exhibitions have been staged since 2001 to examine issues, options and solutions. Participation rates were high as were the levels of endorsement received. These exhibitions pre-dated the statutory consultation required in the production of the Area Action Plan. Consultation with the business community within the town centre in association with the BID Business Plan was also intense. However, these exercises are not seen as the end of the process and the Council will continue to provide additional non-statutory consultation to encourage the public and stakeholders to help shape and take ownership of the initiatives.

TABLE 5A - TOWN CENTRE HOUSING TRAJECTORY

BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN SITES 2001-2021



APPENDIX D

MONITORING FRAMEWORK

MONITORING FRAMEWORK

- D1 The Borough Council of Bedford has prepared this plan for the period between now and 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.
- D2 This Plan will be monitored and reviewed 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.
- D3 Table 6 sets out how the Borough Council proposes to monitor the effectiveness of the plan in delivering its objectives. Each of the 14 objectives is to be delivered by a specific policy or policies in the plan. The table also includes any relevant targets, the progress to which will be monitored. The table below sets out how each objective will be monitored in the AMR by setting a series of indicators. The references (C1b, L9 etc) included in the 'indicators' column of the table relate to the core and local indicators set out in the AMR.

TABLE 6 – TABLE OF PLAN OBJECTIVES AND RELATED POLICIES, TARGETS AND INDICATORS

DPD OBJECTIVE	DPD POLICIES RELATED TO THAT OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED TARGETS	INDICATORS	TRIGGERS
A MORE COMMERCIALY ACTIVE AND COMPETITIVE RETAIL CENTRE AND A MORE STRUCTURED AND DISTINCTIVE CENTRE				
1. To provide a framework for the regeneration of the town centre	Strategic Policy TC36: Redevelopment Proposals	Overall Plan targets: Retail: Up to 47,000 sq.m. net additional comparison goods retail floorspace by 2016 (30,000 sq.m. net by 2011) Office: Sites TC13, TC15 and TC16 Leisure: Site TC7	C4a: Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development	C4a: Retail – Review the retail capacity study in 2011. If 30,000 sq.m. net is delivered before 2011 review the retail capacity study early. If 30,000 sq.m. net not delivered by 2011, take account of the reviewed retail capacity study and consider the need for alternative sites using sequential approach. Office: If development on sites TC13, TC15 and TC16 are not on target to commence construction (see Table 5) consider alternative office site allocations in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CP5. Leisure: Monitor leisure delivery on TC7 site on a 2 yearly basis. If TC7 site unlikely to deliver leisure development in line with target date for the commencement of construction (see Table 5) and phasing agreed in the planning permission, consider alternative site allocations.
2. 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	Strategic Policy TC2: Improving the Retail Offer TC3: Primary Shopping Area and Primary Shopping Frontages TC4: Secondary Shopping Frontages TC5: Office Development TC7: New Retail Quarter – Bedford Town Centre West TC8: New Retail Quarter – Retail Reinvestment and the High Street TC9: Cultural Quarter – Castle Lane TC11: Riverside Quarter – Riverside Square TC36: Redevelopment Proposals TC37: Leisure Uses	TC2 target: Provision for up to 47,000 sq.m net additional comparison goods retail floorspace by 2016 (30,000 sq.m. net by 2011) and up to 6,000 sq.m net additional convenience goods retail floorspace by 2011 within the town centre (primarily within Bedford Town Centre West and thereafter the Primary Shopping Area) TC7 target: Provision of up to 30,000 sq.m net retail floorspace at Bedford Town Centre West by 2015/16 TC9 target: up to 600 sq.m. net retail floorspace by 2008/09 TC11 target: up to 600 sq.m. net retail floorspace by 2009/10	C4a: Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development C4b: Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres	C4b: If the identified retail floorspace at the three key sites (Policies TC7, TC9 and TC11) is not likely to be delivered or is delivered more quickly than expected (see timescales in Table 5 for when construction expected to commence), an updated retail capacity study should be undertaken to consider the reasons for this, to review the amount of additional floorspace likely to be needed and to consider the scope if appropriate for expansion of the Primary Shopping Area. Alternative site allocations for retail should be made if necessary and having regard for the updated retail capacity evidence.

DPD OBJECTIVE	DPD POLICIES RELATED TO THAT OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED TARGETS	INDICATORS	TRIGGERS
3. To create a more diverse and vital mix of uses including a major increase in the town's retail offer	<p>Strategic Policy</p> <p>TC2: Improving the Retail Offer</p> <p>TC3: Primary Shopping Area and Primary Shopping Frontages</p> <p>TC7: New Retail Quarter – Bedford Town Centre West</p> <p>TC8: New Retail Quarter – Retail Reinvestment and the High Street</p> <p>TC9: Cultural Quarter – Castle Lane</p> <p>TC11: Riverside Quarter – Riverside Square</p> <p>TC16: Land at Lime Street</p>	<p>Strategic Policy target: Expand the town centre and improve the town's shopping offer</p> <p>TC2 target: Provision for up to 47,000 sq.m net additional comparison goods retail floorspace by 2016 (30,000 sq.m. net by 2011) and up to 6,000 sq.m net additional convenience goods retail floorspace by 2011 within the town centre (primarily within Bedford Town Centre West and thereafter the Primary Shopping Area)</p> <p>TC7 target: Provision of up to 30,000 sq.m retail floorspace at Bedford Town Centre West. Provision of mixed use development including leisure, commercial and residential uses (300 residential units) by 2015/16</p> <p>TC9 target: Provision of 105 residential units and up to 600 sq.m of retail floorspace and commercial (A3 use) use by 2008/09</p> <p>TC11 target: Provision of 155 residential units and up to 600 sq.m of retail floorspace and commercial (A3 use) development by 2009/10</p> <p>Overall Plan targets:</p> <p>Office: Sites TC13, TC15 and TC16</p> <p>Leisure: Site TC7</p>	<p>C4b: Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres</p>	<p>C4b: If the identified retail floorspace at the three key sites (Policies TC7, TC9 and TC11) is not likely to be delivered or is delivered more quickly than expected (see timescales in Table 5 for when construction expected to commence), an updated retail capacity study should be undertaken to consider the reasons for this, to review the amount of additional floorspace likely to be needed and to consider the scope if appropriate for expansion of the Primary Shopping Area. Alternative site allocations for retail should be made if necessary and having regard for the updated retail capacity evidence.</p> <p>Office: If development on sites TC13, TC15 and TC16 are not expected to be built by target dates (see timescales in Table 5 for when construction expected to commence), consider alternative office site allocations.</p> <p>Leisure: Monitor leisure delivery on TC7 site on a 2 yearly basis. If TC7 site unlikely to deliver leisure development in line with target date (see timescales in Table 5 for when construction expected to commence), consider alternative leisure allocations.</p>

DPD OBJECTIVE	DPD POLICIES RELATED TO THAT OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED TARGETS	INDICATORS	TRIGGERS
4. To achieve the successful integration of new development with the existing town centre	Strategic Policy			
5. To strengthen the economy of the town centre and its role as an employment, administrative and educational centre	Strategic Policy TC5: Office Development TC7: New Retail Quarter – Bedford Town Centre West TC12: Riverside Quarter – Shire Hall and the Bank building site TC13: Station Quarter – Bedford Station TC14: St Mary's Quarter TC15: Kingsway Quarter TC16: Land at Lime Street	TC13 target: Provision of new office quarter by 2014/15 TC15 target: Provision of office and public administration uses by 2016/17 TC16 target: Provision of office development by 2011/12	C1b: Amount of floorspace developed for employment by type, in employment or regeneration areas C1c: Amount of floorspace developed by employment type, which is on previously developed land C4b: Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres	C1b/c and C4b: If office accommodation is not likely to be delivered on the three sites identified (Policies TC13, TC15 and TC16) in line with the date for commencement of construction in Table 5, further office sites should be sought in accordance with the search sequence set out in Core Strategy Policy CP5.

DPD OBJECTIVE	DPD POLICIES RELATED TO THAT OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED TARGETS	INDICATORS	TRIGGERS
A BETTER CONNECTED CENTRE				
6. 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	<p>Strategic Policy</p> <p>TC7: New Retail Quarter – Bedford Town Centre West</p> <p>TC9: Cultural Quarter – Castle Lane</p> <p>TC11: Riverside Quarter – Riverside Square</p> <p>TC12: Riverside Quarter – Shire Hall and the Bank building site</p> <p>TC13: Station Quarter – Bedford Station</p> <p>TC15: Kingsway Quarter</p> <p>TC17: Progress Ford, The Broadway</p> <p>TC18: Junction/Network Improvements 2006-2011</p> <p>TC19: Network Improvements post 2011</p> <p>TC20: Development Related Network Improvements</p> <p>TC21: Walking and Cycle Routes</p> <p>TC22: Pedestrian Connections</p> <p>TC23: Public Transport Interchange/Services</p> <p>TC24: Parking</p>	<p>TC7 target: Provision of a new bus station, revised access, on and off site highway improvements, car and cycle parking, cycle storage</p> <p>TC9 target: Provision of on and off site highway improvements and cycle parking</p> <p>TC11 target: Provision of on and off site highway improvements, foot/cycle bridge, foot/cycle routes, cycle parking</p> <p>TC12 target: Provision of highway improvements and cycle parking</p> <p>TC13 target: Relocation of the railway station, revised access, car and cycle parking, pedestrian overbridge</p> <p>TC15 target: Improved cycle/walking connections</p> <p>TC17 target: On and off site highway improvements (as required)</p> <p>TC18 target: Developer funded schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realignment of Greyfriars - Midland Road/Greyfriars junction - River Street/Greyfriars junction - Improvements to Hassett Street /Beckett Street/Gwyn Street, Brace Street and Bromham Road - Priory Street to be one-way northbound - Greenhill Street – closure <p>LTP/Other funded schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Town Centre Traffic Management & control system - Ford End Road/Prebend Street junction - Right turn into the Embankment <p>TC19 target: Provision of a new river crossing at Batts Ford linking Kingsway and River Street and associated road network improvements</p>	<p>L3: Level of proposed transport infrastructure set out in the RSS and LTP2 that has been achieved</p> <p>Junction improvements completed</p> <p>Number of new river crossings delivered</p> <p>Park and Ride facilities operational</p> <p>Cycle improvements achieved</p> <p>Traffic levels</p> <p>Policies TC7, TC9, TC11, TC12, TC13, TC15 and TC17 include reference to on/off site highway improvement measures.</p> <p>Transport Assessments for individual planning applications will consider what specific improvements may be required as a consequence of the proposed development. Delivery of the other transport measures in the policies (walking routes, cycle routes etc) will be secured through the planning applications.</p>	<p>Policies TC18 and TC19: The precise timing of the improvements (not including developer funded schemes – see TC20 below) will be informed by the Stage 2 Transportation Study in 2008/09. Delivery of the improvements will be monitored against the study. If improvements are not being delivered, the reasons for this will be established and alternative means of delivery will be sought.</p> <p>Policy TC20: Delivery will be monitored against the S106 agreement and agreed phasing. Any delivery issues will relate to the TC7 site (see C4b trigger above).</p> <p>Policies TC21 and TC22: The routes are to be delivered via developer contributions and LTP funding and delivery monitored on an annual basis. If routes are not being delivered, the reasons for this will be established and alternative means of delivery will be sought.</p> <p>Policy TC23: Delivery of the service improvements listed will be delivered via developer contributions and LTP/CIF/GAF funding. The precise timing of the improvements will be informed by the Stage 2 Transportation Study in 2008/09. Delivery of the improvements will be monitored against the recommendations in the study.</p>

DPD OBJECTIVE	DPD POLICIES RELATED TO THAT OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED TARGETS	INDICATORS	TRIGGERS
		<p>TC20 target: Developer funded improvements related to the TC7 site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realignment of Greyfriars - Midland Road/Greyfriars junction - River Street/Greyfriars junction - Improvements to Hassett Street - Beckett Street/ Gwyn Street, Brace Street and Bromham Road - Priory Street to be one-way northbound <p>TC21 target: Promote walking and cycle routes at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Midland Road corridor (for pedestrians & cyclists) - north-south spine linking the bus station redevelopment via the proposed Landmark Bridge to Kingsway (for pedestrians & cyclists) - River Street corridor - routes along the river - east-west route through Bedford Town Centre West site (for pedestrians and cyclists) - High Street corridor for north-south route through the town centre (for pedestrians & cyclists) - The Grove, Newnham Street and Castle Lane <p>TC22 target: Improvement in the number and quality of connections including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - connections within the centre including between the existing centre and Castle Lane and Bedford Town Centre West; - connections between the centre and river corridor, including provision of new foot/cycle bridges; - connections between the centre and railway station <p>TC23 target: Retention of a bus station, improved bus/rail interchange at the railway station and expansion of park and ride facilities</p>		

DPD OBJECTIVE	DPD POLICIES RELATED TO THAT OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED TARGETS	INDICATORS	TRIGGERS
7. To improve the number and quality of the connections within the town centre, and between the centre and the river and railway station	<p>Strategic Policy</p> <p>TC11: Riverside Quarter – Riverside Square</p> <p>TC13: Station Quarter – Bedford Station</p> <p>TC14: St Mary's Quarter – provision of bridges</p> <p>TC15: Kingsway Quarter</p> <p>TC21: Walking and Cycle Routes</p> <p>TC22: Pedestrian Connections</p> <p>TC29: Riverside Frontages</p> <p>TC30: Riverside Development</p>	<p>TC11 target: Provision of a new foot/cycle bridge across the river</p> <p>TC13 target: Relocation of the railway station</p> <p>TC21 target: Promote walking and cycle routes at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Midland Road corridor (for pedestrians & cyclists) - north-south spine linking the bus station redevelopment via the proposed Landmark Bridge to Kingsway (for pedestrians & cyclists) - River Street corridor - routes along the river - east-west route through Bedford Town Centre West site (for pedestrians and cyclists) - High Street corridor for north-south route through the town centre (for pedestrians & cyclists) - The Grove, Newnham Street and Castle Lane <p>TC22 target: Improvement in the number and quality of connections including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - connections within the centre including between the existing centre and Castle Lane and Bedford Town Centre West; - connections between the centre and river corridor, including provision of new foot/cycle bridges; - connections between the centre and railway station 	<p>Number of new river crossings completed</p> <p>Number of pedestrian/cycle connections improved</p> <p>Traffic levels</p>	<p>Policies TC11 and TC13: Development of the foot/cycle bridge and the relocation of the railway station will be monitored against the phasing agreed in the relevant planning permissions.</p> <p>Policies TC21 and TC22: The routes are to be delivered via developer contributions and LTP funding and delivery monitored on an annual basis. If routes are not being delivered, the reasons for this will be established and alternative means of delivery will be sought.</p>

DPD OBJECTIVE	DPD POLICIES RELATED TO THAT OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED TARGETS	INDICATORS	TRIGGERS
A MORE ATTRACTIVE AND LIVEABLE CENTRE				
8. To achieve a significant growth in town centre living in order to enhance the vitality and viability of the centre	<p>Strategic Policy</p> <p>TC7: New Retail Quarter – Bedford Town Centre West</p> <p>TC8: New Retail Quarter – Retail Reinvestment and the High Street</p> <p>TC9: Cultural Quarter – Castle Lane</p> <p>TC10: Cultural Quarter – Cecil Higgins Art Gallery & Bedford Museum</p> <p>TC11: Riverside Quarter – Riverside Square</p> <p>TC13: Station Quarter – Bedford Station</p> <p>TC15: Kingsway Quarter</p> <p>TC16: Land at Lime Street</p> <p>TC17: Progress Ford The Broadway</p> <p>TC26: Living over the Shop</p>	<p>TC7 target: Provision of 300 residential units</p> <p>TC9 target: Provision of 104 residential units</p> <p>TC10 target: Provision of 20 residential units</p> <p>TC11 target: Provision of 155 residential units</p> <p>TC13 target: Provision of 180 residential units</p> <p>TC15 target: Provision of 300 residential units</p> <p>TC16 target: Provision of 10 residential units</p> <p>TC17 target: Provision of 85 residential units</p> <p>Overall target: 1154 residential units</p>	Number of units of housing completed within the Plan area	If actual housing delivery varies by more than 20% outside expected delivery (see Appendix C Housing Trajectory) reasons for this should be established and appropriate responses considered. This could include a review of town centre housing allocations. Delivery against the plan's housing requirement of 1154 will be monitored on a 5 year rolling basis.
9. 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	<p>Strategic Policy</p> <p>TC7: New Retail Quarter – Bedford Town Centre West</p> <p>TC8: New Retail Quarter – Retail Reinvestment and the High Street</p> <p>TC9: Cultural Quarter – Castle Lane</p> <p>TC11: Riverside Quarter – Riverside Square</p> <p>TC13: Station Quarter – Bedford Station</p> <p>TC15: Kingsway Quarter</p> <p>TC16: Land at Lime Street</p> <p>TC17: Progress Ford The Broadway</p> <p>TC25: Housing Mix</p> <p>TC26: Living over the Shop</p>	<p>TC7 target: A proportion of the 300 residential units</p> <p>TC9 target: A proportion of the 104 residential units</p> <p>TC10 target: A proportion of the 20 residential units</p> <p>TC11 target: A proportion of the 155 residential units</p> <p>TC13 target: A proportion of the 180 residential units</p> <p>TC15 target: A proportion of the 300 residential units</p> <p>TC16 target: A proportion of the 10 residential units</p> <p>TC17 target: A proportion of the 85 residential units</p> <p>Overall target: A proportion of the 1154 residential units</p>	C2d: Affordable housing completions	If actual housing delivery varies by more than 20% outside expected delivery (see Appendix C Housing Trajectory) reasons for this should be established and appropriate responses considered. This could include a review of town centre housing allocations. Delivery against the plan's housing requirement of 1154 will be monitored on a 5 year rolling basis.

DPD OBJECTIVE	DPD POLICIES RELATED TO THAT OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED TARGETS	INDICATORS	TRIGGERS
10. 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	<p>Strategic Policy</p> <p>TC8: New Retail Quarter – Retail Reinvestment and the High Street</p> <p>TC9: Cultural Quarter – Castle Lane</p> <p>TC10: Cultural Quarter – Cecil Higgins Art Gallery & Bedford Museum – refurbishment</p> <p>TC12: Riverside Quarter – Shire Hall and the Bank building site – retention and refurbishment of listed buildings</p> <p>TC14: St Mary's Quarter – potential for a mini marina</p> <p>TC27: Heritage</p> <p>TC28: Tourism</p>		L20: Quality of new development in terms of design and landscaping and respecting local character	
11. To achieve high quality urban design with high quality materials and finishes	<p>TC36: Redevelopment Proposals</p> <p>TC39: Urban Design Principles</p>		L20: Quality of new development in terms of design and landscaping and respecting local character	
A WELL MANAGED TOWN CENTRE				
12. To create a town centre which is safe, attractive and in which people will want to live, shop, work and spend their leisure time	<p>Strategic Policy</p> <p>TC32: Public Spaces</p> <p>TC34: Town Centre Management</p> <p>TC35: Town Centre Amenity</p> <p>TC37: Leisure Uses</p>		L20: Quality of new development in terms of design and landscaping and respecting local character	

DPD OBJECTIVE	DPD POLICIES RELATED TO THAT OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED TARGETS	INDICATORS	TRIGGERS
13. To achieve high quality public realm improvements including provision for management and maintenance	Strategic Policy TC8: New Retail Quarter – Retail Reinvestment and the High Street TC11: Riverside Quarter – Riverside Square TC15: Kingsway Quarter TC17: Progress Ford The Broadway TC30: Riverside Development TC32: Public Spaces TC36: Redevelopment Proposals		Number of new public spaces created/existing public spaces improved	
14. 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	TC20: Development Related Network Improvements TC21: Walking and Cycle Routes TC40: Developer Contributions	TC20 Target: Developer funded improvements related to the TC7 site: - Realignment of Greyfriars - Midland Road/Greyfriars junction - River Street/Greyfriars junction - Improvements to Hassett Street/Beckett Street/ Gwyn Street, Brace Street and Bromham Road - Priory Street to be one-way northbound	Level of infrastructure improvements secured by means of condition/S106 agreements or town centre/Plan area sites	Policy TC20: Delivery will be monitored against the S106 agreement and agreed phasing. Any delivery issues will relate to the TC7 site (see C4b trigger above)

■ APPENDIX E

URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

INTRODUCTION

- E1 In preparing proposals for the redevelopment of sites, developers will need to address a number of key urban design principles. These are based on By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice which was published by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions and the Commission for Architecture & The Built Environment in May 2000.
- E2 The aim of By Design is to promote higher standards of urban design and it concludes that successful streets, spaces, towns and cities tend to have common characteristics. These factors have been analysed and distilled into a series of principles or objectives for good urban design. They are:-

■ CHARACTER

A place should have its own identity and a character that is locally distinctive in terms of both townscape and landscape.

■ CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE

A place should have public and private spaces which are clearly defined by development and which promotes the continuity of street frontages.

■ QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM

A place with attractive and successful public spaces and routes which are safe, attractive and accessible by all members of society including disabled and elderly people.

■ EASE OF MOVEMENT

A place that is easy to get to and move through, which promotes accessibility and permeability, connects with its surroundings, puts people before traffic and integrates land uses and transport.

■ LEGIBILITY

A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand by incorporating recognisable routes, junctions and landmarks.

■ ADAPTABILITY

A place that can change easily in response to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

■ DIVERSITY

A place with variety and choice through a mix of different land uses.

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

E3 This section sets down the Council's vision of how the key urban design principles should be applied.

■ CHARACTER

- E4 The new development must respect the local distinctiveness of its context and create a series of areas, which are themselves, distinctive. This will help to assimilate development into the town centre and will also help to create development that is highly legible and easily understood.
- E5 The Bedford Town Centre Development Framework Study (March 2005) has identified several character areas within Bedford and these have formed the basis of new urban quarters. Developers will need to demonstrate how their proposals achieve well integrated, mixed use development which respects the Council's aspirations to concentrate particular uses within these urban quarters.
- E6 Six urban quarters have been identified and these are shown on Figure 2. They are:

■ RETAIL QUARTER

This is the main retail core of the town centre comprising the Harpur and Howard Centres, Midland Road, Allhallows and the bus station site. Most of this area has been wholly or partially pedestrianised and it contains a wide variety of architectural styles. The 1960's bus station and adjoining buildings provide Bedford's greatest redevelopment opportunity to improve and expand the town's retail offer. As a result, the retail and urban living quarter will expand in size and cover a greater proportion of the town centre.

■ CULTURAL QUARTER

This is focused on Castle Lane, Cecil Higgins Art Gallery & Bedford Museum and the Castle Mound. This forms part of the original settlement of Bedford and is of great significance for its historic associations and archaeology related to the Castle Mound. There is a need to regenerate this area for a mixture of uses including residential and to reconnect it with the High Street, the river and the rest of the town centre.

■ RIVERSIDE QUARTER

The River Great Ouse provides a spectacular setting for the town and is one of Bedford's main assets. Both the County and the Town Bridges provide key landmarks and the northern bank is characterised by 3-4 storey buildings. The Swan Hotel and the Shire Hall are particularly noteworthy. It is recognised however that an iconic building will be inherently of a different order to the existing townscape and will have to be considered in its own right.

■ STATION QUARTER

The area around the railway station comprises a mix of commercial and other uses that have enjoyed better days and provides a less than ideal gateway to the town centre. Expansive areas of surface car parking dominate yet provide the opportunity for development. The definition of the area as a 'Quarter' is more about its potential than its existing character.

■ ST MARY'S QUARTER

The southern bank of the river is predominantly enclosed by trees and open parkland with some examples of less attractive buildings, including the Moat House Hotel, County Hall and the group of buildings which form Bedford College. The scale of buildings is also greater on the southern bank. The key opportunity here is to enhance the quality of the buildings fronting onto the river corridor and to achieve greater integration between the river and the town centre.

■ KINGSWAY QUARTER

This comprises an ill-defined edge and approach to the town centre. It comprises the BT Tower and low grade retail sheds and offices. These create a series of standalone buildings which give little definition to the street and sense of enclosure. This is particularly the case with the Kingsway. There is an opportunity to redevelop parts of this quarter to create a tighter knit development of streets and blocks.

- E7 In addition the **Bedford Conservation Area** forms an overlapping area of character. This covers the historic centre of the town focused around St. Paul's Square, Harpur Square, Harpur Street, Silver Street and extending to the High Street and Castle Lane and contains a significant concentration of listed buildings. Key buildings include St. Paul's Church, Shire Hall, the Corn Exchange, Harpur Suite and the old Town Hall. It is characterised by narrow frontages, a vertical emphasis to the buildings and a wide variety of architectural styles and details.

■ CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE

- E8 The relationship between buildings and public spaces is crucial if a successful place is to be created. The new development should be laid out so that there is a clear distinction between public and private space with the public domain being both overlooked and accessible. This is best achieved by creating layouts based on a block structure. This is a traditional form of development in town centres and Bedford is no exception.
- E9 The block structure comprises a series of streets and blocks which ensure that new buildings front onto the street and provide a 'public face', with service yards, parking areas and private space to the rear. Thus buildings should have 'public fronts' and 'private backs.' Development should follow the perimeter of the block along a common building line (without major setbacks) to foster a strong sense of enclosure.
- E10 The use of a block structure will also ensure that new development integrates successfully into the existing town centre.

■ QUALITY IN THE PUBLIC REALM

- E11 Bedford town centre already comprises a number of public spaces. These include Harpur Square, St. Paul's Square, Allhallows/Church Square, Silver Street and St. Mary's Gardens. Most of these have been made into pedestrian zones or have limited vehicular access. As well as facilitating pedestrian movement within the centre, they provide a setting for a wide range of activities such as markets, Victorian Fair and other events (Bedford by the Sea etc.). As a result, they are a major element in defining Bedford's 'sense of place'.
- E12 The redevelopment of key sites provides the opportunity to create new public spaces, which will extend the existing network. This is particularly the case with the Bedford Town Centre West, Castle Lane and Riverside Square sites. In the latter case, the site lends itself to the provision of a major new south-facing public square adjacent to the river which will act as a positive symbol of Bedford's renaissance.
- E13 The aim should be to create a series of high quality public spaces which are attractive, safe, clean and pedestrian friendly. They should also be designed to support a wide range of activities and events. Consideration should be given to how the spaces will connect with each other to form a sequence of streets and squares, thus enhancing legibility and movement. Put simply, the spaces should be designed as a series of 'beads on a chain.' Public art should also be integrated into buildings and spaces to enhance character and legibility and create a visually rich environment.
- E14 It is also vital that a mechanism is put in place to ensure that these are maintained to a high standard in perpetuity, and the Borough Council will expect all development sites within the centre to contribute towards that objective.

■ EASE OF MOVEMENT

- E.15 This principle has three distinct elements – connections, permeability and the integration of land use and transport. Integral to the strategy is the use of development to achieve improved connections:-
- Between the town centre and adjoining areas. An example is the need to provide better linkages between the northern and southern banks of the river.
 - Between sites within the centre. The prime example is the need to integrate the Castle Lane site with both the High Street and the Embankment.
 - Between the town centre and the riverside corridor to facilitate its use for leisure and recreation.
 - Between the town centre and the railway station, where connections between the two are poorly defined.
- E.16 This will create a series of new routes which will link the development sites together and achieve greater integration between the new quarters and the town centre.
- E.17 Secondly, the strategy seeks to maximise permeability and provide a choice of routes through the development, removing physical barriers to movement by all members of the community including those with disabilities, families, young children and the elderly. This will be greatly enhanced through the use of the block structure referred to above.
- E.18 Thirdly, it is important that the different uses proposed are easily accessible on foot, by cycle and by public transport. The re-provision of a new bus station and enhanced connections with the railway station will go some way towards greater integration of the town centre with non-car modes. They also represent key elements in the transportation strategy.

■ LEGIBILITY

- E.19 Legibility relates to how well a development is structured so as to help people find their way around. New development is often criticised for offering little to remember when moving through it. This results in a lack of orientation and a poor 'mental image'. Research has shown that five types of physical features play a key role in establishing a strong mental image of a place. These are paths, nodes, landmarks, edges and districts.

■ PATHS

- E.20 These are channels of movement and relate primarily to main roads although in Bedford's case, the river corridor also falls into this category. The most significant paths include:-
- The Broadway/High Street/St. Mary's Street/St. John's Street.
 - St. Peter's Street/Dame Alice Street/Bromham Road.
 - Horne Lane/River Street/Greyfriars.
 - The Embankment.

■ NODES

- E21 These are focal points such as junctions or public spaces. The main nodes within the town centre are:-
- St. Paul's Square.
 - Harpur Square.
 - Church Square
 - High Street/Dame Alice Street/St. Peter's Street junction and St. Peter's Green.
 - St. John's roundabout.
 - Bromham Road/Union Street/Greyfriars junction.
- E22 More minor nodes include:
- The Greyfriars roundabout access to the bus station.
 - The Silver Street/High Street/Mill Street junction.
 - Castle Mound.
- E23 The provision of a new bus station facility has potential to create a new node within the town centre.
- E24 Many of these nodes provide key 'gateways' into the town and new development should consider these and enhance the sense of arrival into the town centre.

■ LANDMARKS

- E25 These are reference points and could be prominent buildings, particular uses, or landscape features. They help people to orientate themselves when moving through the town centre and help to create a strong sense of place and local identity. Opportunities exist to create a series of new landmark buildings of various scales and forms. Landmark buildings are not necessarily tall buildings but could be buildings of special architectural quality and treatment.
- E26 In producing schemes for the key development sites, designers need to consider the scope for the introduction of landmark features so as to enhance the legibility of the town centre as a whole. Facades should be articulated with such features as balconies, bay or other projecting windows and minor set backs to reinforce the form of the building and create visual interest.
- E27 In regenerating the town centre it is vital that development has regard to scale including its relationship with the rest of the town centre. The most sensitive areas include St. Paul's Square, Harpur Square, High Street and Castle Lane. Here buildings are generally between 2-4 storeys in height and are arranged in tightly knit groups. Building footprints are relatively small and where larger buildings do occur, these are integral to the street frontage rather than free standing. A good example of this is the Corn Exchange.
- E28 Within this area, development should have significant regard to the scale and form of the existing built form although some scope for larger scale buildings may exist.
- E29 Elsewhere, scale is less of a constraint. Indeed larger scale buildings can make a positive contribution to defining the urban character of these quarters and the creation of landmarks to enhance legibility.
- E30 In addition, in considering the scale of new development it is important to consider the existing short, middle and long distance views within the existing town centre, and how new development can retain and enhance these. Of particular importance is the need to retain views of St. Paul's Church as the prime landmark within both the town centre and the wider area. Views along the river corridor are also critical and need to be taken into account.

■ EDGES

- E.31 These divide areas of different character or uses and are often linear in nature. In Bedford's case, the most prominent edges comprise the northern and southern boundaries of the river corridor. There is potential to consolidate and strengthen these edges through the development of sites such as Riverside Square. Larger scale development can also have a role in achieving this.

■ DISTRICTS

- E.32 These are sections of the development which have a distinctive character. This character could be derived from the physical nature of the buildings and spaces as well as the uses and activities associated with those areas. The new development will create seven potential districts focused on the 'quarters' described above.

■ ADAPTABILITY

- E.33 Buildings and spaces should support a range of different activities and have the flexibility to change over time. This is particularly relevant in the case of large footprint buildings where consideration should be given to potential scope for sub-division at some time in the future. A range of building typologies is essential to creating a robust and adaptable built fabric.
- E.34 Successful urban mixed-use development breaks down large development parcels into smaller units. The following principles apply:

In frontages which line the main pedestrian dominated routes, individual plots should generally be no wider than 12 metres. This creates development which is sometimes referred to as having a 'fine grain'. Where proposals emerge for larger developments along these routes, facades will need to be broken down to avoid the creation of monotonous frontages. This may mean that large format buildings such as supermarkets and multi-storey car parks need to be 'lined' with smaller units in order to give them a more attractive 'public face'.

The ground floors of all buildings should be clearly defined. Where appropriate, this can take the form of shopfronts, entrances, different more robust materials, and colonnades. Ground floors should also have a higher floor to ceiling height than the storeys above.

Access to buildings should be from the street with entrances to ground floor units. Entrances should be close together to encourage activity and particular attention should be given to the design of buildings which 'turn the corner'.

■ DIVERSITY

- E.35 Given their town centre location, there is scope to redevelop the key sites for a mixture of uses, the scope of which will vary within each quarter. These will include a mixture of new retail, residential, commercial and leisure uses. The greater emphasis on urban living will enhance the vitality of the town centre and assist with natural surveillance. As a result most of the redevelopment schemes will contain an element of residential use.
- E.36 The vision of a vital town centre requires the provision of mixed-use development to create sufficient density to make a vibrant and sustainable place. In determining the density of development, accessibility to public transport, the town centre and the local site context will be critical considerations.

APPENDIX F

PARKING STANDARDS

PARKING STANDARDS

- F1 Parking provision will need to be determined with reference to the needs of the site and the town centre and remainder of the Plan area as a whole, taking account of overall on-street and off-street provision and current/future management. In any event parking levels should not exceed the maximum standards set out in Table 7.

TABLE 7 MAXIMUM PARKING STANDARDS

TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT	MAXIMUM STANDARD FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT
Non Food Retail (A1)	1 space per 30 sq.m
Food Retail	1 space per 20 sq.m
Food and Drink (A3)	1 space per 30 sq.m
Offices/Business (B1)	1 space per 45 sq.m
Leisure (D2)	1 space per 40 sq.m
Hotel Conference Facilities/Cinema (D2)	1 space per 2 rooms (hotel) 1 space per 5 seats
Residential	1 per unit on average

- F2 Where redevelopment opportunities arise, consideration should be given to the provision of underground parking where this is technically and financially feasible.

APPENDIX G

EXISTING & FUTURE PARKING PROVISION

TABLE 8

EXISTING PARKING PROVISION

LOCATION	NO. OF SPACES	COMMENT
Castle Lane	223	Public car parking will be lost following the redevelopment of the site.
Riverside Square	146	Public car parking will be lost following the redevelopment of the site.
Allhallows MSCP	577	This will be re-provided as part of the Bedford town centre west development.
Lurke Street MSCP	820	
River Street MSCP	487	
Queen Street MSCP	652	
Harpur Centre	97	Privately owned
Melbourne Street	197	Could have potential for redevelopment – to be explored through the proposed development brief for the Kingsway.
St Peter's Street	116	
Bedford Station	613	
Sub Total	3928	
Elstow Park & Ride	480	Currently operational
Total provision	4408	

FUTURE PARKING PROVISION

LOCATION	NO. OF SPACES	COMMENT
Allhallows MSCP	780 *	(an additional 200 spaces will be available be for residents)*
Lurke Street MSCP	820	
River Street MSCP	487	
Queen Street MSCP	652	
Harpur Centre	97	Privately owned
Melbourne Street	197	
St Peter's Street	116	
Bedford Station	900*	
Sub Total	4049	
Elstow Park & Ride	480	Currently operational
Biddenham Loop Park & Ride	500	To be required as part of the development of the Biddenham Loop.
Land off the A6 (Clapham Road) Park & Ride	500	To be required as part of the development of land to the north of Bromham Road.
Cardington Road Park & Ride	250	Phase 1
Total provision	5779	

* Provisional figure – to be determined at planning application stage.

APPENDIX H

STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

- H1 In order to inform the Plan, the Council has undertaken a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and this forms one of the supporting documents. The specific objectives of the study were to:-
- Provide a reference and policy document to inform the Area Action Plan and future development plans for town centre.
 - Ensure that the Borough Council is in line with recommendations in the current Planning Policy Guidance Note 25. Emerging guidance in the form of the consultation draft of Planning Policy Statement 25 has also been taken into account.
 - Provide a reference and policy document for private and commercial development of potential risks associated with development proposals and their obligations under the latest planning guidance.
- H2 All of the key areas of change identified in the preferred option and carried forward into the submission version of the Plan, and this the adopted Plan were assessed for flood risk and against both existing and emerging guidance.
- H3 The principal conclusion of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is that the Plan is deliverable in terms of flood risk. On the basis of the information contained in that report, the proposed key sites are generally sustainable in terms of flood risk and are suitable for the proposed land uses, subject to the identification and implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.
- H4 As individual sites come forward for development, site specific flood risk assessments will need to be prepared at that time.

APPENDIX I

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

A1: Shops and other high street uses.

A2: Financial and professional services available to the general public such as Accountants, Solicitors, Building Societies and Banks.

A3: Restaurants and cafes.

A4: Drinking establishments.

A5: Hot food takeaways.

B1: Businesses including main offices, high tech and light industry.

Affordable Housing: housing, whether for rent, shared ownership or outright purchase, provided at a cost considered affordable in relation to incomes that are average or below average, or in relation to the price of general market housing.

Area Action Plan: used to provide a planning framework for areas of change and areas of conservation. Area Action Plans have the status of Development Plan Documents.

Bedford Development Framework: the local name of the Local Development Framework for Bedford Borough Council.

Brownfield Land: land that has been previously developed.

Community Plan for the Borough of Bedford 2004 - 2010: the plan for Bedford Borough Council published in January 2005. The key themes are 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, and including everyone.

Comparison Shopping: goods such as clothes and electrical equipment, for which the consumer generally expects to direct time and effort into visiting a range of shops before making a choice.

Compulsory Purchase Order: an order issued by the government or a local authority to acquire land or buildings for public interest purposes. For example, for the construction of a major road or the redevelopment of certain brownfield sites.

Conservation Areas: under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, local planning authorities are able to designate as conservation areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

Convenience Shopping: goods such as food, newspapers and drink, which tend to be purchased regularly and for which convenience of purchase is therefore important.

Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan: the long-term spatial vision and strategy for the local planning authority area, including the key strategic policies and proposals to deliver that vision. The Plan has the status of Development Plan Documents.

Corporate Plan: the Council's priorities are that the Council will be a listening council, a clean and green borough, a safer borough, a prosperous borough, an enjoyable borough and achieve a balanced housing market.

De-trafficking: the removal of certain categories of traffic.

Development Briefs: prepared by the Borough Council as a detailed statement of its planning policies for a particular site and its aspirations in terms of uses, layout and design principles.

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 Documents: spatial planning document prepared by the local planning authority that is subject to independent public examination. They can cover a range of issues, and will set out the main spatial strategy, policies and proposals of the Council.

East of England Plan: provides the comprehensive planning regional spatial strategy for the whole of the Eastern Region and, in Bedford's case, will provide development targets for the part of the borough not covered by the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy.

Edge-of-centre: a location that is well connected to and within easy walking distance to retail of up to 300 metres of the primary shopping area and for office development located outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange, including railway and bus stations, within the urban area. For all other main town centre uses this is likely to be within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. A site is not well connected to a centre where it is physically separated from it by a barrier such as a major road, railway line or river and there is no existing or proposed pedestrian route which provides safe and convenient access to the centre.

Evening Economy: use of the town centre for a range of leisure and recreation uses after normal shopping hours.

Frontage: the surroundings of an edge of a building or space. Active frontages are the edge of a building or space with windows and doors as opposed to blank walls, fences and garages. Dead frontages are the edge of a building or space with no opportunity for surveillance from the building or space.

Gateways: key entry points into the town centre.

Gross Domestic Product: the total value of all goods and services produced by a Country in a specified period (usually annually) less income from foreign investment.

Growth Area: the area designated for growth, in terms of housing and employment development. In Bedford Borough the Growth Area is located within Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale.

Infill Development: development of a relatively small gap between existing buildings.

Interchange: combined road, rail and other transport services.

Inward Investment: new business investment or expansion of an existing investment into the borough area from abroad or within Great Britain.

Issues and Options: produced during the early production stage of the preparation of Development Plan Documents and may be issued for consultation to meet the requirements of Regulation 25.

Legibility: the ease by which people can find their way around the town centre.

Listed Buildings: under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Secretary of State for National Heritage has a statutory duty to compile lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Graded I, II* or II to reflect their importance, permission is required for works which may affect their character or appearance.

Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV): an organisation set up to help deliver planned growth in the area.

Local Development Documents: generic term for documents that can be included in the Local Development Framework. It comprises Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the Statement of Community Involvement.

Local Development Framework: a portfolio of Local Development Documents that provides the framework for delivering the spatial strategy of the area.

Local Development Scheme: rolling three-year project plan for the preparation of Local Development Documents.

Local Plan: 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.

Local Transport Plan: five-year strategy prepared by the County Council for the development of local, integrated transport, supported by a programme of transport improvements. It is used to bid to government for funding transport improvements.

Market Share: the extent to which Bedford captures trade from competing centres.

Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy: strategy relating to the part of the borough (Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale) which has been identified by the government as a growth area.

Mixed-Use Development: in the past there has been a tendency to define areas of single land uses. Mixed-use development promotes the integration and diversity of land uses which has benefits such as reducing the need to travel and deterring criminal activity by generating different activities at different times of the day.

Modal Shift: the movement from road, rail and other transport services.

Out-of-centre: a location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

Plan Area: the area encompassed by the Area Action Plan boundary.

Permeability: the degree to which an area has a variety of routes through it.

Planning Obligation/Section 106 Legal Agreement: these are legal agreements between a local planning authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer, secured in the context of granting a planning consent to ensure that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken.

Preferred Options Document: produced as part of the preparation of Development Plan Documents, and is issued for formal public participation as required by Regulation 26.

Planning Policy Guidance: statements of government policy on a range of issues – being replaced over time by Planning Policy Statements.

Planning Policy Statement: new name for Planning Policy Guidance – statement of government policy on a range of issues.

Primary Shopping Area: the area where Class A1 Uses (shops) predominate.

Primary Shopping Frontage: the key shopping frontages within the primary shopping area.

Proposals Map: illustrates policies and proposals in Development Plan Documents.

Public Art: permanent or temporary physical works of art visible to the general public, whether part of a building or freestanding. For example, sculpture, lighting effects, street furniture, paving, railings and signs.

Public Realm: public spaces which include streets and squares.

Regeneration: the economic, social and environmental renewal and improvement of an area.

Regional Centre: Bedford is defined as a regional centre for retail in the draft East of England Plan.

Regional Spatial Strategy: a statutory document under the new system that replaces Regional Planning Guidance setting out the regional spatial strategy and policies. New Local Development Documents will have to be in accordance with it. Bedford Borough Council's Regional Spatial Strategy is currently the draft East of England Plan.

Renewable Energy: energy derived from sources that are available in an unlimited supply.

Retail Core: See Primary Shopping Area

Saved Policies or Plans: existing adopted development plans are saved for three years from the date of commencement of the Act. The Local Development Scheme sets out the authority's saved policies.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, the Secretary of State for National Heritage is required to compile and maintain a schedule of monuments of national importance. The monuments are statutorily protected in a similar way to listed buildings.

Secondary Shopping Area: the area where there is a diversity of Class A uses.

Secondary Shopping Frontage: a retailing area, secondary to the primary shopping frontage, that provides greater opportunities for a diversity of uses.

Statement of Community Involvement: 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.

Sub-Region: the Milton Keynes & South Midlands sub-region is located in southern central England, between London and the wider Midlands. Its largest urban centres are Bedford/Kempston, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis. The sub-region straddles the three regions of the East of England, the East Midlands and the South East.

Supplementary Planning Documents: provides supplementary information in respect of the policies in Development Plan Documents. They do not form part of the Development Plan and are not subject to independent examination.

Sustainability Appraisal: a social, economic and environmental appraisal of strategy, policies and proposals that is required for the Regional Spatial Strategy, all Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.

Sustainable Development: meets the present needs without compromising those of future generations.

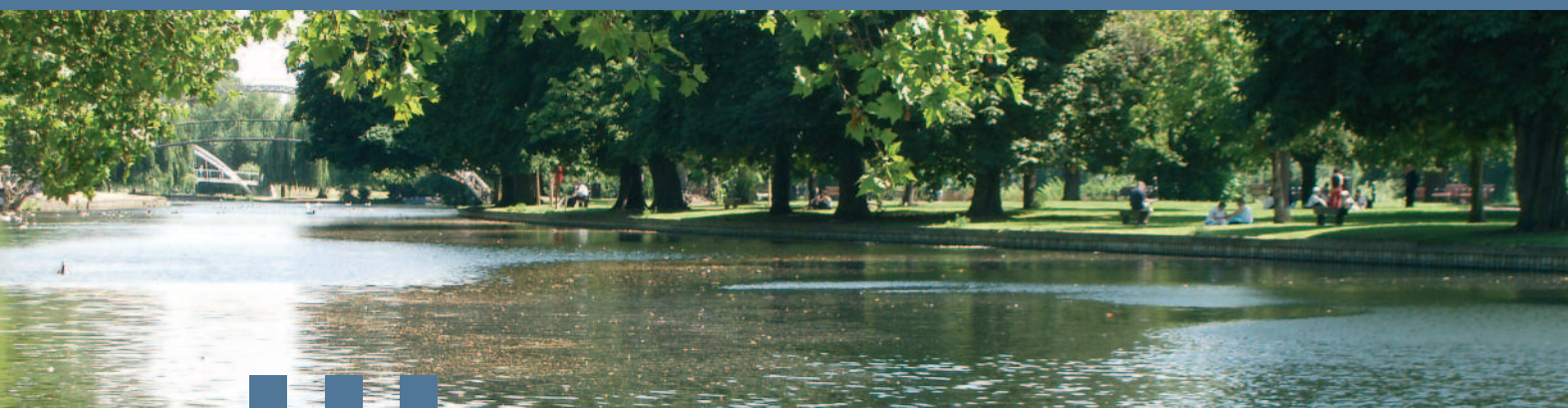
Sustainable Communities Plan: a programme issued by the government to set the framework for delivering sustainable communities over the next 15-20 years. The main areas of focus are sustainable communities, housing supply, new growth areas, decent homes, and countryside and local environment.

Town Centre: the principal centre in the local authority area. It is the defined area, including the primary shopping area and areas of predominantly leisure, business and other main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. The extent of the town centre is defined on the Proposals Map.

Townscape: the visual appearance of a built up area, such as the street pattern, furnishings and landscaping that form the built environment.

Urban Design: the art of making places. Urban design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, in villages, towns and cities, and the establishment of framework and processes which facilitate successful development.

Vitality and Viability: essential elements in the stability and future prosperity of town centres. They stem not only from a variety of retail uses but from the range and quality of activities in town centres and their accessibility to people.





BEDFORD
DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK

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