



## **St Albans Development Plan Documents**

# **Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report**

by Rob Gardner, & Stefan Laeger (C4S), Julian Wooderson (Halcrow)

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UNPUBLISHED PROJECT REPORT

Centre for Sustainability at TRL Limited



Halcrow Group Limited



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## **St Albans Development Plan Documents**

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Version: Final

by Rob Gardner, & Stefan Laeger (C4S), Julian Wooderson (Halcrow)

Client: St Albans City and District Council

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<b>Approvals</b>	
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## Abbreviations

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator
CO	Carbon monoxide
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon dioxide
DEFRA	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DPD	Development Plan Document
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographical Information System
GHG	Greenhouse gas
LA	Local Authority
LDD	Local Development Document
LDF	Local Development Framework
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LTP	Local Transport Plan
MAGIC	Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside
MPG	Minerals Planning Guidance
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NO <sub>x</sub>	Nitrogen oxide
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PM <sub>10</sub>	Particulate matter at less than 10 microns diameter
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
PSA	Public Service Agreement
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SO <sub>2</sub>	Sulphur dioxide
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
VAT	Value Added Tax

## Non-Technical Summary

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires Sustainability Appraisals (SAs) to be carried out on Local Development Plan Documents (DPD), and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). In addition, the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) require Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) for a wide range of plans and programmes, including Local Development Frameworks (LDF).

SAs and SEAs aim to help make planning more sustainable and provide for a high level of protection of the environment. It is possible to satisfy the requirements of both pieces of legislation through a single appraisal process; an approach which is taken here. St Albans' emerging core strategy and its other development plan documents, form part of its LDF and must be subject to both sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment. The new LDF will provide a long-term vision for development in St Albans City and District.

The aim of scoping is to ensure that the SA/SEA process focuses effort and resources on the significant issues. It also provides an early opportunity for other parties to provide comment. This Scoping Report consists of two documents; the main report and the supporting appendix. The main report provides information on the SA/SEA and DPD development process to date; specifically the establishment of the baseline for the assessment, the problems and opportunities in St Albans, and the setting of SA/SEA objectives. The remainder of the report sets out the methodology to be used for the next stages of the SA/SEA process. The appendix contains supporting tables that may be of interest to consultees but that are not fundamental to understanding and commenting on the report.

The main sustainability issues that are considered to be relevant in St Albans are illustrated below.

<b>Air Quality</b>	Traffic congestion on the main routes continues to grow
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Condition of SSSIs is below county and national average
<b>Climatic Factors</b>	St Albans is keen to promote and increase renewable energy and more energy efficiency
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	The built heritage of St Albans is highly valued by its residents - maintaining local distinctiveness is critical
<b>Landscape &amp; Townscape</b>	St Albans District is surrounded by Metropolitan Green Belt Some buildings from the past uninspiring
<b>Material Assets</b>	St Albans is keen to promote sustainable construction methods
<b>Water</b>	Over abstraction of water in some areas Some areas are at risk of flooding
<b>Housing</b>	House prices are extremely high Need for more affordable housing
<b>Crime</b>	Crime reduction is a high priority for the district as a whole
<b>Accessibility</b>	Public transport is oriented towards London, rather than across the district
<b>Recreation, Sport &amp; Leisure</b>	There are some deficits in the availability of and access to sport and recreational facilities particularly amongst hard to reach groups
<b>Health Care &amp; Education</b>	High educational attainment figures and high quality schools However, often there are not enough places and some children have to travel further distances

**Economy & Employment**

Low unemployment rates and high average salaries; however, a high proportion of the workforce commutes to London

The abridged SA/SEA objectives developed for St Albans' development plan documents are summarised below. These objectives will be used to assess the environmental, social and economic implications of the development plan documents.

1. To protect and enhance biodiversity
2. Maintain/enhance water quality and limit water consumption
3. Ensure new developments do not increase flood risk
4. Minimise the loss of valuable soils
5. Reduce the emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases
6. Ensure development is 'climate change proof'
7. Achieve good air quality, especially in urban areas
8. Maximise the use of previously developed land
9. To use natural resources efficiently
10. To maintain and enhance historic and cultural assets
11. Conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape
12. Encourage healthy lifestyles
13. To deliver more sustainable patterns of location of development
14. Promote equity & address social exclusion
15. Ensure that everyone has access to good quality housing that meets their needs
16. Enhance community identity and participation
17. Reduce both crime and fear of crime
18. Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and growth
19. Promote wider prosperity and fairer access to services
20. Revitalise town centres

**The SEA Regulations require that the four statutory environmental bodies (English Nature, Environment Agency, English Heritage and Countryside Agency) are consulted at the scoping stage to help ensure all significant environmental issues have been identified.**

This Scoping Report is also available to a wider group of stakeholders to ensure a range of views and interests are incorporated. Specific questions have been asked in each section of the Scoping Report to aid responses; these are summarised below.

**Questions for consultees**

**Q1:** Do you think the LDF might impact on Natura 2000 sites? If so, on which sites and what might be the likely impacts?

**Q2:** Are there any other policies, plans or programmes (PPPs) that contain environmental protection objectives or identify issues that are not covered by this list of PPPs?

**Q3:** Are there any other issues or information related to the topics covered in section 2.3 that are relevant to St Albans' development plan documents and should be included?

**Q4:** Are there any potential interrelationships, cumulative or synergistic effects which should be considered in more detail?

**Q5:** Are there any other problems, opportunities or issues that are relevant to St Albans' development plan documents and have not been covered?

**Q6:** Where do you see the main issues in the area and which topics do you want see addressed with priority within the SA/SEA?

**Q7:** Do the SA/SEA objectives, criteria and indicators provide a reasonable framework through which the likely significant environmental effects of the development plan documents can be assessed?

**Q8:** Are there any other potential conflicts between the proposed SA/SEA objectives and the core strategy objectives that have not been identified in the compatibility assessment?

**Q9:** How could potential conflicts be addressed?

**Q10:** How would your organisation like to be involved in the rest of this SA/SEA process?

**Q11:** Do you believe that the significant impacts of the development plan documents can be identified using this approach?

**Q12:** Are there other/additional methodologies that could be used to identify the significant impacts of the core strategy?

This Scoping Report and the results of stakeholder consultations will feed through into the next stages of the assessment process; and thereby help to determine local issues and opportunities and how these could be addressed in St Albans' development plan documents.

**The first written output of the next stages of the SA/SEA process will be draft Sustainability Appraisal/Environmental Report to accompany the draft core strategy. Both documents will undergo public consultation which will take place in late summer 2006.**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background to Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal

New regulations require planning authorities to replace their local plans with local development frameworks (LDF). St Albans' core strategy and its other development plan documents, form part of its LDF and must be subject to both Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) which implement European Directive 2001/42/EC, known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.

Both the SA and the SEA processes help planning authorities to fulfil the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in preparing their plans through a structured assessment of the objectives and core strategies against key sustainability issues.

Although the requirement to carry out both an SA and SEA is mandatory, it is possible to satisfy the requirements of both pieces of legislation through a single appraisal process. Government guidance for undertaking SEA<sup>1</sup> and for SA of Development Plan Documents<sup>2</sup> in particular details how the SA and SEA should be integrated into one process. The final output of the process is a combined Sustainability Appraisal/Environmental Report which will be published alongside the plan. This report will be referred to as the SA/Environmental Report.

### 1.1.1 Purpose of this Scoping Report

The SEA regulations require that the consultation bodies<sup>3</sup> shall be consulted when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the Environmental Report – this being the main written output from the SA/SEA process. The consultation does not have to be in the form of a published Scoping Report. For this project a Scoping Report is considered the appropriate method of presenting the results of the initial stages of the SA/SEA process. It also will assist in helping to identify the issues relevant to stakeholders.

The Scoping Report will be made available to others than those required by statute, so that the subsequent assessment can take account of issues raised from a wider spectrum of consultees. This will be particularly important when looking at the social and economic issues which fall outside the remits of the environmental bodies.

### 1.1.2 Background to the Project

This SEA/SA is being carried out as part of a joint project commissioned by the four Hertfordshire local authorities situated in the south west of the county – Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Three Rivers District Council, and St Albans Borough Council. The Centre for Sustainability (C4S) at TRL Ltd and their project partners Halcrow Group Ltd have been appointed to undertake this project.

By joining together in this way the four authorities aim to make the project more efficient by utilising a common appraisal methodology; although authority specific issues will also be addressed.

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<sup>1</sup> "A Practical Guide to the Strategy Environmental Assessment Directive" (ODPM, 2005)

<sup>2</sup> Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents (ODPM, 2005)

<sup>3</sup> English Nature, Environment Agency, Countryside Agency and English Heritage

Whilst this Scoping Report is being produced specifically for St Albans' development plan documents, much of the data presented in this report also relates to all four authorities.

### 1.2 St Albans Local Development Framework

Local Development Frameworks comprise a series of documents, which set out spatial policies and proposals for future development within each local planning authority's area.

Information on the specific documents which will form the LDF for the St Albans District can be found in the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS is essentially the Council's three year work programme for the preparation of each new style planning policy document. The LDS covering the period April 2005 – March 2008 was approved by the Government Office for the East of England in April 2005.

The Council submitted its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to the Secretary of State in August 2005 for independent examination. The SCI explains the authority's approach to involving the community in the preparation and review of its planning policy documents and in all development control decisions. Once adopted, the Council will have to adhere to the consultation techniques in the SCI when preparing the Local Development Framework documents and determining all planning applications.

Shortly, St Albans' planning officers will start working on the individual development plan documents. The core strategy is likely to be the first available. An initial period of stakeholder consultation is likely to take place in early 2006, with more widespread public participation on the Council's preferred options and proposals planned for Autumn 2006.

### 1.3 SEA/SA Methodology

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the DPD plan making and the SA/SEA process.

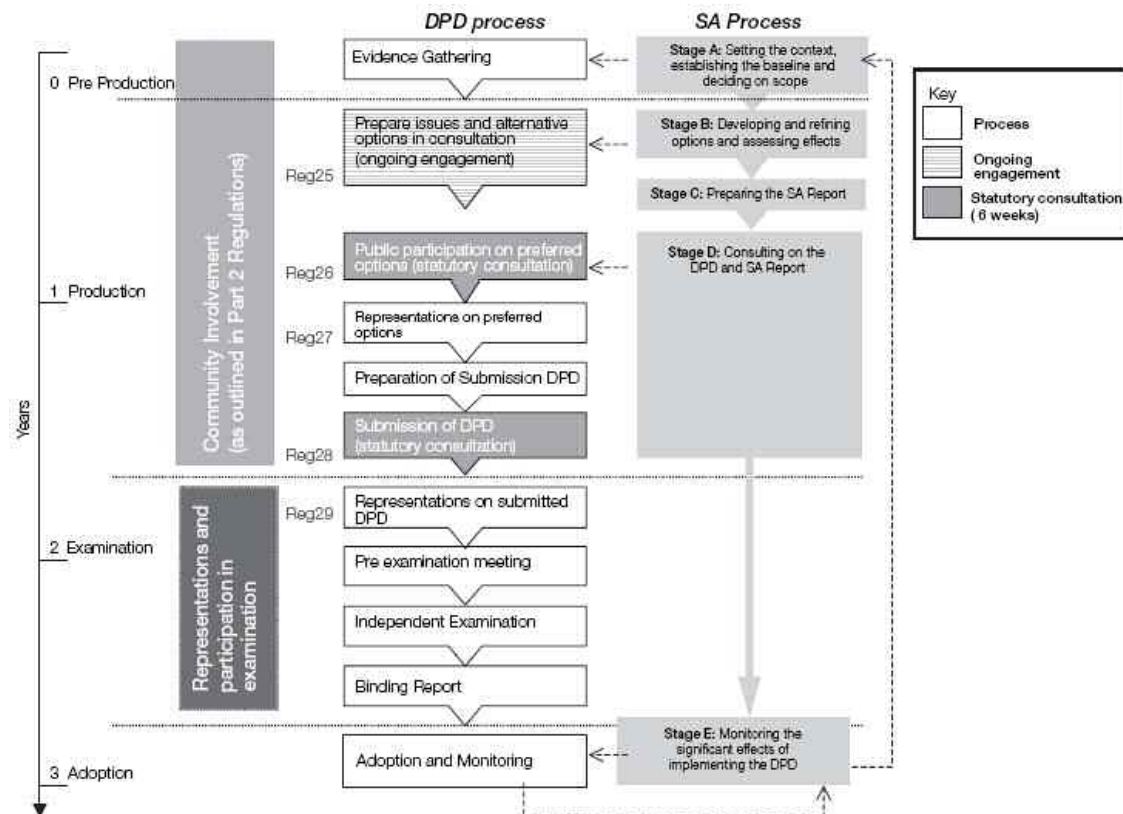


Figure 1: DPD and SA process (source: OPDM).

The key stages of the SA/SEA process are broadly as follows:

- Setting the context and establishing the baseline;
- Devising draft SA/SEA objectives, criteria and indicators;
- Developing an appraisal framework to appraise the development options against the main criteria and indicators;
- Preparing a Scoping Report and undertake consultation;
- Appraisal of the alternative development options' effect on the SA/SEA objectives and selection of the preferred option;
- Preparation of an SA/Environmental Report, including a non-technical summary;
- Undertaking consultation of the SA/Environmental Report;
- Revision of the SA/SEA, taking into account changes to the development options and the results of consultation; and,
- Publication of a SEA Statement, describing how the SEA influenced the plan making process.

#### 1.4 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

An issue that must be addressed is whether the plan or its proposals (either alone or in combination with other plans and projects) would be likely to significantly affect Natura 2000 sites. These are sites that are designated by the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 79/409/EEC 1979 and the EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora 92/43/EC 1992. If a site is affected by development resulting from the plan in combination with other plans and programmes an 'appropriate assessment' under The Conservation (Habitat, & c.) Regulations 1994 will be required.

St Albans does not contain any Natura 2000 designated sites, and the closest such site is approximately 10 miles away from the borough – Chiltern Beechwoods in Dacorum DC. It has been determined that the St Albans development plan documents are not likely to have significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites.

#### Consultation question

**Q1:** Do you think the LDF might effect on Natura 2000 sites? If so, on which sites and what might be the likely effects?

#### 1.5 Geographic and Temporal Scope

The spatial scope for the assessment is the city and district of St Albans. However where potential impacts are identified that could affect the environment in neighbouring authorities (i.e. within Three Rivers, Dacorum, Watford, Hertsmere and Welwyn Hatfield) these will also be assessed for their significance.

The SEA/SA will examine three temporal scales:

- Short term effects: effects expected in the next 1-5 years;
- Medium term effects: effects expected in the next 5-10 years; and
- Long term effects: effects expected in the next 10+ years.

## 1.6 Structure of the Scoping Report

The ultimate reference material used in the preparation of this report are the SEA regulations<sup>4</sup>. Schedule 2 of the regulations requires the consideration of the following factors which are addressed in this report as part of stage A of the SA/SEA:

- a) An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme that is being appraised and the relationship with other relevant plans or programmes;
- b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;
- c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be affected;
- d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular importance such as areas pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC; and,
- e) The environmental protection objectives, established at international, community or member state level, which are relevant to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.

The report is structured in the following sections:

Chapter 1: Sets out the context and purpose of the SA/SEA, considering the legal requirement for SA/SEA.

Chapter 2: Outlines the relationship between other relevant plans and programmes and presents the environmental baseline in St Albans, including current trends.

Chapter 3: Presents the environmental and sustainability issues and opportunities that have been identified during the review.

Chapter 4: Presents the proposed SA/SEA Objectives and framework that will be utilised in the subsequent assessment processes.

Chapter 5: Outlines a proposed methodology for the remaining steps of the SA/SEA.

Chapter 6: Provides a summary of the questions for consultees that have been posed during the rest of the Scoping Report.

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<sup>4</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (England) SI 2004 No. 1633

## 2 Environmental & Sustainability Planning Context

### 2.1 Introduction

This stage involves:

- Examining the relationship of the development plan documents with other plans and programmes, to ensure that all relevant environmental protection objectives are identified and that potential conflicts can be addressed within the plan making process;
- Assembling data on the current and future state of the environment (baseline) related to all environmental and sustainability topics which may be affected by the plan. The analysis of data can later be used for establishing the effects of the development plan documents; and
- Identifying present and future environmental problems and opportunities in order that development plan documents can address these issues as far as possible.

The full review of other plans and programmes is presented in the appendix of this report. Rather than producing a summary of all the documents at each level (national, regional, county and local), the summary is split into key topics. Section 2.2 provides an overall summary of this review, whilst the relationships of the other plans to the assessment topics are discussed through sections 2.3.1 to 2.3.10.

The baseline review stage requires the collection and processing of large amounts of raw data. This data is presented under the individual topic headings in 2.3.1 to 2.3.10 below.

### 2.2 Summary of Review of other Plans and Programmes

Together, plans can be constraints (i.e. set formal limitations, policy contexts, requirements) or can be sources of useful background information as part of evidence gathering. These act together in a hierarchy where a sequence of precedence is established in a nesting, or tiering of plans. A review of other relevant policy documents is required to establish the environmental objectives that they contain, and this stage allows opportunities and synergies to be identified, as well as potential conflicts between aims, objectives or detailed policies. The review also highlights sustainability drivers between plans to be identified.

Table 1 lists all reviewed policies, plans and programmes. Those which influence specific topics of the LDF are summarised under the different topic headings (2.3.1 to 2.3.10) whereas plans of overarching importance are summarised below.

**Table 1: List of reviewed other relevant policies, plans and programmes.**

<b>Reviewed other relevant policies, plans and programmes</b>
<b>International</b>
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (1971) Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1979) Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979) The Convention on Biological Diversity, Rio de Janeiro (1992) Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change (1997) The UN Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (2002) World Summit on Sustainable Development - Earth Summit (2002)
<b>European</b>
EU Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) EU Waste Framework Directive (91/156/EEC) EU Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) EU Directive on Ambient Air Quality and Management (1996/62/EC) European Spatial Development Perspective (1999) EU Waste to Landfill Directive (99/31/EC) EU Directive Establishing a Framework for the Community Action in the Field of Water Policy (2000/60/EC) – The Water Framework Directive European Commission White Paper on the European Transport Policy (EC, 2001) EU Sustainable Development Strategy (2001) Åarhus Convention (2001) EU Directive to Promote Electricity from Renewable Energy (2001/77/EC) Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice - EU Sixth Environment Action Programme (2002) EU Directive for the Promotion of Bio-fuels for Transport (2003/30/EC)
<b>National</b>
PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development PPG 2 – Green Belts PPG 3 – Housing PPG 4 – Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms PPS 6 – Town Centres and Retail Developments PPS 7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas PPG 8 - Telecommunications PPS 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation PPS 12 – Local Development Frameworks PPS 10 – Waste Management PPG 13 – Transport PPG 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment PPG 16 – Archaeology and Planning PPG 17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport, and Recreation PPG 21 – Tourism PPS 22 – Renewable Energy PPS 23 – Planning and Pollution Control PPG 24 – Planning and Noise PPG 25 – Development and Flood Risk Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) UK Biodiversity Action Plan - UK BAP (1994) England Forestry Strategy (1999) UK Air Quality Strategy (2000) Countryside and Rights of Way Act – CRoW (2000) Government Urban White Paper: Our Towns, Our Cities, the Future. Delivering an urban renaissance (2000) UK Waste Strategy (2000) Government Rural White Paper: Our Countryside, the Future – A Deal for Rural England (2000) Climate Change: The UK Programme (2001) The Historic Environment: A Force for Our Future (2001) UK Fuel Poverty Strategy (2001) 'Working with the Grain of Nature': A Biodiversity Strategy for England (2002)

<p>'Our Energy Future' - Creating a Low Carbon Economy' - UK white paper on energy (2003)          'The Future of Transport' – UK white paper on transport (2004)          UK Climate Change Programme Review: Consultation (2004)          England Rural Strategy (2004)          Choosing Health: Making Healthier Choices Easier - Health White Paper (2004)          Securing the Future – UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)</p>
<p><b>Regional – East of England</b></p>
<p>Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England (2001)          Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future - Communities Plan (2003)          Our Environment, Our Future – The Regional Environmental Strategy for the East of England (2003)          Draft East of England Plan (currently under examination in public (EiP) from 1st November 2005 to 3rd March 2006; final RSS will be published in March 2007)          Regional Transport Strategy for the East of England (draft published in 2004 as part of the East of England Plan)          Regional Social Strategy: A strategy to achieve a fair and inclusive society in the East of England (launched in May 2004)          A Shared Vision: The regional economic strategy of the East of England (formally released on 1 December 2004)          The London Plan (2004)          South East Plan (2005)          Sustainable Futures: The Integrated Regional Strategy for the East of England (2005)          Revised Regional Housing Strategy for the East of England 2005-2010 (2005)          Creating Sustainable Communities in the East of England (2005)          Towns and Cities – Strategy and Action Plan: Urban Renaissance in the East of England          Chilterns ANOB Management Strategy: The Framework for Action 2002-2007          A Housing Strategy for the London Commuter Belt Sub-Region 2005-2008</p>
<p><b>County – Hertfordshire</b></p>
<p>Hertfordshire Structure Plan 1991-2011 and Deposit Draft Alterations          A 50 Year Vision for the Wildlife and Natural Habitats of Hertfordshire (1998)          Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan 1995-2005 (1999)          Economic Development Strategy for Hertfordshire 2000-2005 (2000)          The Hertfordshire Environmental Strategy (2001)          Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review (2001)          Rural Hertfordshire – an agenda for action (2001)          'Enjoy!' - A Cultural Strategy for Hertfordshire (2002)          Hertfordshire Town Renaissance Campaign          Hertfordshire Waste Strategy 2002-2024          Hertfordshire Sustainability Guide (2003)          The Hertfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework and Scheme (2005)          Hertfordshire LTP 2006/07 – 2010/11 (draft)</p>
<p><b>Local Authority – St Albans City and District</b></p>
<p>City and District of St Albans Plan Review (adopted November 1994)          St Albans City and District Urban Wildlife Survey (2001)          Revised Parking Policies and Standards (January 2002)          St Albans Housing Needs Survey (2002)          Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing (March 2004)          Supplementary Planning Guidance on Residential Extensions and Replacement Dwellings in the Green Belt (May 2004)          An assessment of the accommodation Needs of gypsies and travellers in South and West Hertfordshire (March 2005)          An Archaeological Strategy for the Historic Centre of St Albans (2005)          St Albans Corporate Plan 2005/06          Enjoy! A Tourism Strategy for St Albans City 2003 - 2005          'A Vision for St Albans and District' - The Community Strategy 2003-2007          St Albans Energy Policy          St Albans City and District Economic Development Strategy (consultation draft) 2005 - 2007          St Albans City and District Community Safety Strategy 2005- 2008</p>

### *Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development*

PPS1 identifies that development plans should promote development that creates socially inclusive communities, including suitable mixes of housing. Plan policies should:

- Ensure that the effect of development on the social fabric of communities is considered and taken into account;
- Seek to reduce social inequalities;
- Address accessibility (both in terms of location and physical access) for all members of the community to jobs, health, housing, education, shops, leisure and community facilities;
- Take into account the needs of all the community, including particular requirements relating to age, sex, ethnic background, religion, disability or income;
- Deliver safe, healthy and attractive places to live; and,
- Support the promotion of health and well being by making provision for physical activity.

### *PPS 12 – Local Development Frameworks*

This planning policy statement sets out the Government's policy on the preparation of local development documents which will comprise the local development framework. Local development frameworks are intended to streamline the local planning process and promote a proactive, positive approach to managing development. The key aims of the new framework system are:

- Flexibility. Local planning authorities can respond to changing local circumstances and ensure that spatial plans are prepared and reviewed more quickly than development plans under the old system;
- Strengthening community and stakeholder involvement in the development of local communities. Local communities and all stakeholders will be involved from the outset and throughout the preparation of local development documents;
- Front loading. Local planning authorities should take key decisions early in the preparation of local development documents. The aim will be to seek consensus on essential issues early in the preparation of local development documents and so avoid late changes being made;
- Sustainability appraisal. To ensure that local development documents are prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development;
- Programme management. The efficient management of the programme for the preparation of a range of local development documents in accordance with the local development scheme; and,
- Soundness. Local development documents must be soundly based in terms of their content and the process by which they are produced. They must also be based upon a robust, credible evidence base.

The local development framework will comprise of local development documents, which include development plan documents, that are part of the statutory development plan and supplementary planning documents which expand policies set out in a development plan document or provide additional detail. The local development framework will also include the statement of community involvement, the local development scheme and the annual monitoring report.

### *The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England - the Draft East of England Plan*

The plan provides the statutory framework for local development plans for the next 15 years up to 2021. Its overall aims are ensuring economic growth while promoting sustainable development and renewable energy. Its examination in public ends in March 2006.

Its main environmental objectives are:

- Increase prosperity and employment growth;
- Improve social inclusion and access to employment and services;
- Maintain and enhance cultural diversity;
- Increase the regeneration and renewal of disadvantaged areas;
- Deliver more integrated patterns of land use;
- Sustain and enhance the vitality of town centres;
- Make more use of previously developed land;
- Meet the region's identified housing needs, and in particular provide sufficient affordable housing;
- Protect and enhance the built and historic environment and encourage good quality design and use of sustainable construction methods for all new development;
- Protect and enhance the natural environment, including its biodiversity and landscape character;
- 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 effect;
- Minimise the environmental effect of travel, by reducing the need to travel, encouraging the use of more environmentally friendly modes of transport, and widening choice of modes; and,
- Minimise the risk of flooding.

### *Relevant Plans in London and the South East*

Although Hertfordshire is located in the East of England region, parts of it are adjunct to both the South East region and London. The London Plan and the South East Plan are the spatial strategies for the respective regions and proposals within them can greatly affect nearby areas, such as South West Hertfordshire. This is particularly true for London, where the Mayor gained control over public transport and some suburban rail links.

### *Hertfordshire County Structure Plan (April 1998)*

The basic issues that are important to the County of Hertfordshire are economic growth, housing, social needs and transport and the environment. The plan begins by outlining the framework for sustainable development; a major objective. It documents that the aim is to address these aforementioned issues in a sustainable way. The area has planned for regeneration with the aim of providing for the changing human needs. More sustainable transport has become a major objective, where the movement of people and goods is one of the critical elements to be addressed in achieving a more sustainable Hertfordshire. Minimising the need for travel and encouraging less damaging forms of transport is an essential element of the overall development strategy. Education is another area in which the county's objectives lie, thus development in education and training needs will be

supported. A healthy economy is one of the major objectives because it is an essential and integral element of the strategy for sustainability. Many of the aims cannot be achieved without economic growth and the challenge is to ensure that the effect of this growth is within levels which the environment can sustain.

### *Relevant Local Plans*

Three plans are of overarching importance for St Albans planning context. One is the existing local plan, the 'City and District of St Albans Plan Review', which will be replaced by the emerging LDF. It guides land use and development in the area and is used as a basis for many of the decisions taken by the council, particularly with regard to individual planning applications.

Moreover, 'St Albans Corporate Plan 2005/06' sets out a vision for St Albans, namely

*'To preserve and enhance the distinctive character of St Albans City and District, making it an outstanding place in which to live and work and to visit, where everyone enjoys a range of quality and efficient services in a progressive, caring and environmentally concerned community.'*

This vision is put into practice by a number of aims and actions.

Finally, the Community Strategy 2003-2007 'A Vision for St Albans and District' contains more details of how the Local Strategic Partnership aims to achieve St Albans' vision. The Strategy has been developed under five key themes. These are:

- Business, transport and infrastructure
- Community safety
- Environment and heritage
- Health, housing and social care
- Leisure, learning and culture

Each theme of the strategy is supported by a detailed action plan.

A review of all local plans can be found in the appendix.

### **Consultation question**

**Q2:** Are there any other policies, plans or programmes (PPPs) that contain environmental protection objectives or identify issues that are not covered by this list of PPPs?

## **2.3 Current and Future State of the Environment**

### **2.3.1 Air Quality**

#### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

On European level EU Directive 1996/62/EC on Ambient Air Quality sets the framework for dealing with local air pollution by introducing new air quality standards for previously unregulated pollutants. In addition, the 6th EU Environment Action Programme highlights strategic priorities of the Commission's environmental policy, amongst others human health -

an issue closed related to air pollution. On national level, the UK Air Quality Strategy defines a number of air quality objectives for several pollutants, whilst PPS 23 'Planning and Pollution Control' stresses the importance of the proximity principle in siting new developments and thereby separating incompatible land uses.

### Baseline Information

The monitoring of air quality is important in ensuring that levels of identified pollutants remain below national standards and targets to protect human health and eco systems. Identified pollutants include:

- Nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>);
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>);
- Particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>);
- Sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>);
- Benzene;
- Carbon monoxide (CO); and,
- 1, 3-butadiene.

The ambient pollution concentrations and the number of days where air pollution was moderate or high have been collected. This data has been compared to regional data and national targets.

Table 2 shows the estimated pollutant levels<sup>5</sup> of Watford Borough Council, St Albans City Council, Dacorum Borough Council, and Three Rivers District Council. The data was derived by calculating the average of for all sites in the Local Authority area. Data was not available for SO<sub>2</sub> and CO levels in 2005 and 2010, and 1, 3-butadiene in 2010. The data below displays a general trend of decreasing pollutant levels between 2001 and 2010.

**Table 2: Pollutant levels<sup>5</sup>.**

Pollutant	Watford Borough Council			St Albans City Council			Dacorum Borough Council			Three Rivers District Council		
	2001	2005	2010	2001	2005	2010	2001	2005	2010	2001	2005	2010
NO <sub>x</sub>	65.04	53.51	40.97	63.77	52.52	40.07	43.87	39.59	28.85	60.00	49.33	38.08
NO <sub>2</sub>	34.20	29.90	24.89	33.67	29.36	24.47	25.92	22.89	19.44	32.33	28.25	23.64
PM <sub>10</sub>	21.74	20.92	19.01	21.46	20.61	18.74	20.30	19.53	17.97	21.31	20.49	18.69
SO <sub>2</sub>	3.6	-	-	3.76	-	-	3.42	-	-	3.6	-	-
Benzene	0.72	0.63	0.47	0.60	0.52	0.40	0.46	0.41	0.32	0.59	0.52	0.39
CO	0.42	-	-	0.38	-	-	0.32	-	-	0.37	-	-
1, 3-butadiene	0.31	0.25	-	0.27	0.21	-	0.19	0.17	-	0.27	0.21	-

Units: NO<sub>x</sub> (ugm-3 as NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean); NO<sub>2</sub> (ugm-3 annual mean); PM<sub>10</sub> (ugm-3 grav. annual mean); SO<sub>2</sub> (ugm-3 annual mean); Benzene (ugm-3 annual mean); CO (mgm-3 annual mean); 1, 3-butadiene (1, 3-butadiene 2001 ugm-3 annual mean)

<sup>5</sup> Air Quality Archive: <http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/laqm/laqm.php>

Table 3 below displays estimated pollutant level data for the East of England<sup>6</sup>. The data was derived by calculating the average of the predictions for all sites in the East of England. No data was available for benzene or 1, 3-butadine. It can be seen that between 2001 and 2005 pollutant levels fall.

**Table 3: Pollutant levels for the East of England<sup>6</sup>.**

Pollutant	2001	2005
NO <sub>x</sub>	60.87	40.58
NO <sub>2</sub>	28.93	23.95
PM <sub>10</sub>	21.33	21
SO <sub>2</sub>	8.1	6.48
Benzene	-	-
CO	0.4	0.24
1, 3-butadeine	-	-

Units: NO<sub>x</sub> (ugm-3 as NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean); NO<sub>2</sub> (ugm-3 annual mean); PM<sub>10</sub> (ugm-3 grav. annual mean); SO<sub>2</sub> (ugm-3 annual mean); Benzene (ugm-3 annual mean); CO (mgm-3 annual mean); 1, 3-butadine (1, 3-butadine 2001 ugm-3 annual mean)

Table 4 displays the national targets for pollutant levels<sup>7</sup> and the year by which they are to be achieved whereas Table 5 shows the number of days when air pollution was 'moderate' or 'high' for PM<sub>10</sub><sup>8</sup> at the local level. Table 6 shows the number of days when air pollution was 'moderate' or 'high' in the East of England, and in England overall<sup>9</sup>. Figures for the East of England were calculated by taking an average of the sites where days were recorded (Norwich Centre, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock, St Osyth, Sibton, Weybourne, and Wicken Fen). The number of days where air pollution was 'moderate' or 'high' in England does not include figures taken at St Osyth, Weybourne, Stockton-on-Tees Yarm, Hull Freetown, and Coventry Memorial park due to the fact that these were new sites<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Air Quality Archive:

[http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/data\\_and\\_statistics.php?action=exceedence\\_pre\\_step&go=Go](http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/data_and_statistics.php?action=exceedence_pre_step&go=Go)

<sup>7</sup> APIS: [http://www.apis.ac.uk/overview/regulations/overview\\_UK\\_NAQS.htm](http://www.apis.ac.uk/overview/regulations/overview_UK_NAQS.htm)

<sup>8</sup> Herts Link – Quality of Life Indicators

<http://www.hertslink.org/portal/Observatory/Data%20by%20Subject/Life%20in%20the%20community/Quality%20of%20Life/Quality%20of%20Life%20Indicators>

<sup>9</sup> Regional Quality of Life Counts:

<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/documents/publications/rqolc2003.pdf>

**Table 4: National targets<sup>7</sup>.**

Pollutant	Objective concentration	measured as	Year to be achieved
	NO <sub>2</sub>	200 µg/m <sup>3</sup> not to be exceeded more than 18 times per year	
	40 µg/ m <sup>3</sup>	annual mean	2005
PM <sub>10</sub>	40 µg/ m <sup>3</sup>	annual mean	2004
	50 µg/ m <sup>3</sup> not to be exceeded more than 35 time per year	24 hour mean	2004
SO <sub>2</sub>	350 µg/ m <sup>3</sup> not to be exceeded more than 24 times per year	1 hour mean	2004
	125 µg/ m <sup>3</sup> not to be exceeded more than 3 times per year	24 hour mean	2004
	226 µg/ m <sup>3</sup> not to be exceeded more than 35 times per year	15 minute mean	2005
Benzene	16.25 µg/ m <sup>3</sup>	annual running mean	2010
CO	10 mg/ m <sup>3</sup>	running 8 hour mean	2003
1, 3-butadine	2.25 µg/ m <sup>3</sup>	annual running mean	2003

**Table 5: The number of days where air pollution was 'moderate' or 'high'<sup>8</sup>.**

Local Authority	2001	2002	2003
Watford Borough Council	5	2	10
St Albans City Council	4	4	15
Dacorum Borough Council	0	4	(4)
Three Rivers District Council	5	8	13

( ) = denotes sites that have a capture rate of less than 75% over the year.

**Table 6: The number of days where air pollution was 'moderate' or 'high'<sup>9</sup>.**

Site Name	Site Type	2002	2003
East of England	Average (Urban and Rural)	40	69
England Urban	Urban	19	51
England Rural	Rural	34	68

The pollutant levels in the area encompassed by St Albans City Council decrease between 2001 and 2010<sup>5</sup>. The levels of NO<sub>x</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> in both 2001 and 2005 can be seen to be above the levels for the East of England, but below the national target level of 40 µg/ m<sup>3</sup>. In 2001, the PM<sub>10</sub> levels for St Albans were higher than that of the East of England level<sup>6</sup>. In 2005, however, the PM<sub>10</sub> levels for St Albans were below that of the East of England. PM<sub>10</sub> levels in St Albans remained below the national target levels in 2001, 2005 and 2010<sup>7</sup>. Levels of SO<sub>2</sub> and CO in St Albans in 2001, were below the level for the East of England<sup>6</sup>. The levels of benzene and 1, 3-butadine were also below the national targets<sup>7</sup>.

Due to high levels of NO<sub>x</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub>, St Albans City Council has declared 3 Air Quality Management Areas<sup>5</sup>:

- The area comprising of odd numbers 1-7 London Road and even numbers 2-38 London Road, St Albans (NO<sub>2</sub>);
- The area comprising of Beechtree Cottages, Hemel Hempstead Road, St Albans (adjacent to junction of M1 (J7) and M10 (NO<sub>2</sub>); and,
- An area encompassing a number of domestic properties in Frogmore and Colney Street in the vicinity of the M25 (NO<sub>2</sub>).

Within these areas, the levels of NO<sub>2</sub> are closely monitored for change.

The number of days where air pollution was moderate or high remained constant between 2001 and 2002 at just 4 days, and increased between 2002 and 2003 from 4 to 15 days<sup>8</sup>. This level, however, is both below the average for the East of England and the average for England<sup>9</sup>.

### *Trends*

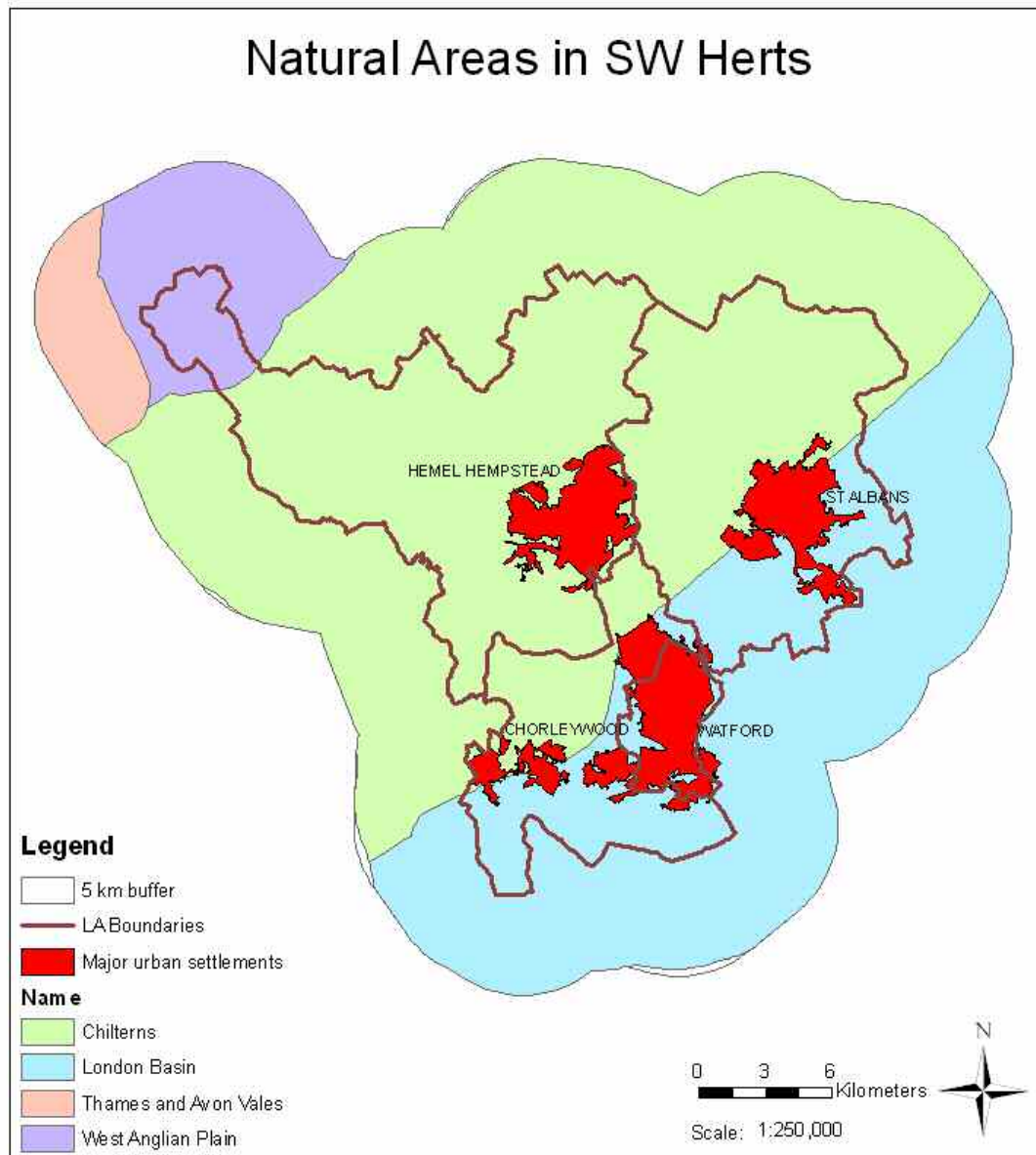
In general, pollutant levels are decreasing, and better than the national targets.

## **2.3.2 Biodiversity**

### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

Numerous international agreements deal with the loss of biodiversity. The Ramsar, Bonn and Bern Conventions aim to protect wetlands, migratory species, wildlife and natural habitats respectively whereas the more recent Convention on Biological Diversity, the Millennium Development Goals and the World Summit on Sustainable Development stress the wider importance of biodiversity and its conservation. On European level, the Birds and Habitats Directive and the EU Biodiversity Strategy make more specific provisions which are then cascaded down into national legislation.

The Bern Convention, Birds and Habitats Directive are implemented in the UK via the Wildlife and Countryside Act, whereas the national Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) sets out more detailed commitments for species and habitat protection and enhancement. The Biodiversity Strategy for England aims to embed biodiversity conservations in all main sectors of public policy, while the England Forestry Strategy fosters the sustainable management and expansion of woodland areas. This is supplemented by a number of planning policy statements/guidance notes, such as PPG 2 'Green Belts', PPS 9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' and MPG 6 'Aggregates Provision' which make specific provisions for biodiversity conservation in the planning system. More locally, the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan aims to contribute to the UK BAP by setting out actions for conservation of certain species and habitats.

*Baseline Information**Natural Areas*

**Figure 2: Natural Areas in South West Hertfordshire (source MAGIC).**

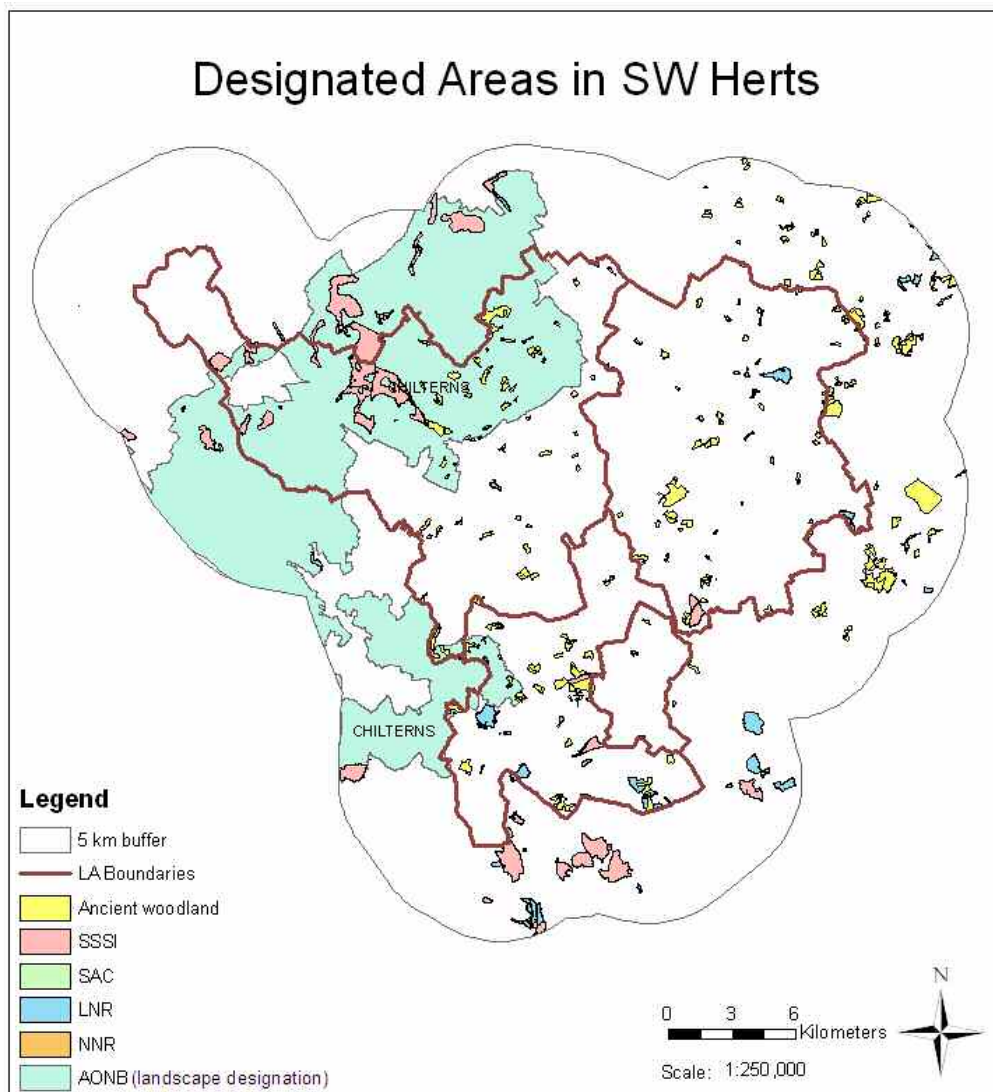
St Albans falls within the English Nature’s natural areas “London Basin” (number 66) and “Chilterns” (number 65). As illustrated in Figure 2, the major part of the district falls into the London Basin. Natural areas are bio-geographic zones which reflect the geological foundation, the natural systems and processes, and the wildlife within the area. They follow very similar boundaries to the landscape character areas, although natural areas are often divided into more than one character area. They provide the context in which plans such as the LDF can look to secure, strengthen and enhance the biodiversity and natural features which characterises St Albans’ part of the Natural Area.

The English Nature summary for the London Basin starts as follows<sup>10</sup>:

*“The London Basin is a large, trough-like basin which was formed around 50 million years ago, and is filled with mostly sands and clay sediments. About one-third of the area is covered by London and the wildlife of the Natural Area is characterised by islands of semi-natural habitats. These habitats include large areas of woodland, with extensive stands of mature beech woods, significant areas of lowland mixed deciduous woodland and numerous large wood pastures and parklands. There are also notable areas of heathland in the Natural Area.”*

St Albans contains a range of sites designated for their biodiversity value. These are illustrated in Figure 3 and discussed in more detail below.

*Designated Areas*



**Figure 3: Designated areas in South West Hertfordshire**

<sup>10</sup>English Nature (1997) "London Basin Natural Area", available at <http://www.english-nature.org.uk/science/natural/profiles/naProfile66.pdf>

St Albans contains no international or European designations (Ramsar sites, SPAs, SACs). However, two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) covering 73 hectares can be found in St Albans (Bricket Wood Common, Moor Mill Quarry West). English Nature maintains statistics on the condition of all SSSIs in the country, and they have a Public Service Agreement target to have 95% of the SSSI area in “favourable” or “unfavourable recovering” condition by 2010. Only 10.8% of St Albans’ SSSI are in favourable or unfavourable but recovering condition, well below the PSA target and the overall figure for Hertfordshire (66.29%) and England (63%).

English Nature reports for the condition of SSSIs were reviewed to find the reasons behind certain SSSI areas falling in the ‘part destroyed/destroyed’ category (see Table 7). The reasons stated for the unfavourable condition of SSSIs in St Albans were inappropriate cutting/mowing, inappropriate scrub control and public access/disturbance. These should be taken into account in the LDF plan making process to avoid the degeneration of SSSIs in future.

There are no National Nature Reserves (NNR) in St Albans itself; however NNR Ruislip Woods is situated just outside Hertfordshire. It is designated for its woodland, open water, lowland grassland habitats.

According to English Nature<sup>11</sup> there are five Local Nature Reserves in St Albans and the locations of these sites have been taken into account, in the assessment of the LDF:

- Batford Springs (4 ha);
- Colney Heath (26 ha);
- Marshalls Heath (3 ha);
- The Wick Wood (3 ha); and,
- Watercress Wildlife Site (1.2 ha).

In addition, a survey undertaken by the Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre in 2001 identified 95 urban sites which were recorded as being of wildlife interest within an urban context.

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<sup>11</sup> English Nature (2005) “Local Nature Reserves”, available at [http://www.english-nature.org.uk/special/lnr/lnr\\_search.asp](http://www.english-nature.org.uk/special/lnr/lnr_search.asp)

**Table 7: Reasons for adverse conditions of SSSIs in England (source: English Nature).**

Reason for adverse condition	% of unit area not meeting PSA target	Reason for adverse condition	% of unit area not meeting PSA target
Overgrazing	34.38%	Inappropriate CSS/ESA prescription	1.02%
Moor burning	26.42%	Fire – other	0.95%
Drainage	8.98%	Siltation	0.84%
Sea fisheries	6.93%	Water abstraction	0.79%
Air pollution	6.73%	Inappropriate water levels	0.76%
Forestry and woodland management	6.45%	Inappropriate dredging	0.67%
Inappropriate scrub control	6.10%	Inappropriate cutting/mowing	0.63%
Undergrazing	5.89%	Inappropriate pest control	0.52%
Other - specify in comments	5.88%	Pesticide/herbicide use	0.29%
Coastal squeeze	5.71%	Peat extraction	0.26%
Inappropriate ditch management	5.10%	Game management - pheasant rearing	0.22%
Water pollution - agriculture/run off	3.21%	Vehicles - other	0.21%
Inappropriate weed control	2.55%	Military	0.20%
Water pollution - discharge	2.44%	Game management - other	0.20%
Public access/disturbance	1.49%	Earth science feature obstructed	0.18%
Inappropriate coastal management	1.47%	Vehicles - illicit	0.18%
Agriculture - other	1.44%	Planning permission - other mineral and waste	0.16%
Deer grazing/browsing	1.41%	Earth science feature removed	0.11%
Fertiliser use	1.34%	Planning permission - general	0.10%
Inappropriate stock-feeding	1.04%		

There is no specific Biodiversity Action Plan for St Albans. However, on a county level "A 50 Year Vision for the Wildlife and Natural Habitats of Hertfordshire"<sup>12</sup> was drawn up as a response to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. It evaluates the status of habitats and species in the county and thereby identifies key habitats, species of national and local significance and High Biodiversity Areas.

Species for which action plans have been prepared include, amongst others, great crested newt, bittern, stone curlew, song thrush, freshwater white-clawed crayfish, water vole, otter, dormouse, cornflower and a number of local species. Priority habitats for which action plans have been prepared include, amongst others ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows, chalk rivers, fens, reed beds and a variety of lowland habitats.

These Biodiversity Action Plans should be taken into account by St Albans City and District Council when deciding on issues which could effect on biodiversity directly or indirectly.

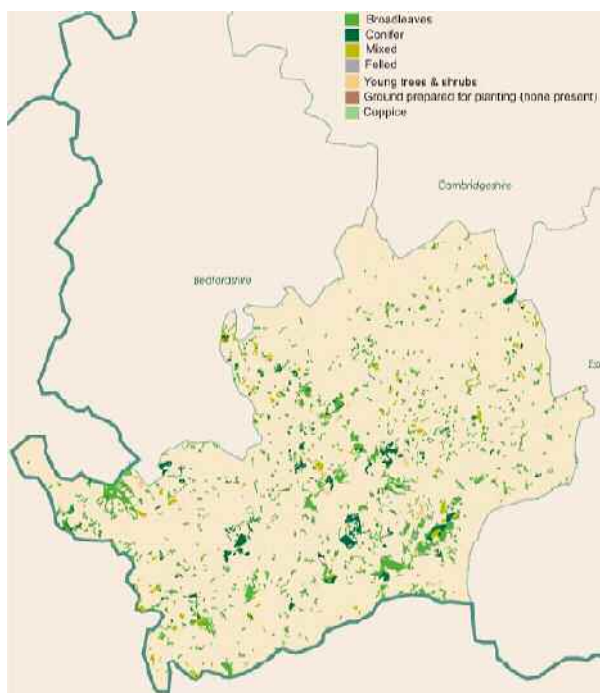
<sup>12</sup> Hertfordshire Environmental Forum and Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (1998) "A 50 Year Vision for the Wildlife and Natural Habitats of Hertfordshire", available at <http://www.ukbap.org.uk/lbap.aspx?id=374>

Hertfordshire's Quality of Life Report 2004 Report<sup>13</sup> reports a number on indicator species which could potentially be used for monitoring:

- Water voles (declining, reflecting the national trend);
- Pipistrelle bats (no trend, first monitored in 2004);
- Grey heron (reflecting wetlands; 130 nests, regional decline and national increase);
- Skylark (reflecting farmland; increasing against regional and national decline);
- Song thrush (reflecting woodland and mixed farmland; increasing against regional decline and national increase); and,
- House sparrow (reflecting urban environment; declining in line with regional trend, no obvious national trend).

### Woodland Cover

Quantified figures for woodland cover were not available for St Albans. However, parts of the authority are covered by Watling Chase Community Forest which aims to combine the sustainable production of timber with wildlife conservation and environmental enhancements.



The county of Hertfordshire itself has a total area of woodland of 15,503 ha covering 9.5% of the county (see Figure 4). This is slightly above the UK average of 7.7% but well below the woodland coverage in continental Europe of 30%.

**Figure 4: Woodland coverage in Hertfordshire by type forest (Source: Forestry Commission<sup>14</sup>).**

### Trends

The condition of SSSIs in St Albans is very poor and far away from the target. More detailed trend information does not seem to be available.

<sup>13</sup> Hertfordshire Environmental Forum (2004) "Quality of Life Report 2004", available at <http://www.hertsdirect.org/infobase/docs/pdfstore/gol4.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Forestry Commission (2002) "National Inventory of Woodland and Trees - County Report Hertfordshire", available at [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/hertfordshire.pdf/\\$FILE/hertfordshire.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/hertfordshire.pdf/$FILE/hertfordshire.pdf)

The draft East of England Plan proposes to build 79,600 net additional homes in Hertfordshire (7,000 in St Albans) between 2001 and 2021<sup>15</sup>. It is therefore possible that these development pressures could adversely affect biodiversity.

#### *Data Gaps/Limitations*

Lack of data on local authority level.

### **2.3.3 Climatic Factors**

#### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol provide the international framework for tackling climate change. In addition, the UN Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals, and the EU Sixth Environment Action Programme stress its importance whereas the EU Bio Fuels Directive and the EU Directive to promote Electricity from Renewable Energy set out specific measures to mitigate climate change.

On a national scale, 'Climate Change: The UK Programme' and its review propose to cut UK's carbon dioxide emissions by some 60% by about 2050. This is supplemented by the white papers on energy and transport which highlight the importance of energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and sustainable transport. In a planning context PPS 22 'Renewable Energy' states regional and local planning documents shall contain policies to promote renewable energy. The draft RSS for the East of England, the 'East of England Plan' implements this by setting a renewables target for electricity of 17% by 2020 (excluding offshore wind).

#### *Baseline Information*

Climate change is an issue that is at the forefront of both political and public thinking at present. Over the last century, the UK has seen an increase in the number of storms, and extreme weather spells (for example heat waves). Climate change is partially caused by the production of greenhouse gases, which heat the earth and cause temperatures to rise. The burning of fossil fuels is a major contributor to greenhouse gas production. Rising temperatures could cause ice caps to melt and sea levels to rise. If climate change is not slowed down there might be an increased risk of flooding, storms, drought, introduction of foreign pests, and insurance blight<sup>16</sup>

For the purpose of this report, data on carbon emissions (Table 8), improvements in domestic energy efficiency ( ), and local authority energy consumption was collected (

Table 10). It can be seen that carbon emissions per capita for St Albans are higher than the regional and national average. Nevertheless, domestic energy efficiency improved by 15.4% between 1/4/96 and 31/2/04<sup>18</sup>; although fossil fuel and electricity consumption has increased between 2002 and 2004<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> East of England Regional Assembly (2004) "draft East of England Plan", available at <http://www.eera.gov.uk/category.asp?cat=452>

<sup>16</sup> Harman, J, Gawith, M. and Colley, M. 2005. Progress on assessing climate effects through the UK Climate Effects Programme, *Weather*, 60 (9), 258-262.

**Table 8: Carbon dioxide emission estimates per local authority in 2003 (in kilo tonne CO<sub>2</sub>)<sup>17</sup>.**

Local Authority	Industry and Commercial	Domestic	Road Transport	Land Use Change	Total	Population in Thousands	Per capita CO <sub>2</sub> (in tonnes)	Domestic per capita CO <sub>2</sub> (in tonnes)
Watford	202	215	91	0	509	80	6.4	2.7
Three Rivers	178	244	299	4	725	84	8.6	2.9
St Albans	283	404	546	15	1248	132	9.5	3.1
Dacorum	371	360	237	20	988	138	7.2	2.6
Total E of England	18193	15715	13373	2455	49735	5463	9.1	2.9
UK total	262087	163737	128606	13676	568105	59537	9.5	2.8

**Table 9: Percentage improvement in domestic energy efficiency (1/4/96-31/3/2004)<sup>18</sup>.**

Local Authority	Improvement in energy efficiency (%)
Watford Borough Council	21.1
St Albans City Council	15.4
Dacorum Borough Council	17.9
Three Rivers District Council	31.87

**Table 10: Local authorities' energy consumption<sup>19</sup>.**

Indicator	Watford Borough Council		St Albans City Council		Dacorum Borough Council		Three Rivers District Council	
	2002-2003	2003-2004	2002-2003	2003-2004	2002-2003	2003-2004	2002-2003	2003-2004
Actual/'Typical' energy consumption LA buildings - fossil fuels (consumption/m <sup>2</sup> )	122.7	-	95.8	112.0	105.0	77.0	99.0	141.0
Actual/'Typical' energy consumption LA buildings - electricity (consumption/m <sup>2</sup> )	136.6	-	225.7	234.0	110.0	78.0	97.0	87.0

Besides reducing greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate climate change it is also important that local authorities adapt to the likely impacts. This is necessary since the climate is already changing and is likely to continue to do so for at least the next decades.

<sup>17</sup> Netcen (2003) "Local and Regional Estimates of Carbon Emissions 2003 (excludes aviation, offshore, shipping)", available at

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/globalatmos/galocalghg.htm>

<sup>18</sup> DEFRA: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/energy/heca95/pdf/heca-data2004.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> ODPM: <http://www.bvpi.gov.uk/pages/index.asp>

### *Trends*

It can be seen that domestic energy efficiency improved<sup>18</sup>.

### *Data Gaps/Uncertainties*

Carbon emissions per local authority are estimates only and do not include emissions from aviation, offshore and shipping.

No trend data for local CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

## **2.3.4 Cultural Heritage**

### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

The European Spatial Development Perspective aims for balanced and sustainable development in the European Union. As part of that the conservation and management of natural resources and the cultural heritage is set out as one of three fundamental goals. In the UK, 'The Historic Environment: A force for our future' states the intention of the government to protect the historic environment and recognises its major contribution to the rural economy, whereas PPG 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' and PPG 16 'Archaeology and Planning' set out specific guidance on how the planning system can foster the conservation of historic environmental and cultural heritage.

In addition, St Albans published an archaeological strategy for its historic centre in 2005, which defines what is meant by the historic environment and reviews its character and its value for today's residents and future generations.

### *Baseline Information*

English Heritage's Heritage Counts 2004 reports that the county of Hertfordshire contains:

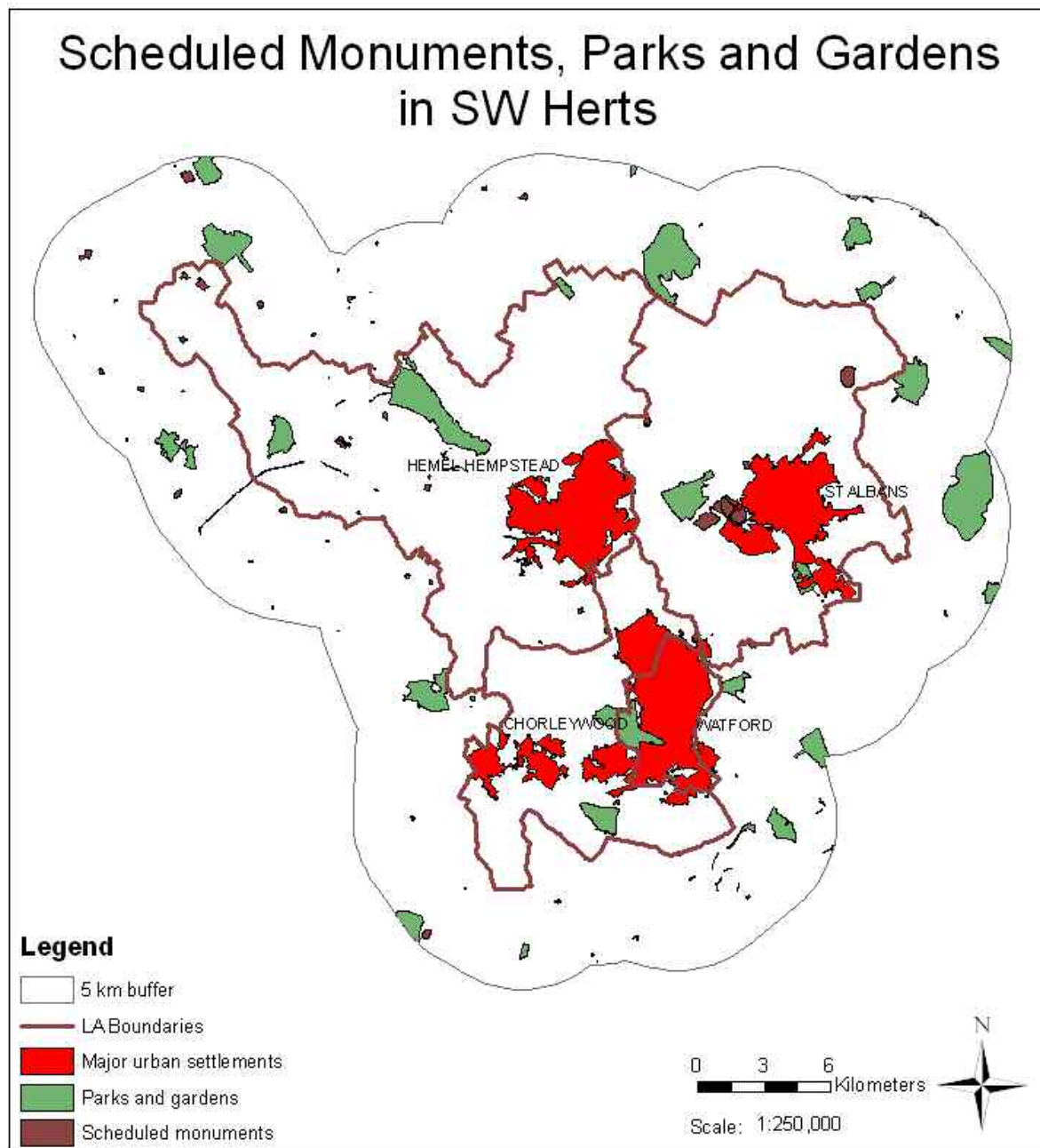
- 177 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (increase by 9 from 2003);
- 8,127 Listed Buildings (decrease by 1 from 2003);
- 43 Parks and Gardens (no change from 2003); and,
- 178 Conservation Areas (no change from 2003).

None of England's historic battlefields or World Heritage Sites are located in Hertfordshire; however 2 National Trust Properties can be found in or close to the county: Ashridge Estate (Three Rivers) and Shaw's Corner (near Wheathampstead).

Development pressures and changes in agricultural policy are the two major challenges for the East of England's historic environment according to English Nature's Heritage Counts 2004<sup>20</sup>. For South West Hertfordshire, being part of the London Arc in immediate proximity to Greater London, the planned housing growth and infrastructure developments could potentially have adverse effects on the local historical heritage and the proposed change needs to be carefully managed.

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<sup>20</sup> English Heritage (2004) "Heritage Counts 2004 - The State of England's Historic Environment", available at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/heritagecounts/>



**Figure 5: Registered parks and gardens and scheduled monuments in South West Hertfordshire.**

Figure 5 illustrates registered parks and garden and scheduled ancient monuments in South West Hertfordshire.

The following historic assets can be found in St Albans:

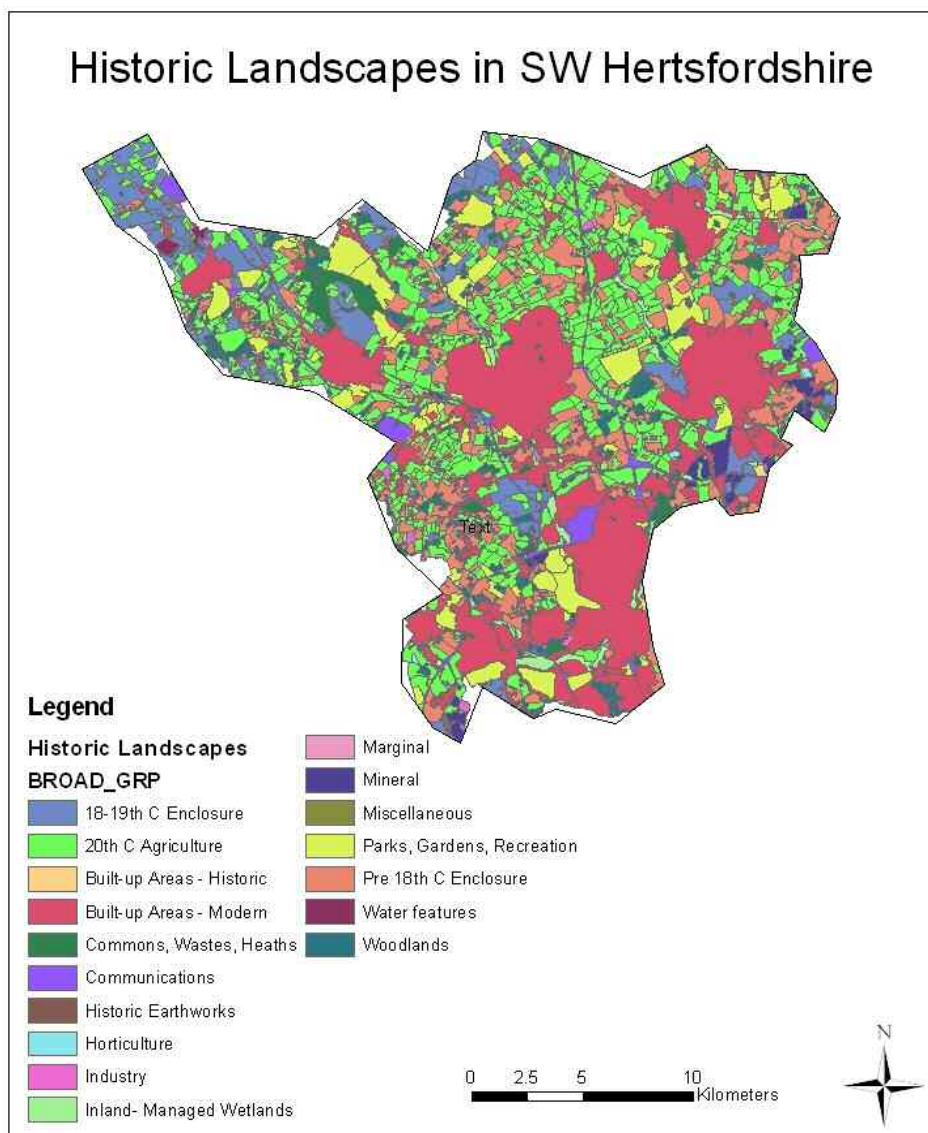
- 12 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Replica of the Mohne Dam, Colney Chapel Moated Site, The Benedictine Priory of St Mary, St Albans Abbey, Verulamium, Devils Ditch, Bacon's House, Batchwood, Iron Age Territorial Boundary known as Beech Bottom Dyke, The Aubreys Camp, Rothamsted Romano-British Cemetery, Wheathampstead Earthwork);
- Some 897 Listed Buildings (thereof 15 grade I and 39 grade II\*);
- 18 Conservation Areas;

- Two Registered Parks and Gardens (Gorhambury (246 ha) ,Napsbury Hospital (100 ha)); and,
- A large number of locally listed buildings.

St Albans has no entries on English Nature’s Buildings at Risk Register.

Moreover, the Archaeological Strategy for the Historic Centre of St Albans (2005) identified 33 key sites as being of particular significance.

It should be noted that Hertfordshire County Council have undertaken extensive work with regards to local archaeological assets<sup>21</sup>. Its Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record brings together (HER) information regarding Hertfordshire’s historic environment in a computerised form. It contains information on historic buildings, archaeological remains, historic sites and military remains (see Figure 6). It is anticipated that this information will be used to assess in more detail how archaeological assets could be affected by the proposed planning policies.



**Figure 6: Historic Landscape Classification in South West Hertfordshire.**

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.hertsdirect.org/libisleisure/heritage1/archaeology/sitesandmon>

### *Trends*

For Hertfordshire as a whole there was a slight increase in scheduled monuments and no significant change for listed buildings, parks and gardens and conservation areas compared with 2003.

### *Data Gaps/Limitations*

No trend data is available for historic assets in St Albans.

## **2.3.5 Landscape**

### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

The protection and enhancement of the countryside is often dealt with in conjunction with biodiversity issues, such as in the biodiversity strategy for England 'Working with the Grain of Nature', or agricultural issues, such as farming subsidies. In addition, the new Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) created a new statutory right of access to open country and registered common land and provides the context for many accessibility issues in Britain. More locally, the Chilterns AONB strategy sets the framework for protecting and enhancing the Chilterns – an area of outstanding natural beauty lying partly in SW Hertfordshire.

### *Baseline Information*

#### *Tranquillity/Light Pollution*

Satellite data shows that light pollution is increasing and tranquillity is decreasing in both the London Arc area and the East of England. This resulted in only 5% of truly 'dark skies' being left<sup>22</sup>; most of them in deep rural areas further away from Greater London (see Figure 7). However, in Hertfordshire light pollution increased by a modest 5% compared with an 21% increase for the overall region. Between the 1960s and 1990s 'tranquil areas' and 'tranquil areas with some intrusion', as based on the Campaign to Protect Rural England's mapping exercise<sup>23</sup>, have been decreasing substantially mainly due to new housing and infrastructure developments (see Figure 8). For the purpose of this mapping exercise 'tranquil areas' were defined as:

*'Places which are sufficiently far away from the visual or noise intrusion of development or traffic to be considered unspoilt by urban influences'*

These places were identified through specific criteria, such as certain distances away roads, towns, airports and power stations.

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<sup>22</sup> Campaign to Protect Rural England (2003) "Night Blight! Report", available at <http://www.cpre.org.uk/publications/landscape/light-pollution.htm>

<sup>23</sup> Campaign to Protect Rural England (2005) "Mapping Tranquillity - Defining and assessing a valuable resource", available at <http://www.cpre.org.uk/publications/landscape/tranquillity.htm>

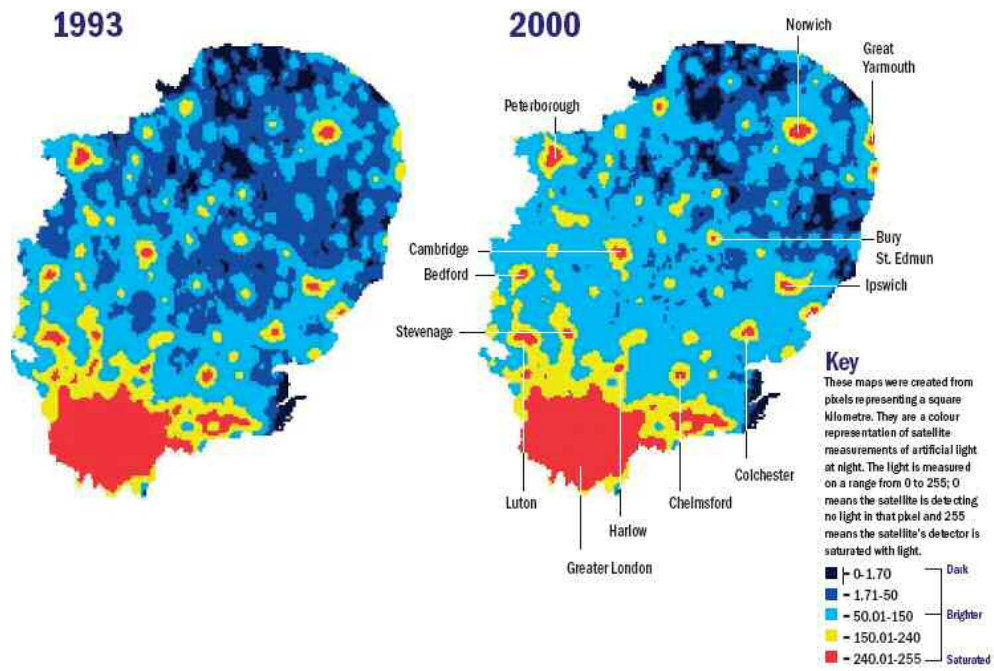


Figure 7: Light pollution in the East of England (source: Campaign to Protect Rural England).

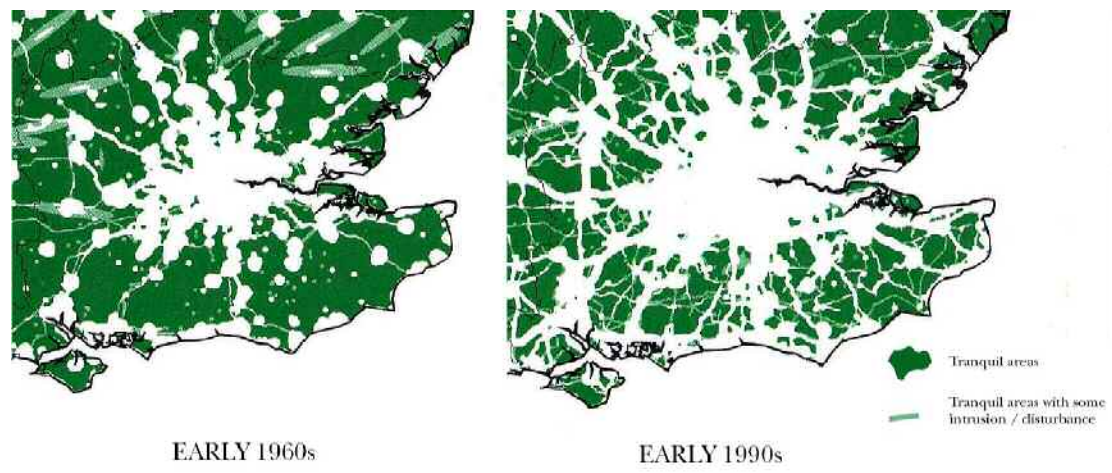
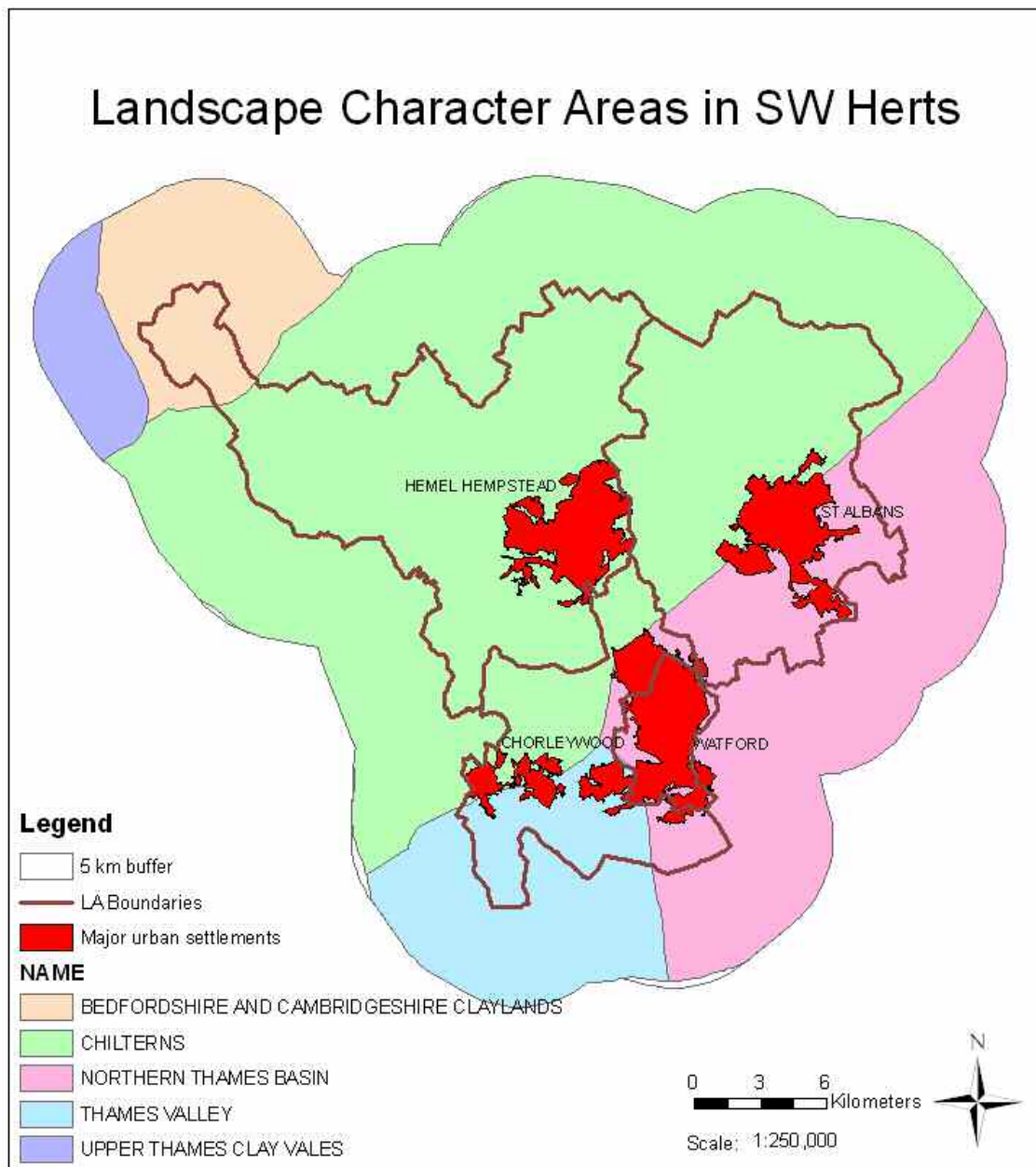


Figure 8: Loss of tranquillity between the 1960's and 1990's (source Campaign for Rural England).

*Landscape Character*

**Figure 9: Landscape Character Areas in South West Hertfordshire.**

St Albans falls into two Landscape Character Areas, “Northern Thames Basin” and “Chilterns” (see Figure 9).

According to the Countryside Agency they are characterised as follows<sup>24</sup>:

*Chilterns* consists mainly of chalk hills, small fields and dense network of ancient hedges, often on steep ground. The agricultural landscape is often dominated by hedges, trees and small woodlands. Scattered villages and farmsteads can be found; some of medieval origin, displaying consistent use of traditional building materials including flint, brick, and clay tiles. A network of ancient green lanes and tracks covers the area including the Ridgeway which links numerous archaeological sites and settlements.

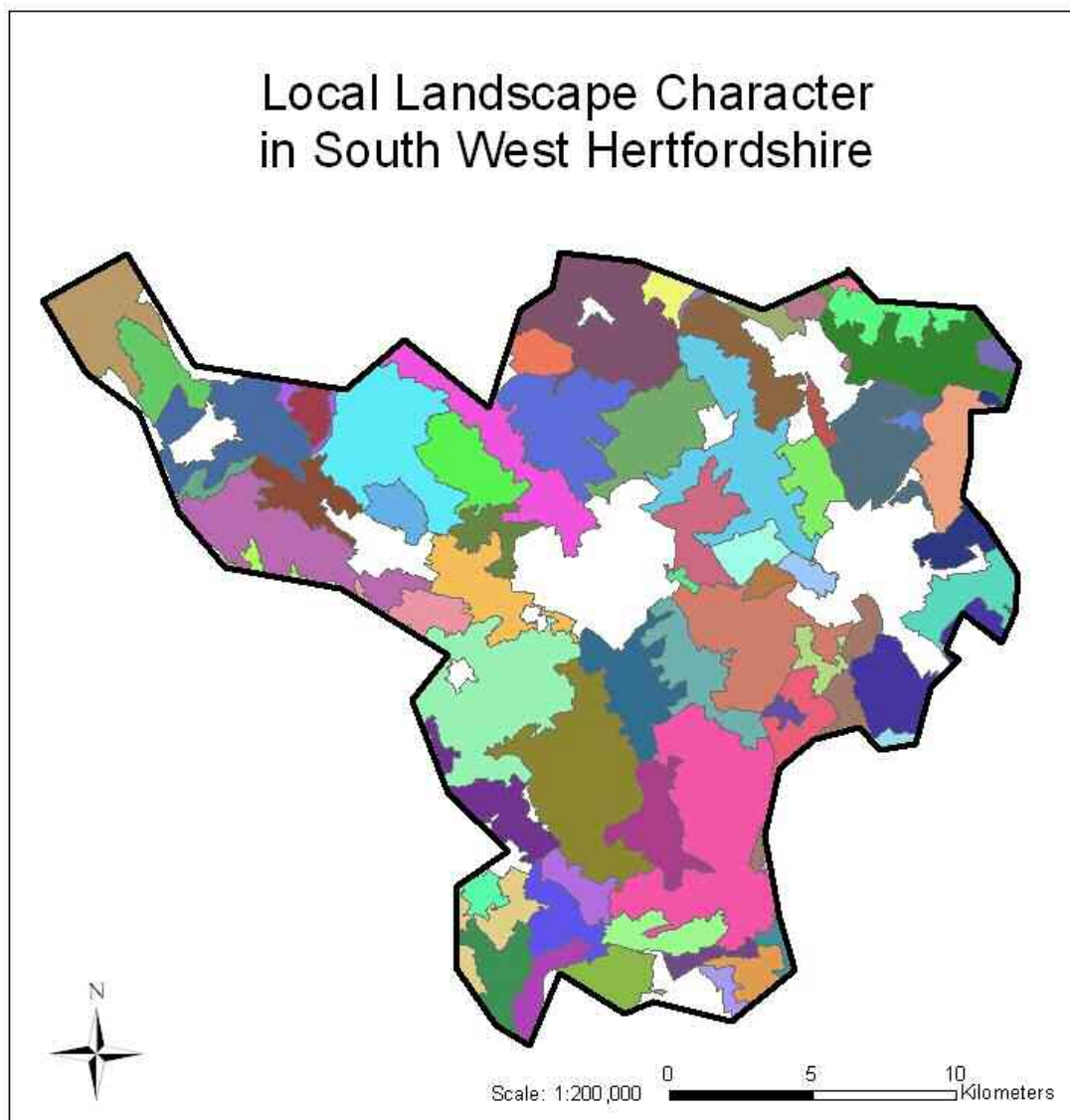
<sup>24</sup> Countryside Agency (2000) "Landscape Character Areas in the South East and London ", available at <http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/CC/SEL/index.asp>

The Northern Thames Basin is sub divided into four sub-character areas with St Albans falling into the 'Hertfordshire Plateau and River Valleys'. It is described as<sup>25</sup>:

*"A diverse landscape with a series of broad valleys containing the major rivers [...] and extensive areas of broadleaved woodlands being the principal features of the area. Hertfordshire's large towns, the M25 and M1 motorways, railway line and prominent electricity pylons are also a major influence on character."*

In addition, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) "Chilterns", which consists of gently rolling hills covered with beech woodland and chalk downland providing habitat to wild flowers and red kites, can be found in close proximity to the authority.

St Albans, being in close proximity to London, experienced as most areas in the London Arc some changes inconsistent to landscape character<sup>26</sup>.



**Figure 10: Local Landscape Character Areas in South West Hertfordshire.**

<sup>25</sup> Countryside Agency (2000) "Character Northern Thames Basin", available at [http://www.countryside.gov.uk/Images/JCA111\\_tcm2-21204.pdf](http://www.countryside.gov.uk/Images/JCA111_tcm2-21204.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Levett-Therivel and LUC (2004) "East of England Plan - SA Report", available at <http://www.go-east.gov.uk/goeast/publications/>

Hertfordshire County Council has conducted in depth work regarding local landscape character assessments<sup>27</sup>. It defined Hertfordshire Landscape Regions which are based on Countryside Agency/ English Nature Countryside Joint Character Areas and supplemented with some local refinements (see Figure 10). It is anticipated that this information will be used to assess in more detail how local landscape character could be affected by the proposed planning policies.

### *Trends*

Loss of tranquillity and light pollution are likely to increase further due to development pressures

Inconsistent changes to landscape character are likely to continue due to development pressures e.g. the aim to build 79,600 net additional homes in Hertfordshire (7,000 in St Albans) between 2001 and 2021<sup>28</sup>.

### *Data Gaps/Limitations*

Tranquillity data not available at local authority level.

## **2.3.6 Material Assets**

### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

The World Summit Johannesburg in 2002 and the 6th EU Environment Action Programme highlighted the need of greater resource efficiency, waste reduction and the promotion of renewable energy to make sustainable development feasible.

Numerous pieces of European legislation deal with waste issues; the Landfill Directive and the Waste Framework Directive are only two of them. The former aims to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill whereas the latter highlights the importance of the waste hierarchy and sets the framework for national waste management licensing. The UK Waste Strategy sets out measures to make waste management in the UK more sustainable, such as decoupling waste from economic growth and promoting the composting of organic waste. PPS 22 'Renewable Energy' sets out the Government's planning policies for renewable energy. It details eight key principles regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should adhere to in their approach to planning for renewable energy.

On a regional level, 'A Shared Vision, the Regional Economic Strategy for the East of England stresses the need to improve resource efficiency, whereas the Hertfordshire Waste Plan, Hertfordshire Waste Strategy and the forthcoming Hertfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework set out issues how to address waste issues locally. In addition, St Albans City and District Council published its energy policy which aims to improve energy efficiency and to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

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<sup>27</sup> See <http://www.hertsdirect.org/yrccouncil/hcc/env/enjoy/care/landscape/hlca/>

<sup>28</sup> East of England Regional Assembly (2004) "draft East of England Plan", available at <http://www.eera.gov.uk/category.asp?cat=452>

## Baseline Information

### Waste

Waste production and disposal is a growing problem. In almost every country production of waste increases at least as fast as its gross national product<sup>29</sup>. Disposal of this waste is becoming increasingly difficult, with diminishing numbers of suitable sites for landfill disposal<sup>30</sup>.

Legislation to reduce waste production, and to increase re-use, and recycling has been introduced<sup>31</sup>. Stringent targets, particularly for biodegradable waste, have been set by the European Union. The Member States must reduce the amount of biodegradable sent to landfill to 75% of 1995 levels by 2006, 50% of 1995 levels by 2009, and 35% of 1995 by 2016<sup>31</sup>. If these targets are not met, heavy fines will be imposed on the UK<sup>31</sup>.

For the purpose of this report, Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) data has been collected, along with waste arisings data for Hertfordshire. Table 11 and Table 12 below display this data. From this data, it can be seen that in general the percentage of household waste composted and recycled has increased between 2001 and 2004<sup>32</sup>. In addition, the amount of household waste (kg) collected per head has increased between 2001 and 2004<sup>32</sup>.

**Table 11: Best Value Performance Indicator data for waste <sup>32</sup>.**

Indicator	Watford Borough Council			St Albans City Council			Dacorum Borough Council			Three Rivers District Council		
	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
% of household waste composted	0	1.6	10.4	0	0	0.7	0	0.8	2.9	0	0	0
% of household waste recycled	11.2	11	10.5	15.5	11.1	18.7	9.8	12.6	13.1	12.2	13.3	18.7
Kg of household waste collected per head	339.8	358	376.2	348	369.9	378.6	356	379	376	307.4	333.5	337.9

<sup>29</sup> Cooper, J. 2001. Waste: striving for a more sustainable future, Local Environment, 6 (2), 109-111.

<sup>30</sup> Cheeseman, K. and Phillips, P. 2001, The Northamptonshire Resource Efficiency Project: the exit strategy, Resources, Conservation and Recycling, 32, 203-226.

<sup>31</sup> Williams, P. 2005. Waste Treatment and Disposal, Second edition, John Wiley and Sons Ltd, Chichester, 380pp.

<sup>32</sup> ODPM: <http://www.bvpi.gov.uk/pages/index.asp>

**Table 12: Percentage of the total household waste arisings in Hertfordshire <sup>8</sup>.**

Date	Hertfordshire							
	Recycled %	Recycled Total (Tonnes)	Composted %	Composted Total (Tonnes)	Used to recover heat, power and other energy sources %	Used to recover heat, power and other energy sources Total (Tonnes)	Landfilled %	Landfilled Total (Tonnes)
2002	10.5	55,443	4.6	24,417	7.7	40,694	77.2	408,787
2003 - 2004	15.8	80,982	6.3	32,034	6.6	33,791	71.4	366,509
2004 - 2005 (Provisional)	17.3	90,999	9.5	49,886	5.8	30,741	67.5	355,918

The amount of household waste composted in St Albans City and District increased from 0% to 0.7%, between 2001 and 2004<sup>32</sup>. This is lower than the amount composted in Hertfordshire overall<sup>8</sup>.

In addition, the amount of household waste recycled increased from 15.5% to 18.7%, between 2001 and 2004. Between 2002 and 2003, however, the amount of household waste recycled decreased from 15.5% to 11.1%<sup>32</sup>. The level of waste recycled in St Albans was higher than the average level for Hertfordshire<sup>8</sup>.

The amount of waste collected per head increased between 2001 and 2004, from 348 kg to 378.6 kg<sup>32</sup>.

#### *Trends*

The percentage of household waste composted and recycled is increasing, but the amount of waste collected per head is increasing<sup>32</sup>. In Hertfordshire, the amount of household waste being disposed of to landfill is decreasing, but the amount of waste used to recover energy is decreasing<sup>8</sup>.

#### *Gaps/Limitations*

None.

#### *Land Use*

As already mentioned, there are conflicting pressures on land use in Hertfordshire. This is particularly true for housing and associated infrastructure which has to be balanced with the protection of the natural environment<sup>33</sup>.

To achieve both the more efficient use of previously developed land (PDL) and the reduction of development pressures on undeveloped (greenfield sites and metropolitan greenbelt land), the government set a target that 60% of all new developments should be built on brownfield sites.

A measure of the more efficient use of material assets in the form of land is the local authority best value performance indicator (BVPI) BV 106 which states the percentage of new homes constructed on previously developed land (see Table 13).

**Table 13: Best Value Performance Indicator 106 Percentage of houses built on previously developed land.**

<sup>33</sup> HEF (2004) "Quality of Life Report 2004", available at <http://www.hertsdirect.org/infobase/docs/pdfstore/qol4.pdf>

LA	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
St Albans	100%	100%	100%	98%
Three Rivers	83%	84%	94%	Not available
Dacorum	96%	97%	94%	Not available
St Albans	90%	83%	90%	96%

The figures illustrate that a much higher proportion of new developments in South West Hertfordshire was built on previously developed land compared with the regional average of 57% for 1999-2002<sup>34</sup>. However, previously developed land is a finite resource and might not be as readily available in the future, thus leading to greater use of undeveloped sites.

Detailed information about the amount of potentially contaminated land in the four authorities concerned was not available for this study. However, St Albans City and District Council will collate information for two new indicators from 2005/2006 onwards:

- BV 216a Number of sites of potential concern with respect to land contamination; and,
- BV 216b Number of sites for which sufficient detailed information is available to decide whether remediation of the land is necessary, as a percentage of all 'sites of potential concern'.

It is proposed that those indicators should inform the annual monitoring reports.

A measure of achieving higher land efficiency is increasing housing density. However, to sustain quality of life this has to be combined with good design. St Albans' Housing Monitoring Report (2005) states housing densities in St Albans range from 24 dwellings per hectare for developments on green belt sites to 73 dwellings per hectare for developments on urban sites.

The same holds true for local aggregates and mineral resources. Extracting primary resources can cause a variety of effects which could potentially be avoided by using secondary or recycled materials. Information of the current usage of these materials would therefore be advantageous for this assessment.

### *Trends*

The draft East of England Plan proposes to build 79,600 net additional homes in Hertfordshire in Hertfordshire (thereof 7,000 in St Albans) between 2001 and 2021<sup>35</sup>. Although the aim is to build the majority of these houses on previously developed land, a small proportion might be built on undeveloped land. The associated land take could lead to a variety of economic, social and environmental effects.

### *Data Gaps/Limitations*

Local information regarding land contamination, mineral and aggregate use/reserves was not available for this study.

<sup>34</sup> ONS (2003) "Regional Quality of Life Counts", available at <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/documents/publications/rqolc2003.pdf>

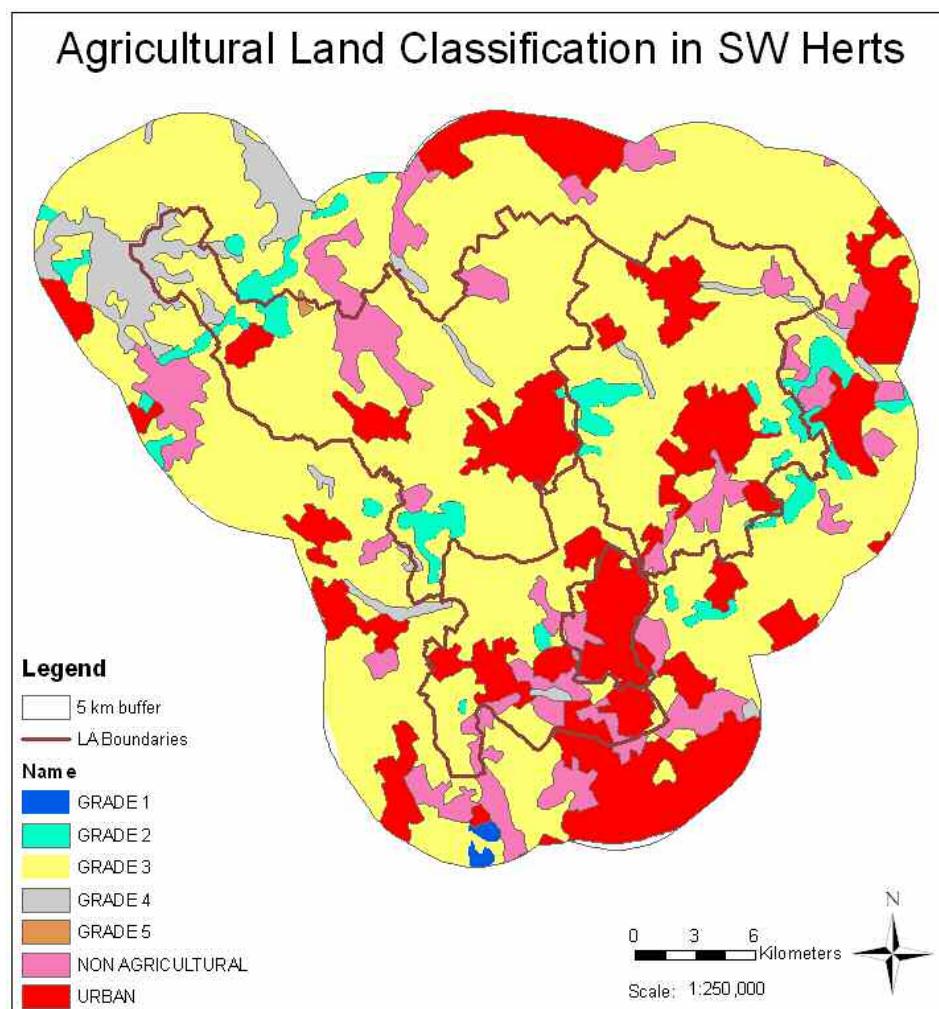
<sup>35</sup> East of England Regional Assembly (2004) "draft East of England Plan", available at <http://www.eera.gov.uk/category.asp?cat=452>

### 2.3.7 Soil

#### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

Besides the 'big' environmental issues, such as climate change, loss of biodiversity and desertification, effects on soil seem often to have a lower priority. This is despite the fact that soil is the foundation of the environment, landscape, wildlife and food production. Nevertheless, on European level the EU 6th Environment Action Programme highlights soil protection as one of main priorities for the future, whereas MPG 6 'Aggregates Provision' advises mineral planning authorities how to balance best social, economic and environmental issues related to mineral and aggregates extraction which can effect on soil.

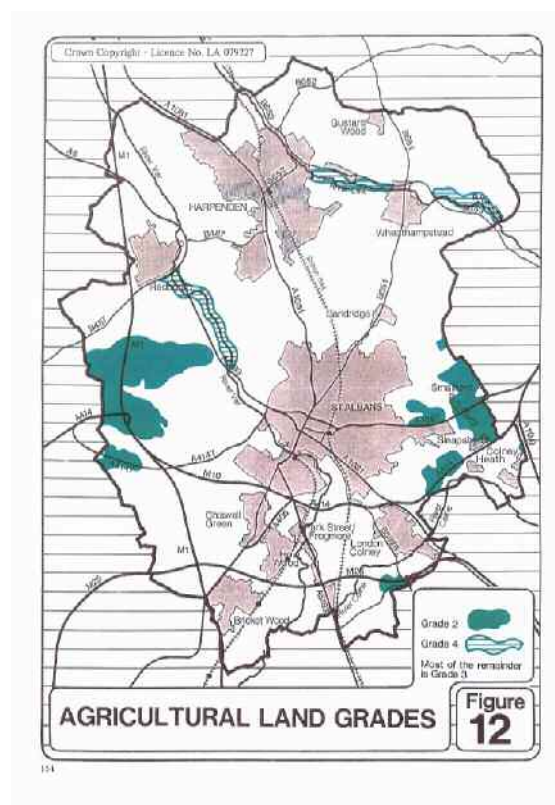
#### *Baseline Information*



**Figure 11: Agricultural Land Classification for South West Hertfordshire.**

South West Hertfordshire's soils are mainly classified as grade 3 agricultural land, with some grade 2 soils (see Figure 11). A significant proportion is covered by urban areas; a fact it has in common with many areas in the London Arc. Dacorum and St Albans contain mostly slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage, whereas Three Rivers is characterised by more freely draining, slightly acidic sand soils.

Figure 12 illustrates agricultural land grades found in St Albans.



**Figure 12: Agricultural land grades in St Albans (source: St Albans City and District Council).**

Major effects on soil are soil loss, contamination or compaction which can stem from a variety of sources, such as<sup>36</sup>:

- Erosion;
- New developments (e.g. housing and accompanying infrastructure);
- Nutrient loss and diffuse pollution from agriculture;
- Climate change;
- Air pollution and run-off from roads; and,
- Quarrying.

Unfortunately, more detailed data about local soil properties was not available to inform this assessment.

### *Trends*

The draft East of England Plan proposes to build 79,600 net additional homes in Hertfordshire (thereof 7,000 in St Albans) between 2001 and 2021<sup>37</sup>. Although it is anticipated that no additional agricultural land will be needed to achieve this housing growth, it is possible that the proposed developments could adversely affect soils if they should be built on other high quality soils.

<sup>36</sup> Environment Agency (2004) "The State of Soils in England and Wales", available at <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/landquality/776051/775200/775473/?lang=e>

<sup>37</sup> East of England Regional Assembly (2004) "draft East of England Plan", available at <http://www.eera.gov.uk/category.asp?cat=452>

*Data Gaps/Uncertainties*

More detailed information about local soil properties was not available for this study.

**2.3.8 Water***Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

On an international level, the Millennium Development goals highlight the need to tackle issues, such as climate change, conserving biodiversity and protecting water resources. In Europe, the Water Framework Directive requires Member States to achieve 'good ecological status' of inland water bodies by 2015, whereas the EU Nitrates Directive addresses diffuse pollution from agriculture. In England, PPS 23 'Pollution Control' and PPG 25 'Development and Flood Risk' set out how the planning system can help to reduce pollution of water courses and flood risk.

*Baseline Information*

Water is an essential natural resource. It is important that water resources are protected so that the risk of harm to the environment and to human health can be reduced as far as possible. Nitrate and phosphate levels, in particular, need to be monitored closely due to the risk of eutrophication and loss of biodiversity.

For the purpose of this report, data on the chemical and biological quality of rivers, and the % of rivers with high phosphate or nitrate concentrations have been collected. In addition, the number of planning permissions objected to and refused due to flood risk has been collected. The data has been compared against regional data.

Some areas of Hertfordshire suffer from over abstraction of water resources which has adverse impacts on flora and fauna. The proposed new developments in South West Hertfordshire are likely to lead to an increases demand for water.

*Water Quality*

In general, chemical water quality between 1995 and 2004 has improved, and biological water quality has declined (Table 14 and Table 15). There appears to be no obvious trend regarding phosphate and nitrate concentrations (Table 16 and Table 17).

**Table 14: Chemical water quality<sup>38</sup>.**

Local Authority / Region	1995				2000				2004			
	%G	%F	%P	%B	%G	%F	%P	%B	%G	%F	%P	%B
Watford	52	48	-	-	85	15	-	-	52	48	-	-
St Albans	34	54	46	-	34	78	22	-	34	95	-	5
Dacorum	18	74	8	-	28	69	3	-	38	46	16	0
Three Rivers	24	70	-	-	60	40	-	-	31	63	7	-
East of England	39.7	47.3	12.8	0.2	45.8	46.9	6.9	0.4	42.4	47.3	10.1	0.2

<sup>38</sup> DEFRA e-Digest: <http://www2.defra.gov.uk/db/rq/gorlist.asp>

**Table 15: Biological water quality<sup>38</sup>.**

Local Authority / Region	1995				2000				2004			
	%Good	%Fair	%Poor	%Bad	%G	%F	%P	%B	%G	%F	%P	%B
Watford	34	66	-	-	82	7	12	-	52	7	33	9
St Albans	34	55	45	-	26	65	35	-	26	43	57	-
Dacorum	76	24	-	-	57	17	22	4	15	39	46	-
Three Rivers	90	10	-	-	76	12	9	4	36	19	37	8
East of England	71.0	27.9	0.9	0.2	80.9	18.1	0.9	0.1	77.4	20.8	1.7	0.1

**Table 16: Phosphate levels<sup>38</sup>.**

Local Authority / Region	1995	2000	2004
	% High	% High	% High
Watford	100	100	100
St Albans	32	59	71
Dacorum	72	72	67
Three Rivers	100	100	93
East of England	82.6	85.4	81.0

**Table 17: Nitrate Levels<sup>38</sup>.**

Local Authority / Region	1995	2000	2004
	% High	% High	% High
Watford	85	52	82
St Albans	95	57	93
Dacorum	86	72	70
Three Rivers	79	26	79
East of England	94.0	92.8	93.7

The chemical water quality in St Albans improved between 1995 and 2004 but the percentage of rivers considered as having good chemical quality has remained lower than the average for the East of England. The percentage of rivers considered as having fair chemical quality, however, has remained higher than the average for the east of England<sup>38</sup>. The biological water quality in St Albans declined between 1995 and 2004. The percentage of rivers considered as having good biological quality was lower than the average for the East on England in 1995, 2000 and 2004<sup>38</sup>.

Phosphate concentrations in St Albans have increased between 1995 and 2004, from 32% to 71% of rivers considered to have high phosphate concentration. This level is lower than the East of England average of 82.6% in 1995, 85.4% in 2000, and 81% in 2004<sup>38</sup>. Nitrate concentrations in St Albans remained below the average level for the East of England in 2000 and 2004, and were above the average level in 1995. Levels decreased between 1995 and 2000, and increased between 2000 and 2004. A general decline, however, can be observed between 1995 and 2004, from 95% to 93% of rivers considered to have high nitrate concentration<sup>38</sup>.

### *Flood Risk*

Table 18 below displays the number of planning permissions objected to and refused on flood risk grounds between 04/2003 and 03/2004<sup>39</sup>. It can be seen that more planning applications were objected than refused. This may be due to the fact that mitigation measures were introduced to reduce the flood risk<sup>39</sup>. In general, the flood risk in the area does not appear to be high due to the low number of objections by the Environment Agency.

In 2003/04 six planning applications were objected and none were subsequently refused on flood risk grounds. In 2004/05 five planning applications were objected and two were refused.

**Table 18: Planning applications objected to and refused<sup>39</sup>.**

<b>Local Authority / Region</b>	<b>Planning permissions objected to by Environment Agency on flood risk grounds (04/2003 – 03/2004)</b>	<b>Planning permissions refused in line with Environment Agency advice (04/2003 – 03/2004)</b>
Watford	0	0
St Albans	6	0
Dacorum	8	2
Three Rivers	3	0

### *Trends*

In general, chemical water quality between 1995 and 2004 has improved, and biological water quality has declined. There appears to be no obvious trend regarding phosphate and nitrate concentrations

### *Data Gaps/Uncertainties*

None.

## **2.3.9 Social Factors**

### *Health*

#### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

The planning process can affect the population of the area. An unhealthy population may place increasing demands on the requirement for services and resources (such as doctor's surgeries) whilst the provision of the infrastructure to support healthy lifestyles can be encouraged by the provision of public open space or leisure facilities, the reduction of crime, severance, noise, air pollution and improving the access to services and facilities.

Objectives regarding human health are embodied at the highest tiers of plan making, indeed the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (2001) include, 'Address threats to public health', amongst its headline objectives.

At a national level health is tackled through a number of documents, including PPG17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport, and Recreation', which recognises the health and wellbeing value of recreational and open spaces, and PPG13 'Transport', which aims to

<sup>39</sup> Environment Agency – High Level Target 12:  
[http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/571633/952531/?version=1&lang=\\_e](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/571633/952531/?version=1&lang=_e)

encourage walking and cycling. However, the primary document relating to human health at this level is the Government Health White Paper – ‘Choosing Health: making Healthier Choices Easier’. This document contains a number of priorities which should be taken into account by the LDF and SA, in particular those relating to ‘increasing exercise’.

Some of the general aims of the Hertfordshire Structure Plan (1991-2011) are to improve quality of life, and to encourage walking/cycling. These aims fit with the Health White Paper priorities, and as part of the Structure Plan, should be disseminated down into Borough and District planning documents.

### *Baseline Information*

Hertfordshire is in general a very healthy county. In the 2001 Census questions were asked for the first time about general state of health and the provision of unpaid care. Of Hertfordshire’s population 6.6% have health reported as not good, compared to 7.6% in the Eastern Region and 9.0% in England. Table 19 indicates the percentage of resident population in each group that classify themselves as being in either good, fairly good or not good health and also provides the percentages of people that have limiting long term illnesses, are of working age and have a limiting long term illness and finally the percentage of households with one or more person with a limiting long term illness. Table 19 shows the data recorded for England and Wales, East of England, St Albans, St Albans, Dacorum and Three Rivers. It can be seen that 75.48% of St Alban’s population classified themselves as being in good general health.

**Table 19: Population breakdown by health group <sup>40</sup>.**

	England and Wales	East of England	Watford	St Albans	Dacorum	Three Rivers
General health: Good	68.55%	70.35%	72.57%	75.48%	73.28%	73.58%
General health: Fairly Good	22.23%	22.05%	20.59%	18.62%	20.32%	19.93%
General health: Not Good	9.22%	7.60%	6.85%	5.90%	6.40%	6.49%
People with a limiting long term illness	18.23%	16.21%	14.21%	13.08%	13.82%	14.26%
People of working age with a limiting long term illness	13.56%	11.40%	9.86%	8.59%	9.49%	9.18%
Households with one or more person with a limiting long term illness	34.05%	30.77%	27.40%	25.39%	27.33%	27.95%

Table 20 shows the percentages of infant mortality for the specified areas over three time periods, indicating a trend for all the areas, illustrating a decline in infant mortality rates between 1999 and 2003. Specifically, St Albans’ infant mortality rate between 1999-2001 stood at 3.6 per 1000 live births compared with the national average of 5.6%. In 2001-2003 St Albans’ figures improved to 2.9

<sup>40</sup> ONS "Neighborhood Statistics", available at <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/AreaProfile2.do?tab=3>

**Table 20: Infant mortality rate<sup>41</sup>.**

Date	Dacorum %		St Albans %		Three Rivers %		Watford %	
	Infant Mortality / 1000 Live Births	Still Births/1000 Live Births	Infant Mortality / 1000 Live Births	Still Births/1000 Live Births	Infant Mortality / 1000 Live Births	Still Births/1000 Live Births	Infant Mortality / 1000 Live Births	Still Births/1000 Live Births
2001	4.8	3.0	4.2	4.2	6.3	7.3	7.2	3.6
1999-2001 pooled	4.2	4.0	3.6	3.7	3.3	4.6	5.4	4.5
2000-2002 pooled	3.0	3.2	3.6	3.9	3.1	5.2	6.7	5.7
2001-2003 pooled	4.5	3.5	2.9	5.4	3.9	4.9	6.1	5.8

With regard to unpaid care, it was recorded that approximately 9.5% of the people of St Albans reported that they provided unpaid care.

The proportion of working days that were lost due to sickness in St Albans was below average between 2003/4 and had a recorded value of 8.4, hence leaving the area 0.8 below the regional average in this category.

Much more information could be provided about health; however this beyond the scope of this document.

### Noise

#### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

There are a number of EU Directives in place which control noise from transport sources, for example from vehicles and outdoor machinery. EU Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise – the Environmental Noise Directive – is the latest piece of European legislation. Its aim is to define a common approach across the European Union to avoid, prevent or reduce the harmful effects of environmental noise from road, rail and air traffic and industry. By 2007 strategic noise maps have to be prepared and by 2008 action plans have to be developed for how to reduce environmental noise where necessary. In a national context, PPG 24 'Noise' sets out how the planning system can be used to minimise the adverse effects of noise and PPG 13 'Transport' aims to reduce the need for travel, possibly leading to a reduction of noise from transport.

#### *Baseline Information*

The number of noise complaints in Hertfordshire has risen in the 1990s, with an increase of 2.3% between 98/99 and 99/00. In 1999/2000 local councils in Hertfordshire received over 156,860 complaints about domestic noise. The numbers of complaints for both periods is illustrated in Figure 13.

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.hertslink.org/portal/Observatory/Data%20by%20Subject/Life%20in%20the%20community/Quality%20of%20Life/Quality%20of%20Life%20Indicators/QoL11%20Infant%20Mortality.xls>

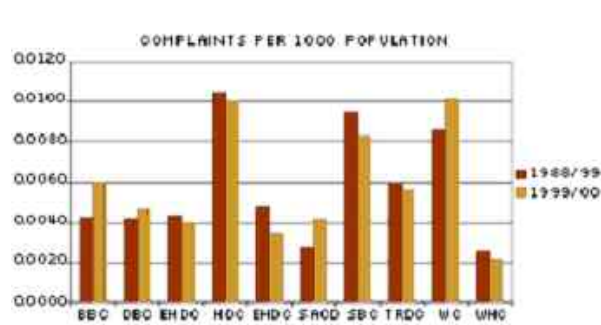


Figure 13: Noise complaints in Hertfordshire per 1000 population.

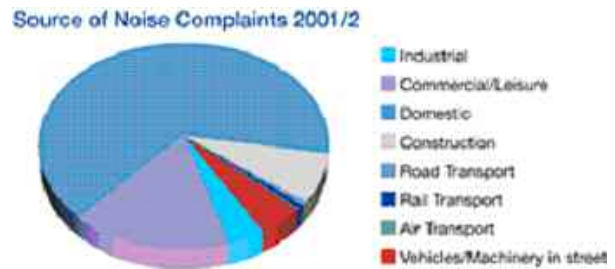


Figure 14: Categories of noise complaints made to Hertfordshire Local Authorities in 2001/2.

Figure 14 illustrates the main categories of complaint made to Hertfordshire local councils in 2001/2. The total number of complaints in 2001/2 increased by 5% from the previous year with domestic noise being the largest category by far.

The council received 688 complaints about neighbourhood noise last year. The largest proportion of complaints received by Environmental Services Department are about noise from domestic sources. The main problems are usually that of noise from music stereo systems, television, barking dogs and DIY activity. Another large contributor to noise complaints are from entertainment at public houses especially during the summer when pubs and householder alike may have their windows open.

*Trends*

Infant mortality is decreasing in St Albans whereas the number of noise complaints received for most categories is increasing.

*Population*

*Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

Population primarily relates to demographics, about which there are very few specific plans, policies or strategies. However, many other types of plans and policies will have secondary effects on the population, e.g. housing strategy policies on accommodation for the elderly. Therefore, when taking into account effects on the SEA/SA topic of 'population', cross reference should be made to plans covered within plans and policies relating to housing, education, social deprivation, crime (safety), recreation, leisure and sports.

Objectives relating specifically to demographics (not attempting to alter them, but rather to adapt to changes in future demographics), may be found in documents focusing on sustainable development. An example can be seen in the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (2001), which includes an objective specifically on 'dealing with the economic and social implications of an ageing society'.

*Baseline Information*

The population of England as a whole is growing. This is due to people living longer, and the relocation of people into England from other parts of the UK, Europe and beyond.

Implications will be a growing proportion of the elderly and a decreasing proportion of young people.

The total population in Hertfordshire has been recorded at approximately 1,033,977. Table 22 shows growth rates in St Albans, St Albans, Dacorum and Three Rivers.

**Table 21: Population growth rates (source: Census 2001).**

	2001 Census Population	1991 Census	1981 Census	Comparison of 2001 and 1991 Census
Hertfordshire	1033,977	975,829	950,760	6.0%
Watford	79,729	74,566	73,927	6.9%
St Albans	128,982	126,202	124,317	2.2%
Dacorum	137,807	132,240	128,565	4.2%
Three Rivers	82,843	78,457	77,755	5.6%

Table 22 shows the estimates of resident population from the 2001 census. This estimate for Hertfordshire suggests a rise in population of 6% since the 1991 census.

**Table 22: Population growth by age group and gender (source: Census 2001<sup>42</sup>).**

	Total	Male	Female	0-14	15-29	30-44	45-59	60-74	75-89	90+
Hertfordshire	1,033,977	505,059	528,918	201,880	182,951	248,799	196,909	130,090	67,093	6,255
2001		48.80%	51.20%	19.50%	17.70%	24.10%	19.00%	12.60%	6.50%	0.60%
1991	975,829	49.00%	51.00%	18.80%	21.80%	22.40%	17.40%	13.30%	5.90%	0.40%
Watford	79,726	39,227	40,499	15,476	16,586	20,405	13,453	8,696	4,604	506
2001		49.20%	50.80%	19.40%	20.80%	25.60%	16.90%	10.90%	5.80%	0.60%
1991	74,566	49.10%	50.90%	19.10%	25.00%	22.00%	15.80%	11.60%	6.10%	0.40%
St Albans	129,005	63,414	65,591	25,003	21,562	31,947	25,303	16,228	8,173	789
2001		49.20%	50.80%	19.40%	16.70%	24.80%	19.60%	12.60%	6.30%	0.60%
1991	126,202	49.10%	50.90%	18.30%	20.90%	23.10%	18.30%	13.00%	6.00%	0.40%
Dacorum	137,799	67,797	70,002	27,153	23,436	33,444	26,829	17,258	8,936	743
2001		49.20%	50.80%	19.70%	17.00%	24.30%	19.50%	12.50%	6.50%	0.50%
1991	132,240	49.10%	50.90%	19.30%	21.60%	23.20%	16.80%	13.30%	5.40%	0.40%
Three Rivers	82,848	40,062	42,786	16,047	13,374	19,002	16,813	10,958	6,014	327
2001		48.40%	51.60%	19.40%	16.10%	22.90%	20.30%	13.20%	7.30%	0.40%
1991	78,457	48.70%	51.30%	18.10%	19.80%	21.90%	18.30%	14.60%	6.90%	0.20%

St Albans has a much higher population than Watford and one of the highest populations of the 10 areas within Hertfordshire (only second to Dacorum). With 128,982 residents, it constitutes 12.5% of Hertfordshire's total population. The demographics of the area are relatively evenly dispersed across the age groups. A large proportion of the population are between 30 and 54 years old.

The proportion of non white people in St Albans is less than that of Watford, with only 8,900 which is 6.9%, the area has a 93.1% majority white population. However, this non white population has grown since the 1991 census was taken, where figures were recorded as having a 5% non white population. The data shows that the Asian communities have grown most rapidly in this time with a 0.4% growth from 2.9% (1999) to 3.3% (2001).

<sup>42</sup> 2001 census data from NHS website - [http://www.nhsinherts.nhs.uk/hp/Hertfordshire\\_age2.htm](http://www.nhsinherts.nhs.uk/hp/Hertfordshire_age2.htm)

### *Trends*

All of the areas have shown a population growth between the census of 1991 and 2001 according to statistics. The majority of the population in each of the areas are concentrated between 25 and 39.

The majority of the population in each of the four areas are white people; however the Asian population has shown the fastest and greatest rate of growth since the 1991 census in all sets of data.

### *Housing*

#### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

A home is one of the most basic human needs. New housing of the right type and in the right location can help facilitate social inclusion. Ensuring that there is provision to meet the variety of needs within the community and a choice of house types, size and affordability within sites can foster a sense of place.

The European Spatial Development Perspective (1999) establishes a number of common objectives and concepts adopted by EU member states that set the high level framework for national and hence regional/local spatial plans. Economic and social cohesion are one of the main goals, and housing plays an important role in the achievement of that goal.

The main national guidance relating to the provision of new housing on a regional basis is PPG3 'Housing'. This guidance emphasises the importance of mixed use developments, ensuring integration of industrial, commercial, and residential property through spatial and transport plans, in order to minimise dependency on road transport. This land use integration will also go some way toward achieving the social deprivation and accessibility objectives within the plan.

At a regional level, the Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future – Communities Plan (2003), informs the conversion of RPGs into RSSs incorporating increased targets for brown field development and affordable housing. These aims are indeed incorporated into the RSS through the draft East of England Plan.

The targets set out in the East of England Plan are provided for within the Revised Regional Housing Strategy for the East of England 2005-2010. Although one of the aims of the Strategy is to ensure that housing serves to improve the region's health and well-being and reduce inequalities, the SA should ensure that housing targets are implemented in a sustainable fashion within the LDF.

St Albans City and District Council published a number of policy documents dealing with housing. The 'St Albans Housing Needs Survey' identified housing needs, whereas the 'Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing' provides additional information how to implement St Albans affordable housing policy. Other documents include the 'Supplementary Planning Guidance on Residential Extensions and Replacement Dwellings in the Green Belt' and the 'Assessment of the Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers in South and West Hertfordshire' (joint publication with other districts and county council). Moreover, St Albans currently is engaged in further housing capacity work and intends to commission, jointly with its neighbouring authorities, consultants to undertake a Housing Market Assessment.

#### *Baseline Information*

Additional housing is needed in the region. Access to housing is an acute problem in parts of the region and many council homes are in need of significant repair. Government Household

Projections based on the 2001 Census suggest that housing demand will be around 17% higher than was estimated by the 1996 Based Household Projections, although at the Regional level they are broadly in line with recent build rates. Only 11% of the housing stock in St Albans was recorded as unfit for dwelling at the start of 2003/4, which gives it a value less than half that of the regional average which has been recorded at 27%.

In 2005, the average house prices in St Albans range from £201,000 for a flat to £432,400 for a detached house which is in most cases above the county average.

### *Trends*

No trend data seem to be available.

### *Crime*

#### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

Crime is to some extent covered intrinsically in plans and policies that aim to increase social cohesion. Hence plans and policies tackling social inclusion and accessibility will all be relevant. A good example of this can be seen in the Regional Social Strategy: A Strategy to Achieve a Fair and Inclusive Society in the East of England. Its strategic objectives include 'to develop social networks, community assets and promote community cohesion', which when tackled would alleviate some of the root causes of crime. This is seen again at a higher level in the European Spatial Development Perspective (1999) which calls for economic and social cohesion. Objectives and aims relating more directly to crime should be present in community strategies at the district and borough level.

St Albans City and District Community Safety Strategy (2005- 2008) sets out the broad strategic direction of the St Albans Community Safety partnership for the next 3 years. It aims to reduce crime, disorder and drug and alcohol misuse.

#### *Baseline Information*

Within the UK as a whole, vehicle crime and numbers of burglaries dropped over this same time period, although violent crime also rose at the national level. Table 23 shows the trend in crimes between 2001 and 2003.

**Table 23: Crime figures per 1,000 population (source: Hertfordshire Observatory<sup>43</sup>).**

Date	Crime	Watford	St Albans	Dacorum	Three Rivers
Apr-01	Domestic burglaries	12.23	10.58	10.25	12.04
Apr-02	Domestic burglaries	16.07	12.9	10.63	12.64
Apr-03	Domestic burglaries	77.63	59.38	45.77	59.76
Apr-01	Violent offences	8.96	3.92	4.09	2.54
Apr-02	Violent offences	16.86	8.36	6.71	6.13
Apr-03	Violent offences	75.21	33.94	32.83	26.7
Apr-01	Vehicle crimes	17.15	14.24	16.77	11.39
Apr-02	Vehicle crimes	21.47	17.61	18.47	13.27
Apr-03	Vehicle crimes	105.75	86.88	81.14	64.13

Higher numbers of crime are due to adoption of the National Crime Recording Standard which is more victim-led and victim-oriented. Previous crime reports were not recorded unless evidence was available.

The figures indicate that crime in Hertfordshire has been steadily increasing over the three years for each of the categories specified.

St Albans has only a slightly higher than regional average number of burglaries per 1000 households and remains lower than Watford's figure for this indicator at 12.4 per 1000 population. Similar to Dacorum, St Albans remains below average for violent offences with 7.3 offences per 1000 of the population recorded. The area does however appear to suffer from a significantly higher than regional average number of vehicle crimes per 1000 of the population. This indicator is estimated at approximately 20.0. This is a notably high figure similar to that of Watford.

### *Trends*

Figures for domestic burglaries, violent offences and vehicle crime are increasing in St Albans.

### *Accessibility*

### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

Basic facilities are an important part of our communities. They provide essential services such as food and medical provisions. They also contribute to the sense of place in communities and provide a focal point for community interactions. They also provide

<sup>43</sup> Hertfordshire Observatory, Quality of Life Indicators - <http://194.216.237.13/Resources/ResourceFrame.asp?ShowWhich=resource&ResourceId=437>

employment, often for locally based people. Limiting access and availability to these services can make people feel socially excluded and reduce interactions in the community.

The European Spatial Development Perspective (1999) establish a number of common objectives and concepts adopted by EU member states that set the high level framework for national (and hence regional/local spatial plans). Economic and social cohesion are one of the main goals, and accessibility (to services and employment) plays an important role in the achievement of that goal. The emphasis on accessibility is continued at this high level by the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. The strategy refers to accessibility directly through 'improving transport systems and land use management', and indirectly through 'dealing with the economic and social implications of an ageing society' (the latter in terms of easy access to amenities including hospitals, in which public transport and mixed use planning plays a major role).

PPG13 'Transport' aims to encourage public transport use, walking and cycling, through managing the pattern of urban growth (and other travel generating development). This will need to be addressed directly within the LDF and should contribute towards the European goals of increasing accessibility to amenities and services for all social and age groups.

The draft East of England Plan is the overarching regional document relevant to accessibility. It will provide the statutory framework for local development plans over the next 15 years, and includes objectives on improving access to employment and services and delivering more integrated patterns of land use. The Regional Social Strategy (2004) develops upon these aims in six strategic objectives which include: promoting access to work and improving access to services, especially for disadvantaged people.

The Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP 2) includes objectives on developing transport systems that provide access to employment, shopping, education, leisure and health facilities for all (including those without a car and those with impaired mobility). The LDF should take account of these transport objectives, and attempt to provide complimentary land use planning objectives to lie alongside them, e.g. mixed use planning, siting developments next to existing public transport facilities.

### *Baseline Information*

BPVI indicators provide the following information on a regional level only:

- The percentage of principle roads in the region, in need of repair stood at 8.7% in 2003/4, slightly lower than the English average of 9.8%;
- Local buses in the region have less patronage than other regions, at just over 14 million passenger journeys per year compared to an average per region in England of over 23.5 million (in 2003/4);
- The percentage length of footpaths and other rights of way which are easy to use in the region stood at 79.3%, significantly higher than the England average of 68.9%; and,
- The proportion of pedestrian crossings with disabled facilities within the region is similar to the English average, at 84.9% and 82.4% respectively.

82% of all St Albans' local authority buildings were identified as being suitable for and accessible by disabled people in 2004/05. This value is over 20% higher than that of the regional average.

### *Trends*

The percentage of LA buildings accessible for and by disabled people has been increasing.

## *Social Deprivation*

### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

The European Spatial Development Perspective (1999) establish a number of common objectives and concepts adopted by EU member states that set the high level framework for national (and hence regional/local spatial plans). Economic and social cohesion are one of the main goals, and as such, place tackling social deprivation high on the agenda.

The main national guidance relevant to social deprivation is: PPG3 'Housing', which emphasises the importance of mixed use developments, and ensuring integration of industrial, commercial, and residential property through spatial and transport plans. This, alongside PPG13 'Transport', aims to improve access to amenities, services, and employment opportunities for all social and age groups.

England's Rural Strategy (2004), includes as one of its three key policies: 'Social Justice for All – tackling social exclusion wherever it occurs and providing fair access to services and opportunities for all rural people'. Despite its relatively small spatial scale, St Albans' LDF will need to take into account rural issues.

The draft East of England Plan is the overarching regional document relevant to social deprivation. It will provide the statutory framework for local development plans over the next 15 years, and includes objectives on improving social inclusion, and regeneration of disadvantaged areas. The Regional Social Strategy (2004) develops upon these aims in six strategic objectives which include: reducing poverty and income inequalities and reducing social exclusion of older people.

### *Baseline Information*

The geographical spread of deprivation across Hertfordshire can be gauged by using the Government's Indices of Deprivation 2004 (ID2004). These rely on Census and administrative data from 2001 for the Census's lower-layer Super Output Areas (SOAs). There are 32,482 of these in England, as opposed to the 8,414 wards used for the Indices of Deprivation 2000. In Hertfordshire there were estimated to be 82,559 people in the income deprived category. This represents around 8% of residents. For employment deprivation the number is 31,841. Hertfordshire has over 15% of the total numbers of income deprived in the region and over 14% of the employment deprived. As Hertfordshire has around 19% of the region's residents, it can be concluded that these forms of deprivation are somewhat less prevalent in Hertfordshire than in the region as a whole<sup>44</sup>.

St Albans ranks 331st out of the 354 local authority areas in England on the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation rankings (A rank of 1 being the most deprived). This compares to a ranking of 331 in the equivalent 2000 report.

### *Trends*

St Albans continues to be the least deprived district in South West Hertfordshire.

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<sup>44</sup> Hertfordshire Local Economy Assessment (2004)

## *Recreation, Sport and Leisure*

### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

The way in which green spaces are treated within land-use development documents are vital to an areas recreation, leisure and sports capacity. National guidance exists in the form of PPG17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport, and Recreation'. This guidance acknowledges that the recreational quality of opens spaces can be eroded by insensitive development, and therefore local authorities should weigh up any benefits being offered to the community against the loss of open space that will occur (and the benefits that it too provides to the local community).

All plans and policies that relate to the improving of human health through exercise are relevant to this section. This strong link between recreation/sport and health is illustrated within the Health White Paper (2004), Choosing Health: Making Healthier Choices Easier, with one of its priorities being 'increasing exercise'. At a more regional level, the Hertfordshire Sustainability Guide (2003) aims to 'promote healthier lifestyles' alongside, 'protecting, providing, and improving open spaces'. St Albans is in the process of finalising its Green Spaces Strategy which will be published this winter.

Finally, 'Enjoy! A Tourism Strategy for St Albans City' (2003 – 2005) sets out the direction for the development, promotion and management of tourism within St Albans City and District over the next three years.

### *Baseline Information*

The number of visits to or usage of museums per 1000 population in St Albans is recorded at 1,078. This is above the regional average of 707.7 and the English average of 976.9. St Albans has 9 sports and leisure centres.

### *Trends*

St Albans' number of visits to a museum per 1000 population is significantly above the regional average.

### *Disability Allowance*

#### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

The Disability Discrimination Act came into force in October 2004. The relevant quotes from the 175-page Code of Practice are:

- 2.2 (p7): "The Disability Discrimination Act makes it unlawful for a service provider to discriminate against a disabled person by refusing to provide any service which it provides to members of the public"; and,
- 4.7 (p39): "From 1st October 1999 a service provider has to take reasonable steps to change a practice which makes it unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of its services".

This will have consequences for many types of commercial and industrial developments, and land-use development plans will need to take into account these requirements at their most basic level.

*Baseline Information*

In August 2003, 3,105 people in St Albans received the Disability Living Allowance benefit. This represented 3% of all people under the age of 65 living in the area, which compared with 5% of the same age group across England and Wales. In August 2003, 2,260 people in St Albans received this Attendance Allowance, which represented 12% of all those people aged 65 and over living in the area; this compared with 14% in England and Wales. In August 2003, 2,880 people in St Albans between the ages of 16 and 65 claimed Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disability Allowance because they had been unable to work for at least 28 consecutive weeks because of illness or disability. Of these people, 10% were under the age of 30.

*Trends*

No trend could be determined.

*Healthcare**Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

Health is a universal basic human need. High levels of public health lead to fitter, happier and healthier people. Health services are nationally high on citizens' list of political priorities. Other benefits include employment provision and contribution to the local economy, training and research opportunities, reduced burden on social services and public finances.

Addressing the effects to public health, and, dealing with the social and economic implications of an ageing society, are both key objectives of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (2001), and will both have implications on future healthcare provision.

*Baseline Information*

Hertfordshire has pockets of poverty in certain wards but Hertfordshire appears to be one of the more healthy counties of England, with life expectancy of 77 years for men and 81 years for women. Table 24 shows the life expectancy in the four areas.

**Table 24: Life expectancy (source: Health Profiles of Hertfordshire<sup>45</sup>).**

	Life expectancy		Rank within Hertfordshire		Rank within UK 1=Best	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Watford	75.02	79.29	10	9	249	318
St Albans	78.12	81.65	2	2	9	46
Dacorum	76.55	80.99	6	5	111	114
Three Rivers	78.72	82.66	1	1	2	7

In the local authority of St Albans, 9% of the resident population provided unpaid care compared to 10% in England and Wales. Of the people providing unpaid care, 14% gave 50 hours or more per week; this compared with 21 %in England and Wales.

<sup>45</sup> Health Profiles of Hertfordshire - [http://www.nhsinherts.nhs.uk/ha/publications/ahr2001/Profile%20Report%202001%20\(C1\).pdf](http://www.nhsinherts.nhs.uk/ha/publications/ahr2001/Profile%20Report%202001%20(C1).pdf)

### *Trends*

Due to an ageing society the number of people requiring care is likely to increase.

### *Education*

#### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

The European Spatial Development Perspective (1999) establish a number of common objectives and concepts adopted by EU member states that set the high level framework for national (and hence regional/local spatial plans). Economic and social cohesion are one of the main goals, and education plays an important role in the achievement of that goal.

At a regional level, the Regional Social Strategy (2004), includes strategic objectives covering: improving life chances of children from disadvantaged families, and improving the life chances of adults through learning and skills development. These objectives can be tackled through the LDF by increasing accessibility not only to employment opportunities but also to education facilities.

#### *Baseline Information*

The proportion of people of working age qualified to GCSE level equivalent or higher in the East of England was 47.6% in 2003, this was below the UK average of 50 per cent. The East of England had the lowest percentage of higher education students who were studying in their own area, 41% in 2002/03. In Hertfordshire the proportion of pupils achieving at least level 4 at Key Stage 2 (KS2) (the anticipated level of attainment for pupils aged 11 in their final year at primary school) changed from 75% in 1999 to 78% in 2004 for Mathematics and from 78% to 83% in respect of English. There are approximately 45,893 students in Hertfordshire, 19,061 of which are economically active. Table 25 below shows the percentage of people aged 16-74 that have no qualifications in the respective areas and also highlights the figure for the East of England for comparison.

Nevertheless, St Albans' residents have a good educational level illustrated by the fact that only 17% of people aged 16-74 have no qualifications (much is lower than the county average) and the good league table results of its schools.

**Table 25: Percentage of people aged 16-74 that have no qualifications.**

	<b>East of England</b>	<b>Watford</b>	<b>St Albans</b>	<b>Dacorum</b>	<b>Three Rivers</b>
People aged 16-74 with no qualifications	27.9%	23.7%	17%	24%	21.8%

83.2% of all 18-24 year olds were in full time education or employment as of January 2001 in St Albans. The authority scores the second highest of our four areas for the proportion of 15 year olds that attend schools that are run by local authorities and are achieving 5+ GCSEs, grades A\*-C. 67.4% of pupils match the criteria and fit in to this category. This figure is above the English average which has been recorded as 45.3%.

### *Trends*

No trend could be determined.

### **2.3.10 Economic Factors**

#### *Economic Activity*

##### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

The UK Government's approach to sustainable development recognises that a better quality of life for all includes economic growth and employment as well as more widely available goods and services. This requires the creation of a stable and competitive economy. Over the past three decades, UK output and inflation has been highly volatile. Economic instability has significant costs, making it difficult for individuals and firms to plan and invest, with damaging effects on long-term economic growth. It involves social costs that often fall heavily on people on lower incomes. The sensible response to this kind of economic uncertainty and turbulence is an emphasis on resilience - that is, on enabling the economy to cope with a range of possible shocks and changes. Economic resilience entails maintaining portfolios of diverse options and solutions rather than aiming for a single optimum, and maintaining the capacity of smaller and simpler subsystems to perform basic tasks if larger and more complex systems fail. Relevant national guidance exists through a number of Planning Policy Guidance Notes. PPS6 'Town Centres and Retail Developments', aims to regenerate town centres; promoting their viability and vitality through improving their environment, transport and safety. PPG4 'Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms', offers guidance on the provision in planning for economic development married to respect for the environment, for example, placing industrial and commercial developments in such a way so as to minimise dependency on road transport. PPG4 reflects a number of the objectives set in place by the European Commission's White Paper on the European Transport Policy (2001), with its principles on developing high-quality urban transport.

Tourism has been and increasingly will be an important component of the local economy. PPG21 related to tourism outlines the economic significance of tourism along with its potential environmental effects. The combination of these two factors makes it an important consideration for any land-use plans.

The importance of economic growth as a key pillar within sustainable development is illustrated at the regional level by the Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England (2001). One of the Framework's key objectives is for the achievement of growth in a balanced way. This theme is adopted by the draft East of England Plan, which has objectives relating to increased prosperity and employment growth (through increased access to employment opportunities and increasing the vitality of town centres).

A Shared Vision: The Regional Economic Strategy of the East of England (2004), expresses a vision of creating a leading economy, through objectives pertaining to improved skills base, innovation and entrepreneurship, efficient resource use, and tackling social exclusion. This is the key regional document relating to the economic activity. At a more local level, the Economic Development Strategy for Hertfordshire (2000-2005) sets out economic priorities up to 2005, including developing skills and promoting social inclusion. It will be superseded by a new strategy shortly. This strategy embodies a large part of the Counties Employment Strategy and Workforce Development Plan. Hertfordshire's important rural economy is addressed through 'Rural Hertfordshire – and agenda for action 2001' (2005).

St Albans City and District Council currently consults on its Economic Development Strategy (2005 – 2007). The aim is to develop a strategy and programme of action to support and support the local economy, including ensuring that residents of the District have an opportunity to improve their position within the labour market. The St Albans City and District Council - Retail and Leisure Study (2006) forms the evidential basis of the town centre, retail and leisure elements of the council's development plan documents.

### Baseline Information

Employment rates in the region remain high. The region however needs to do better in its progress towards National Learning Targets. In addition a significantly lower proportion of employees in the region receive job-related training than the UK average. As in the rest of the country, women are also receiving less job-related training than men. Table 26 below shows the percentages of economic activity levels for all four authorities and also the figures for the county as a whole to enable comparison and identify targets at a local level.

**Table 26: Economic activity<sup>46</sup>.**

	% males (16-64)				
	Hertfordshire	Watford	St Albans	Dacorum	Three Rivers
Economically Active	89.80%	90.70%	87.60%	90.20%	87.90%
Economically Inactive	10.20%	9.3	12.40%	9.80%	12.10%
Students (economically active or inactive)	5.60%	5.2	6.80%	5.40%	6.60%
	% females (16-59)				
	Hertfordshire	Watford	St Albans	Dacorum	Three Rivers
Economically Active	70.40%	72.60%	70.20%	71.10%	67.60%
Economically Inactive	29.60%	27.40%	29.80%	28.90%	32.40%
Students (economically active or inactive)	9.20%	5.60%	7.80%	5.90%	7.20%

Table 27 shows income support claimants in Hertfordshire and then St Albans, St Albans, Dacorum and Three Rivers.

**Table 27: Income support claimants.**

	Total	%	Pensioners	Disabled	Lone Parents	Other
Hertfordshire	44550	100	21510	10525	10430	2085
Watford	3820	8.6	940	940	920	225
St Albans	4265	9.6	2020	1150	895	200
Dacorum	5765	13	2795	1385	1340	245
Three Rivers	3215	7.2	1635	665	770	145

### Employment

#### Relationship with other Plans and Programmes

The majority of the plans and programmes mentioned above under 'Economic Activity and Foot-Printing', are relevant to and promote, local employment. A number of other relevant pieces of national and regional guidance are described below:

PPS 6 'Town Centres and Retail Developments', focuses on the regeneration of town centres; promoting their viability and vitality through improving their environment, transport and safety. Viable town centres will provide employment opportunities, and improved transport should stimulate increased employment opportunities for all sectors of society.

<sup>46</sup> National Statistics -

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/xsdataset.asp?More=Y&vlnk=1939&All=Y&B2.x=74&B2.y=7>

The tourism sector could potentially provide a significant amount of local employment. PPG 21 related to tourism outlines the economic significance of tourism along with its potential environmental effects. The combination of these two factors makes it an important consideration for any land-use plans.

The draft East of England Plan is a defining document at the regional level as regards employment issues. It will provide the statutory framework for local development plans for at least the next 15 years, and has key objectives relating to increasing social inclusion and access to employment opportunities, along with more general employment growth.

At a more local level, the Economic Development Strategy for Hertfordshire (2000-2005) sets out economic priorities up to 2005, including developing skills and promoting social inclusion. It will be superseded shortly. This Strategy embodies a large part of the Counties Employment Strategy and Workforce Development Plan.

### *Baseline Information*

The claimant unemployment count for Hertfordshire in October 2005 was 9,258 a level of 1.4%. This was below both the level for the East of England (1.7%) and the national level (2.3%).

St Albans' rate of unemployment has risen slightly between 2004 and 2005: 777 claimants were registered in October 2005, representing 0.9% of the population of working age. Further data from the Hertfordshire Prosperity Local Economy Assessment 2004, shows the area has reduced its percentage of Hertfordshire's total figure from 9.1% to 7.8%.

The proportion of people of working age in employment has increased from 77.9% to 80.7% over the three year time period between February 2001 and February 2003.

### *Trends*

There has been a declining trend for the unemployment claimant count figures in all of the four areas. The strongest falls, of more than 20%, were seen in Three Rivers and St Albans, which now account for only around 6% and 8% of unemployment in the county respectively. However, figures seem to rise lately.

### *Economic Footprint*

#### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

See relevant section under 'Economic Activity'.

### *Baseline Information*

Hertfordshire accounts for 21% of Gross Value Added (GVA) growth in the East of England, and just over 2 % of UK GVA. Over the period 2003-2009, GVA growth in the county is expected to average 3 % pa, faster than the average for the East of England (2¾ % pa) and UK (2½ % pa). As in the rest of the UK, growth over this period is expected to be fuelled by services, with growth in manufacturing only averaging 1¼ % pa, which is slower than the growth expected in manufacturing in the East of England (3 % pa) and UK (2¾ % pa) as a whole.

Employment growth in the county is expected to be driven by financial & business services, at 2¼ % pa over 2003-2009, which is faster than the growth expected in the East of England (1¾ % pa) and UK (1½ % pa) over the same period.

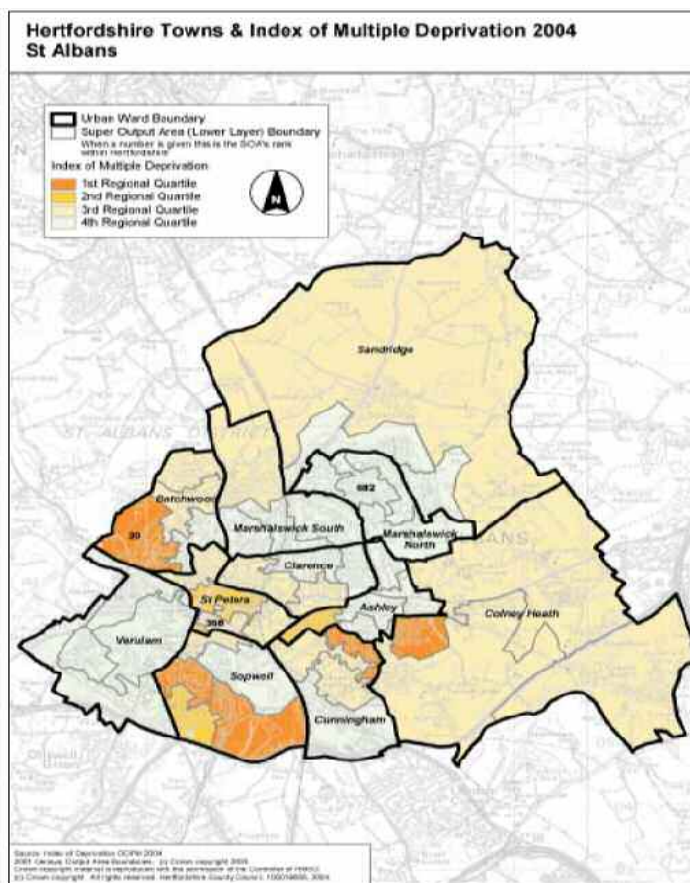
The Governments Index of Deprivation (2004) gives information on the numbers considered income deprived and employment deprived. The actual numbers of people in the income deprived and employment deprived<sup>47</sup> categories, on which these indices are based, are reported as the 'Income Scale' and the 'Employment Scale'. (using mid 2001 estimates). An analysis of the results for the four areas was included in the Hertfordshire Local Economy Assessment (2004):

St Albans accounts for around 12% of GVA in Hertfordshire. Over 2003-2009, GVA in the district is expected to grow marginally faster than the average for the county, with growth of around 3¼% pa. This is partly due to manufacturing accounting for a smaller proportion of output in the district than in Hertfordshire as a whole.

Financial and business services and government and other services account for a larger share of employment in St Albans than the corresponding shares in Hertfordshire as a whole. This helps to explain why employment in the district is expected to grow substantially faster than the county average over 2003-2009. According to the Income Scale, St Albans had 7,825 people affected by income deprivation. This represented 6.1% of the resident population.

According to the Employment Scale, St Albans had 3,366 employment deprived people. This represented 4.2% of the population of working age. On both proportional counts St Albans ranks ninth among the ten districts. Figure 15 below classifies the areas in St Albans according to the Index of Multiple deprivation. Those in the First regional quartile of this index are defined as more deprived than areas ranking in sequential quartiles.

**Figure 15: Index of Multiple Deprivation in St Albans.**



<sup>47</sup> A person is defined as employment deprived if they want to work but are excluded from the labour market through unemployment, sickness or disability.

### *Trends*

St Albans GVA is expected to grow faster than the county average.

### *Enterprise and Innovation*

#### *Relationship with other Plans and Programmes*

See relevant section under 'Economic Activity'.

#### *Baseline Information*

The number of VAT registered businesses in Hertfordshire increased every year from 1996 to 2003. In 2003, less than 1% of all businesses were large (over 200 employees); the majority were micro (1-10 employees); the largest number was in banking, finance and insurance.

In 2003, businesses in St Albans accounted for 14.1% of the county total. The number of VAT registered businesses increased every year during 1996 to 2002 but decreased slightly in 2003. The largest number of business units were micro (1-10 employees) in 2002 and almost half of all business units were in banking, finance and insurance.

### *Trends*

There has been no clear trend in the number of VAT registered business in the areas.

## **2.4 Conclusions**

Appendix A provides a comprehensive analysis of relevant plans and programmes. Key points have been identified in section 2.3 under a series of topics. The challenge is for the LDF to incorporate these key principles, without simply repeating higher tier policy, having regard to the local context.

### **Consultation question**

**Q3:** Are there any other issues or information related to the topics covered in section 2.3 that are relevant to St Albans' development plan documents and should be included?

**Q4:** Are there any potential interrelationships, cumulative or synergistic effects which should be considered in more detail?

### 3 Environmental and Sustainability Issues, Opportunities and Priorities

#### 3.1 Issues and Opportunities

The review of plans and programmes affecting the district, and the collation of the environmental baseline data informed the identification of a series of environmental problems or issues that could be addressed by, or affect the strategies and measures developed in the development plan documents. Such issues, problems and opportunities have been confirmed through:

- Discussions with St Albans City and District Council officers;
- Review of the baseline data, especially where targets are not on track to be met or trends are negative; and
- Tensions / inconsistencies with other plans, programmes and sustainability objectives.

**Table 28: Issues and opportunities in St Albans.**

Issues/problems/opportunities	How this could be addressed in the LDF
<b>Air Quality</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Traffic congestion on the main routes continues to grow</li> <li>▪ Parking is a problem that adds to congestion within the main settlements</li> <li>▪ Car ownership is increasing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide more sustainable modes of travel to encourage modal shift</li> <li>▪ Consider the use of park and ride</li> <li>▪ Improve cycle and pedestrian facilities</li> <li>▪ Aim to meet more needs locally and thereby reducing the need to travel</li> <li>▪ Promote low emission vehicles (e.g. hybrids, LPG, CNG)</li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Condition of SSSIs is below county and national average</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Condition of existing designated areas (especially SSSIs) and open spaces should be maintained and enhanced</li> <li>▪ The use of previously developed land with low biodiversity value should be encouraged</li> <li>▪ Opportunities for extending wildlife corridors should be explored</li> </ul>
<b>Climatic Factors</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ St Albans is keen to promote and increase renewable energy and more energy efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote the use and generation of renewable energy (e.g. for new developments)</li> <li>▪ Promote higher energy efficiency</li> <li>▪ Reduce the need to travel through integrated land use planning</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The built heritage of St Albans is highly valued by its residents - maintaining local distinctiveness is critical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To preserve the character of the town measures such as extending conservation areas or issuing design guides should be considered</li> <li>▪ Create neighbourhoods with local identities</li> </ul>

<b>Human Health</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public health in St Albans is generally good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote healthier lifestyles by providing more cycle and pedestrian facilities</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape/townscape</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ St Albans District is surrounded by Metropolitan Green Belt. At present it is anticipated that no Green Belt Land needs to be released to meet the district's housing target.</li> <li>▪ Some buildings from the past uninspiring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maximise the use of previously developed land with low biodiversity value</li> <li>▪ Ensure developments are in keeping with local character</li> </ul>
<b>Material Assets</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ St Albans is keen to promote and increase renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainable construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste</li> <li>▪ Good design guidelines aiming to design out crime and provide a high quality built environment</li> <li>▪ Declaration of green and home zones</li> <li>▪ Require/promote the use of locally sourced, secondary and recycled materials</li> <li>▪ Promote sustainable construction methods</li> </ul>
<b>Population</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The majority of the population is of working age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anticipated population and housing growth should be achieved in a sustainable manner</li> </ul>
<b>Soil</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ St Albans contains mostly slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Soil contamination/loss due to new developments should be avoided/minimised</li> </ul>
<b>Water</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Over abstraction of water in some areas</li> <li>▪ Some area are at risk of flooding</li> <li>▪ Contaminated land and potential effects on source protection areas</li> <li>▪ Development pressures close to water courses could squeeze space for wildlife buffer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve river quality by e.g. using sustainable drainage schemes</li> <li>▪ Reduce contaminated run off into water courses</li> <li>▪ Restrict unsustainable water abstraction</li> <li>▪ Require biodiversity buffer zones for waterside developments</li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ House prices are extremely high</li> <li>▪ Need for more affordable housing</li> <li>▪ Allocation of new housing and securing necessary infrastructure is a key issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote higher housing densities without compromising design or quality of life</li> </ul>
<b>Crime</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime reduction is a high priority for the district as a whole</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In conjunction with the local constabulary encourage increased policing at night</li> <li>▪ Encourage developments that design out crime</li> </ul>

<b>Accessibility</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public transport is oriented towards London, rather than across the district</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make it possible for people and promote living without a private car</li> <li>Make sure new developments are well served by public transport</li> <li>Integrate land use and transport planning</li> </ul>
<b>Social Deprivation and Disadvantaged Groups</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a need for further gypsy and traveller pitches in South West Hertfordshire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The provision of these sites should be incorporated in the LDF</li> </ul>
<b>Recreation, Sport and Leisure</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are some deficits in the availability of and access to sport and recreational facilities particularly amongst hard to reach groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional sport and recreational facilities should be provided and promoted where needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Health Care &amp; Education</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good range of health care facilities across the district</li> <li>High educational attainment figures and high quality schools</li> <li>However, often there are not enough places and some children have to travel further distances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure health and education facilities are accessible by a variety of sustainable modes of travel</li> </ul>
<b>Economy and Employment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low unemployment rates and high average salaries; however, a high proportion of the workforce commutes to London</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The employment base should be sustained and enhanced to meet more employment need locally</li> </ul>

#### **Consultation question**

**Q5:** Are there any other problems, opportunities or issues that are relevant to St Albans' development plan documents and have not been covered?

### **3.2 Priorities for Investigation**

At this early stage of the planning process details regarding the possible content of the emerging LDF are not available. Therefore, it is very difficult to evaluate which environmental, social or economic topics are likely to be more affected than others and therefore remit more detailed assessment. Hence it is proposed to investigate all topics described in section 2.3; however, it is anticipated to evaluate the following topic in more detail: biodiversity, air quality, climatic factors, cultural heritage, health, landscape, material assets, water, housing, crime, accessibility, recreation and employment.

#### **Consultation question**

**Q6:** Where do you see the main issues in the area and which topics do you want see addressed with priority within the SA/SEA?

## 4 SA/SEA Objectives and Framework

### 4.1 Introduction

Current guidance on SA/SEA of land use and spatial plans advocates the use of objectives in the appraisal process. This section provides an outline of the draft objectives, criteria and indicators formulation process of the SA/SEA in order to provide a focused and clarified approach to appraising the DPDs at a later stage in the SA/SEA. This appraisal framework includes broad sustainability objectives, criteria explaining the broader objective in a more localised manner and indicators.

In order to facilitate legibility and ease of understanding and use, the sustainability objectives, criteria and indicators have been set out in the form of an Appraisal Framework, outlined in section 4.2. This approach is recommended in government good practice on carrying out environmental and sustainability appraisals<sup>48</sup>. This Appraisal Framework will form the basis for the appraisal of all the DPDs. An explanation of the methodology for formulating the Appraisal Framework is presented below.

**Please, note that work on developing the objectives, criteria and indicators is ongoing and will not be finalised until submission of the final DPDs.**

#### 4.1.1 SA/SEA Topic

The sustainability objectives outlined in the Appraisal Framework have been arranged under SA/SEA topics. The topics that have been selected relate to the same topics listed in:

- Annex I of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament on ‘the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes’ (the SEA Directive); and
- Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, ODPM, November 2005.

The topics used are set out in the first column (Biodiversity, Water, Soil, Climatic Factors, Air, Material Assets, Cultural Heritage, Landscape, Population & Human Health, Social Factors and Economic Factors).

#### 4.1.2 Sustainability Objectives (Column 1)

Objectives have focussed on those issues, which are directly relevant to South West Hertfordshire and the scope of the DPDs. They are based on the sustainability objectives presented in the “Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England<sup>49</sup>”.

Following on from the identification of objectives, a range of associated criteria and indicators were identified to provide further clarity in respect of future development directions as well as to assist in the appraisal process.

#### 4.1.3 Criteria (Column 2)

Criteria provide a more specific elaboration of the individual objectives. They focus specifically on the items which are of direct relevance to the DPDs.

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<sup>48</sup> The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. ODPM, October 2003

<sup>49</sup> A Sustainable Development Framework For The East of England, The East of England Regional Assembly, October 2001

#### **4.1.4 Possible Assessment Indicators (Column 3)**

Indicators are the means by which the environmental and sustainability performance of the LDF can be assessed.

The indicators outlined in the Appraisal Framework were primarily derived from the Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England supplemented with other relevant indicators already identified at the European, national, regional and local level.

**The indicators will form the basis for the SA/SEA assessment work and some of the indicators might be suggested for the future monitoring of the success of the DPDs implementation.**

#### **Consultation question**

**Q7:** Do the SA/SEA objectives, criteria and indicators provide a reasonable framework through which the likely significant environmental effects of the development plan documents can be assessed?

## 4.2 Proposed SA/SEA Framework

Table 29 illustrates the proposed SA/SEA Appraisal Framework.

**Table 29: The SA/SEA Appraisal Framework.**

Objective	Criteria	Possible Assessment Indicators
<b>Biodiversity</b>		
<p>1. To protect and enhance biodiversity at all levels, including the maintenance and enhancement of Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species in line with local targets</p>	<p>Avoid damage to designated wildlife sites (international, national and local) and protected species and achieve favourable condition</p> <p>To support farming and countryside practices that enhance biodiversity and landscape quality by economically and socially valuable activities (e.g. grazing, coppicing, nature reserves)</p> <p>To restore the full range of characteristic habitats and species, to achieve BAP targets, maintain or enhance other natural assets (e.g. reedbeds) and to secure the regional stock above viable levels</p> <p>To create or re-create habitats, to ensure sustainable and linked species populations</p> <p>To manage sustainably all woodland and protect existing woodland against conversion to other uses</p> <p>To recognise the social/environmental value of woodlands/orchards particularly near urban areas</p> <p>To encourage people to come into contact with, understand, and enjoy nature</p>	<p>Populations of wild birds</p> <p>Area of semi-natural habitat lost to development</p> <p>Area of new semi-natural habitat created</p> <p>Wildlife sites affected by water abstraction</p> <p>Loss/damage to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)</p> <p>Numbers of species at risk</p> <p>Area of ancient semi-natural woodland</p>
<b>Water</b>		
<p>2. Maintain and enhance water quality and limit water consumption to levels supportable by natural processes and storage systems, taking into account the impact of climate change</p>	<p>To regulate water supply to be within reasonable limits, and manage demand</p> <p>To raise awareness and encourage higher water efficiency and conservation</p> <p>To develop and promote local water recycling initiatives for</p>	<p>Levels of awareness of water issues and the need for water saving</p> <p>Average per capita water consumption in new and existing development</p> <p>Proportion of water needs met by local</p>

	<p>developments and buildings</p> <p>To encourage rainwater harvesting, to reduce new development needs</p> <p>To improve quality and flow of rivers and reduce nitrate levels in groundwater</p> <p>To reduce pollution by managing supplied water and effluents in an integrated way</p> <p>To maintain or restore the integrity of the many water dependent wildlife sites in the region.</p>	<p>water recycling in urban and rural areas</p> <p>Proportion of housing (existing and new development) which includes on-site provision for rainwater re-use</p> <p>Household water use and peak demand</p> <p>Low flows in river</p> <p>Margin between water supply and projected demand</p>
<p>3. Ensure that new development does not increase flood risk and protects or enhances the capacity &amp; integrity of flood storage areas</p>	<p>To avoid development from being located in areas at risk from coastal and fluvial flooding or storm surges taking into account of climate change</p> <p>To promote sustainable urban drainage systems to reduce flood risk and water loss from natural systems</p> <p>No development in undefended floodplains</p>	<p>% of water lost to leakage</p> <p>Number and severity of pollution incidents to surface water</p> <p>Rivers of good or fair quality</p> <p>Number and severity of pollution incidents to groundwater</p> <p>Proportion of new roads served by swales, basins or infiltration trenches vs conventional kerbs</p> <p>River flows during dry summer periods.</p> <p>Total extent/ capacity of flood storage area</p> <p>Number of properties at risk from flooding</p> <p>Proportion of runoff from new developments which is directed into Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems<sup>50</sup></p>

<sup>50</sup> Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) are management practices and physical structures designed to drain surface water in a more sustainable way than conventional systems.

<b>Soil</b>		
4. Minimise development of land with the most agricultural value, and minimise the loss of soils to new development	To safeguard high quality agricultural land (Grades 1-2) from development	Amount of high quality agricultural land lost to development
	To limit the loss of soils to development	Net loss of soils in development Concentration of organic matter in agricultural top-soils
<b>Climatic Factors</b>		
5. Reduce the impacts of climate change, with a particular focus on reducing the consumption of fossil fuels and levels of CO <sub>2</sub>	To minimise CO <sub>2</sub> emissions	Output of greenhouse gases and particularly CO <sub>2</sub> per local authority and per capita
	To adopt lifestyle changes to cope with climate change, such as promoting water and energy efficiency(through e.g. higher levels of home insulation)	Weather-related insurance claims
	To encourage technological development to provide clean and efficient use of resources	Regional energy consumption compared with population and GDP
	To raise awareness of the potential of renewable energy to attract more investment	Energy use per household
	To encourage positive attitudes towards renewable energy schemes (e.g. wind and biomass)	Energy Efficiency rating for new buildings
	To encourage planning authorities to take a more positive attitude towards renewable energy schemes, home insulation, and local community renewable energy schemes	Proportion of electricity generated from renewable sources
To encourage ways of mitigating the region's impact upon the global environment, such as cleaner and more efficient use of transport, supporting local markets to reduce the unnecessary movement of raw materials and food stuffs	Economic health and prospects of energy industry, including off-shore	
Encourage carbon sequestration (e.g. tree planting)	Proportion of total travel which is by car	
To encourage more efficient uses of energy, including product design, manufacturing processes, transport, and behavioural changes	Transports share of region's CO <sub>2</sub> emissions	
To develop, adopt and ensure the effective use of built development design guides tackling energy use, to provide homes and businesses with self-sufficient energy	Freight transport: tonne/miles and empty lorry miles	
	Air quality improvements measured against related illnesses	
	Design solutions which work with the environment, including: working with topography, wind direction and solar	

		shade to reduce impacts on/of climate change & microclimatic impacts
6. Ensure that development is capable of withstanding the effects of climate change	To promote design for more extreme climatic events, incorporating robust and weather resistant built forms	Number of specific measures included in the layout which will provide climatic protection % of surfaces designed for water re-absorption
<b>Air Quality</b>		
7. Achieve good air quality, especially in urban areas	To reduce the need to travel by car through a combination of high quality transport alternatives, particularly public transport, walking and cycling networks, but also light rail, taxi, and water	Levels of key air pollutants within the local authority area, and within the East of England
	To develop the East of England as Britain's premier cycling region, and promote safe routes to schools, greenways and quiet lanes	Number of days when air pollution reported as moderate or higher within the local authority area
	To promote Green Transport Plans, including car pools, car sharing, choice of low fuel and non-fossil fuel powered vehicles	Proportion of trips made by public transport/ foot/ cycle
	To improve opportunities for tourists not to have to drive, such as public transport, green lanes, and cycling	Pollutant levels for Benzene, 1,3-Butadiene, CO <sub>2</sub> , Lead, NO <sub>2</sub> , PM10, SO <sub>2</sub>
	To support energy saving and clean fuel initiatives for all forms of powered transport	Journey times on strategic links
	To encourage intelligent freight practices to transfer movements to rail and water, minimise empty lorry journeys, and promote local distribution of local food products	Time lost to congestion
	To plan for a pattern of settlement and economic activity that reduces dependence on the car and maintains access to work and essential services for non-car-owners	Amount of traffic on strategic links
	To raise public awareness of the need for lifestyle changes (e.g. to reduce dependence on the car)	Emissions from public and private transport
	To encourage use of information technology and e-commerce as an alternative communication link to travel	Proportion of public transport vehicles with emissions compliant with Euro 3/ Euro 4 standards
To address radial (from London) dominance of routes and promote east-	Proportion of materials specified which can be derived from local sources	Average distance over which building

	<p>west links, including rail</p> <p>To make best use of and support adequate maintenance of existing strategic road and rail infrastructure, to overcome congestion</p>	<p>materials are transported</p> <p>Proportion of essential trips possible by public transport</p> <p>Quality of strategic pedestrian routes including safety, interest and amenity</p> <p>Investment in public transport as a proportion of total transport investment</p> <p>Proportion of road network benefiting from public transport priority measures</p> <p>Public transport choice (in terms of routes and modes)</p>
<b>Material Assets</b>		
8. Maximise the use of previously developed land and buildings, and the efficient use of land	<p>To concentrate development through the reuse of previously developed land and buildings and by urban extensions only where the development of greenfield land is unavoidable</p> <p>To encourage local authorities to prepare integrated strategies which identify and bring back into productive use contaminated, vacant, and derelict land and buildings, taking into account any nature conservation or historic interest that they might have developed</p> <p>To maximise the efficient use of land by such measures as higher density development, mixed use</p>	<p>New developments built on previously developed land</p> <p>Loss of greenfield and green belt land</p> <p>Number of vacant properties</p> <p>Average density of development</p> <p>Densities along main transport corridors</p> <p>Densities in the town centre</p> <p>Area under agri-environment schemes</p> <p>Area converted to organic production</p> <p>Volumes of minerals produced in the region</p> <p>Level of minerals and aggregate use replaced by recycled or substitute materials</p> <p>Number of exhausted mineral sites returned to suitable use</p>
9. To use natural resources, both finite and renewable, as efficiently as possible, and re-use finite resources or recycled alternatives wherever possible	<p>To safeguard reserves of exploitable minerals from sterilisation by other development</p> <p>To encourage maximum efficiency and appropriate use of aggregate materials</p> <p>To manage aggregate outputs to meet regional needs in a sustainable manner</p> <p>To prevent mineral extraction where environmental/amenity impacts would be unacceptable (e.g. to communities, wildlife, semi-natural habitats, landscape, archaeology or groundwater)</p>	<p>Level of minerals and aggregate use replaced by recycled or substitute materials</p> <p>Number of exhausted mineral sites returned to suitable use</p>

	<p>To restore to a high standard exhausted or abandoned mineral workings maximising opportunities to create new habitats, and ensure effective after-use management</p>	<p>Construction and demolition waste going to landfill</p>
	<p>To promote the use of recycled materials particularly in the construction industry, to avoid wasteful use and transport of resources</p>	<p>Imported mineral tonnage</p>
	<p>New development to incorporate renewable and recycled materials in buildings and infrastructure, or materials of lower environmental impact or locally sourced materials where possible</p>	<p>Numbers of dwellings created by re-use of existing buildings</p>
	<p>To minimise the production of waste, and then promote re-use, recycling, composting, alternative treatment options and energy recovery before resorting to landfill, taking into account the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO)</p>	<p>Number of buildings designed to sustainability principals</p>
	<p>To promote a shift from a culture of cheap landfill to public acceptance of well-sited well-run alternatives (e.g. recycling and composting facilities)</p>	<p>Levels of wastes and emissions (nutrients, pesticides, herbicides)</p>
	<p>To encourage easily accessible recycling systems and develop markets for recyclable materials building upon the work of the Waste and Resources Action Programme, and promote and support local strategies and enterprises (e.g. Re-Made schemes)</p>	<p>Household waste and recycling rates (absolute and trends)</p>
	<p>To promote education and demonstration projects for Combined Heat &amp; Power (CHP) and waste recovery and recycling</p>	<p>Concentrations of persistent organic pollutants</p>
	<p>To promote waste awareness education programmes in schools and the community</p>	<p>% of the total tonnage of household waste that has been reduced, re-used or recycled</p>
		<p>Initiatives to promote sustainable waste management</p>
		<p>Proportion of development which incorporates design measures to facilitate sustainable household waste management</p>
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>		
10. To maintain and enhance historic and cultural assets	<p>To safeguard and enhance the historic environment, and re-create important historic features</p>	<p>Buildings of Grade 1 and II* at risk of decay</p>
	<p>To promote local distinctiveness and pride in local identity by repairing historic buildings and areas, and by encouraging the re-use of valued buildings</p>	<p>Number of historic assets restored/reused</p>
	<p>To encourage thoughtful design, high density housing and mixed-use developments, which respects their context, reflecting local</p>	<p>Measures to enhance the local architectural heritage</p>
		<p>Conditions of ancient scheduled monuments</p>

	distinctiveness	
	To promote public education and enjoyment of the built heritage and archaeology	
<b>Landscape</b>		
11. Conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape, encouraging local distinctiveness	To protect and enhance the district's countryside	Development in areas designated as Countryside and Sensitive Landscape Character  Area of landscape designation affected by/lost to development  Changes in landscape features – woodland, hedges, stone walls and ponds
	To protect dark skies from light pollution, and promote low energy and less invasive lighting sources, considering the balance between safety and environmental impacts	
<b>Population and Human Health</b>		
12. Encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce the health impacts of new developments	To reduce the need for travel by promoting mixed use development	Number and length of journeys by environmentally damaging modes: car, lorry, plane  Proportion of journeys by 'green' modes: walking, cycle, bus passenger rail, rail freight  Access to open green spaces  Traffic congestion  Average journey distances  Modal share of private car  Modal shift to cycling and walking  Length of cycle / footpath network  Perceived safety of cycle ways and footpaths  Lighting levels (in Lux) of footpaths & cycle ways & levels of exposure to
	To promote the health advantages of walking and cycling, and community based activities	
	To include measures to reduce road traffic accidents	
	To improve the quality and quantity of publicly accessible open space.	
	To identify, protect and manage open space, such as rivers and canals, parks and gardens, allotments and playing fields, and the links between them, for the benefit of people and wildlife	
	To narrow the income gap between the poorest and wealthiest parts of the region and to reduce health differential	
	To make greater use of IT links to specialists by GPs for initial consultations	
	To promote better public transport links to major hospitals	
	To include specific design and amenity policies to minimise noise and odour pollution, particularly in residential areas	
	To use strategic environmental assessment and environment impact	

	assessment techniques to minimise noise	vehicular traffic
13. To deliver more sustainable patterns of location of development, including employment and housing	To reduce the need to travel through closer integration of housing, jobs and services	Proportion of office developments & schools for which Green Travel Plans have been prepared and monitored Number of road casualties % of residents surveyed who are concerned about different types of noise in their area Number of residential units created above shops Distance travelled to work and mode of travel
<b>Social Factors</b>		
14. Promote equity & address social exclusion by closing the gap between the poorest communities and the rest	To include measures which will improve everyone's access to high quality health, education, recreation, community facilities and public transport	% of residents finding it easy to access key local services & community facilities
	To ensure facilities and services are accessible by people with disabilities	Qualifications at age 19 Proportion of housing unfit or lacking appropriate insulation, by area
	To encourage development of sporting opportunities.	% of public & community buildings accessible to disabled people
	To encourage businesses to access learning and skills for prosperity	% of community buildings that are in multiple use e.g. schools that also allow community access
	To encourage people to access the learning and skills they need for high quality of life To increase promotion and use of online learning within the workplace To give greater focus to learning and skills in regeneration areas To concentrate efforts on the provision of basic skills at community and family level	Measures to ensure that public transport is accessible to the mobility impaired – including dropped kerbs, low floor busses, etc.
15. Ensure that everyone has access to good quality housing that meets their needs	Promote a range housing types and tenure, including high quality affordable and key worker housing	Proportion of public transport which is accessible to the mobility impaired
	To improve the provision and condition of affordable housing	Public transport affordable by the poorest

16. Enhance community identity and participation	To make the political process relevant to all sectors of communities by reinforcing local government and improving participative democracy, through proactive dialogue and community strategies	Library floor space per 1,000 population Primary school places provided Secondary schools places provided Affordable housing completion figures % of affordable housing provided % of housing units will be accessible to disabled people % households stating their neighbourhood has 'community spirit' Number of design measures/ features aimed specifically at promoting community identity
	To acknowledge diversity, and to help communities, including ethnic minorities and others potentially excluded, to develop in their preferred way - if possible at street level	% of citizens satisfied with the overall services provided
	To encourage local authorities and other partners to develop local cultural strategies which link to and support the Regional Cultural Strategy	Recorded crime (by type) per 100,000 population
	To recognise the value of the multi-cultural/faith diversity of the peoples in the region	Rates of fear of crime
	To improve the quality of life in urban areas by making them more attractive places in which to live and work, and to visit	Proportion of public spaces and streets which are overlooked by development.
	To encourage high quality design in new development, including mixed uses, to create local identity and encourage a sense of community pride	Proportion of public facilities which are multi-functional, catering for a range of uses over different periods of the day.
	To make a concerted effort to clean up and discourage litter, graffiti, dog mess, and encourage community ownership over the issue through education and awareness	Proportion of development (particularly in the town centre) which is dormant/ unused after hours
17. Reduce both crime and fear of crime	To tackle the root causes of crime, for example by increasing education and qualification levels of the workforce	% of public places that have security lighting and cameras
	To reduce offending, particularly violent crime and burglary, year on year	Levels of usage, maintenance and care of public spaces
	To reduce drug use and drug-related crime	
	To support government-sponsored crime/safety initiatives, maximising the use of all tools available to police, local authorities and other agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour	
	To improve attendance at school	
	To prevent environmental crime	
	To increase the use of community beat officers	
To plan new development to help reduce crime and fear of crime through the design of the physical environment, and by promoting well-		

	used streets and public spaces	
	To support citizenship awareness and anti-racism initiatives	
<b>Economic Factors</b>		
18. Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth	To support the Regional Economic Strategy aim of making the East of England a world-class economy, renowned for its knowledge base, the creativity and enterprise of its people and the quality of life of all who live and work here	GDP per head Annual average investment by manufacturing industry as % of GDP
	To promote and support economic diversity and particularly green technology initiatives within the manufacturing sector	% of businesses recognised as Investors in People
	To support and promote key industry sectors, small and medium sized enterprises, community-based enterprises, and leading edge infrastructure and high quality environment	Adoption of Environmental Management Systems (ISO 14001. EMAS) and 'Green Accounting' by businesses
	To support the development of micro-businesses, community economic development and local investment	Proportion of working age people in work Number and survival of business start-ups
	To encourage investment in rural tourism initiatives, including farm diversification	Participation in training Rate of growth of rural businesses
	To plan and manage tourism development and activities to encourage year-round tourism, and more sustainable destinations, products and businesses (e.g. through use of a 'green audit kit')	Variations in GDP per head within the region
		Index of local deprivation
19. Achieve a more equitable sharing of the benefits of prosperity across all sectors of society and fairer access to services, focusing on deprived area in the region	To encourage local provision of, and access to, jobs and services	Proportion of working age people in work, by area, age band, gender and ethnicity
	To enhance local economies giving access to appropriate, rewarding paid work	Woman in public appointments and senior positions
	To improve the competitiveness of rural businesses by promoting innovative means of service delivery (e.g. ICT, multi-purpose community centres)	Dependency of working –age people in workless households
	To promote the restructuring and diversification of agriculture such as establishing alternative rural businesses, including re-use of farm buildings as workspace to service the local area	Fuel poverty Increase in number of illness-free years
	To complete telecommunications links where there are network gaps	% pensioners in households with below

20. Revitalise town centres to promote a return to sustainable urban living	To restore the role of market towns as centres for sustainable development providing services, housing and employment, drawing on the principles of urban renaissance.	average income % children in households with below half average income
	To encourage well-designed mixed-use developments in the heart of towns and cities, create viable and attractive town centres that have vitality and life, and discourage out-of-town developments	Vacant land and properties and derelict land Proportion of new retail in town centres versus out-of-town Proportion of population living in town centres

### 4.3 Compatibility between SA/SEA Objectives and Plan Objectives

This section investigates i possible conflicts between the proposed SA/SEA objectives and the main themes and key issues set out in St Albans' core strategy by conducting a compatibility assessment. The role of the SA/SEA is to predict the level of potential incompatibilities and suggest possible measures to minimise these conflicts.

Table 30 illustrates the results of the compatibility assessment between the SA/SEA objectives and the key issues identified in St Albans' core strategy. The results indicate that there are no conflicts and only minor uncertainties over the compatibility between the SA/SEA objectives and the core strategy's objectives.

The uncertainties regarding the objectives (abridged)

3. 'Address the need for more affordable housing
5. Secure an improved and better integrated transport system'
6. 'Promote a high standard of design and respect local character'
8. 'Maintain and improve the viability of town and local centres'

stem from the fact that there is not enough information is available to assess how these objectives might be implemented. Hence, a more detailed assessment is not possible at this stage and will form part of the SA/Environmental Report instead.

There is some uncertainty regarding the core strategy objective 7 'Provide sufficient land and floor space to cater for full employment whilst not encouraging additional out commuting'. Although this objective could have a number of social and economic benefits, it is unclear to what extent it could yield environmental benefits. This will depend on the measures proposed by St Albans City and District Council to ensure this growth takes place in a sustainable manner. As soon as this information is available, it will feed into the SA/Environmental Report where it will be assessed again.

It is important to stress that this is an initial compatibility test. It is possible that more information will become available or that the objectives of the core strategy might change or be refined. In addition, a high level compatibility assessment, such as the one used here, always give rise to some uncertainty, since objectives and their impacts can be interpreted differently. It might not highlight cumulative or indirect impacts or possible conflicts which might arise on project level. These factors might lead to a different assessment in the SA/Environmental Report.

#### Consultation questions

**Q8:** Are there any other potential conflicts between the proposed SA/SEA objectives and the core strategy objectives that have not been identified in the compatibility assessment?

**Q9:** How could potential conflicts be addressed?

**Table 30: Compatibility matrix for SA/SEA objectives and core strategy key issues.**

Abridged SA/SEA Objectives	Abridged Core Strategy Objectives											
	1. Conserve and enhance the countryside and green belt	2. Channel developments into urbanised areas and meet the government target for developments on PDL	3. Address the need for more affordable housing	4. Reduce the need to travel by steering developments into locations accessible by more sustainable modes	5. Secure an improved and better integrated transport system	6. Promote a high standard of design and respects local character and encourages higher densities in the most accessible areas	7. Provide sufficient land and floor space to cater for full employment whilst not encouraging additional commuting	8. Maintain and improve the viability of town and local centres	9. Protect and enhance historical heritage	10. Meet local need through the provision of sufficient facilities	11. Protect and enhance landscape quality including sites of nature conservation	12. Secure the prudent use of natural resources and a reduction in pollution
1. To protect and enhance biodiversity	C	C	-	?	?	-	?	C	-	-	C	C
2. Maintain/enhance water quality and limit water consumption	C	?	-	-	-	?	?	-	-	-	-	-
3. Ensure new developments do not increase flood risk	-	?	?	-	-	?	?	-	-	-	-	-
4. Minimise the loss of valuable soils	C	C	?	-	-	C	?	C	-	-	C	-
5. Reduce the emissions of CO2 and other GHG gases	-	C	?	C	?	?	?	C	-	-	-	-
6. Ensure development is 'climate change proof'	-	?	?	?	-	?	?	?	-	-	-	-
7. Achieve good air quality, especially in urban areas	?	?	?	?	?	-	?	?	-	-	-	-
8. Maximise the use of previously developed land	-	C	?	C	-	C	?	?	-	?	C	C
9. To use natural resources efficiently	-	?	?	-	-	?	?	?	-	-	-	C
10. To maintain and enhance historic and cultural assets	-	?	?	-	-	C	?	?	C	-	-	-
11. Conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape	C	C	?	C	?	C	?	?	C	-	C	C
12. Encourage healthy lifestyles	C	C	?	C	?	C	?	C	-	C	C	-
13. To deliver more sustainable patterns of development	C	C	?	C	C	C	?	C	-	C	C	C
14. Promote equity & address social exclusion	-	-	C	-	C	-	-	-	-	C	-	-
15. Ensure everyone has access to good quality housing	-	-	C	-	-	C	-	?	-	-	-	-
16. Enhance community identity and participation	-	-	?	-	-	C	-	-	C	C	-	-
17. Reduce both crime and fear of crime	-	-	?	-	-	-	?	-	-	-	-	-
18. Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and growth	-	?	?	C	C	-	?	?	-	-	-	?
19. Promote wider prosperity and fairer access to services	-	-	?	C	C	-	?	-	-	C	-	-
20. Revitalise town centres	-	C	?	C	C	C	?	C	C	C	-	-

Legend		
C	Objectives are compatible	
?	Uncertainty over compatibility	
-	Objectives are not compatible	
-	No relationship between objectives	

## 5 Consultation and Next Steps

### 5.1 Consultation

For the purposes of complying with the SEA Regulations the following statutory consultees will be consulted on the Scoping Report:

- Environment Agency
- Countryside Agency
- English Nature
- English Heritage

To obtain a diverse and comprehensive range of responses on sustainability issues the views of a variety of organisations will be sought.

**Please send your responses to:**

**Alison Manning**

**Principal Planning Officer (Policy)**

**St Albans City & District Council**

**Civic Centre**

**St Peter's Street**

**St Albans**

**AL1 3JE**

**Email: [A.Manning@stalbans.gov.uk](mailto:A.Manning@stalbans.gov.uk)**

Responses received from the consultation exercise will be used to inform the next stages of the SA/SEA. The SA/Environmental Report will document how the Scoping Report responses have been taken into account.

#### **Consultation question**

**Q10:** How would your organisation like to be involved in the rest of this SA/SEA process?

## 5.2 Next Steps

### 5.2.1 Introduction

This section of the report sets out the subsequent stages of the SA/SEA. They are:

- Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing the effects of the plan;
- Stage C: Documenting the appraisal process in the SA/Environmental Report;
- Stage D: Consultation with the public and statutory bodies; and
- Stage E: Monitor the effects of the plan on the environment/sustainability.

Each of these stages has been summarised in the sections below.

### 5.2.2 Stage B: Assessment of the effects of the LDF alternatives

Stage B provides the first opportunity to examine the potential to meet sustainable objectives and satisfy individual criteria. The appraisal will ascertain the impacts of each of the Plan's alternatives as well as providing recommendations and suggestions for mitigation measures to be included, which could improve the sustainability performance of the alternatives under consideration.

Each of the options identified will be tested against the SA/SEA framework of objectives and indicators. This will help the assessors determine their performance in sustainability terms and identify their significant environmental effects. The process will be iterative with the assessors working closely with the plan makers to strengthen options as the assessment continues. The level of the assessment depends much on the level of detail provided by the plan makers. It is likely to vary between two extremes:

- At the strategic level, options will be assessed at a relatively broad scale using expert judgement, indicating which issues are likely to be of concern and what assumptions have been made regarding potential sites that may be developed under the particular options. The setting out of the assumptions made by the team will help to manage the uncertainty inherent in a strategic level assessment; and,
- At the site level the assessment may allow some quantification. i.e. the number of households that may experience increased noise, potential increases in traffic levels etc.

Regardless of the stage in the assessment (whether at the strategic or the site level), a judgement based approach to prediction that is transparent and auditable will be taken. This will wherever possible guided by pre-set assessment questions / indicators and evidence. A variety of tools will be used to aid assessment and these include:

- Participation of environmental groups;
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS); and
- Causal chain analysis.

The results will be presented in a matrix to ensure transparency. It is proposed that the Appraisal Framework, outlined in section 4.2 will provide the basis for predicting the effects of the alternatives which will involve comparing the alternatives with one another. This will describe changes in terms of their magnitude, their geographical scale, the time period over which they will occur, whether they are permanent or temporary, positive or negative, probable or improbable, frequent or rare, and whether or not there are cumulative and/or

synergistic effects. These criteria will be used to determine if each effect is considered significant both by itself and in conjunction with other plans and programmes.

For each significant effect identified, mitigation measures (including avoidance, offsetting and enhancement measures) will be suggested. The SA/Environmental Report will:

- Identify the need for mitigation for the strategy as a whole and will also suggest mitigation for specific sites if needed. However, the nature of mitigation is likely to be different at different stages. Mitigation of the strategy is likely to include provision of testing of new strategies and policies, whereas, mitigation for sites can include physical measures (noise barriers, landscaping etc);
- Consider measures to enhance positive outcomes. DPD options may provide opportunities for environmental and community enhancements. Mitigation, therefore, is often a case of changing policies rather than implementing physical measures on the ground; and,
- Consider that while mitigation measures should generally be directed towards the resource being affected or the action causing the cumulative effect, the concept of "no-net loss" may be an appropriate mitigation measure in response to cumulative effects. No-net loss requires that any resource disturbed from its pre-action condition be "replaced" with an area of equivalent capability to ensure that sustainable use of the resource is maintained.

It is envisaged that the appraisal results and subsequent SA/Environmental Report will supplement the Final DPDs.

#### **Consultation question**

**Q11:** Do you believe that the significant effects of the development plan documents can be identified using this approach?

**Q12:** Are there other/additional methodologies that could be used to identify the significant impacts of the development plan documents?

### **5.2.3 Stage C: Preparation of an Overarching Draft Environmental Report**

The SA/Environmental Report will should broadly follow the recommended structure as set out in the ODPM's guidance on the SEA Directive. The report will be made up of the following chapter headings as illustrated in Table 31.

**Table 31: Proposed sections of the SA/Environmental Report.**

<b>Section of report</b>	<b>Contents</b>
1. Summary and outcomes	1.1. Non-technical summary 1.2. Statement on the difference the process has made 1.3. How to comment on the report
2. Appraisal methodology	2.1. Approach adopted to the SA/SEA process 2.2. When the SA/SEA was carried out 2.3. Who carried out the SA/SEA 2.4. Who was consulted, when and how
3. Background	3.1. Purpose of the SA/SEA process and the SA/Environmental Report 3.2. Plan objectives and outline of contents 3.3. Compliance with the SEA regulations/guidance
4. Sustainability objectives, baseline and context	4.1. Links to other strategies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives 4.2. Description of the social, environmental and economic baseline characteristics and the predicted future baseline 4.3. Difficulties in collecting data and limitations of the data 4.4. The SA/SEA framework, including objectives, targets and indicators 4.5. Main social, environmental and economic issues and problems identified
5. Plan issues and options	5.1. Main strategic options consider and how they were identified 5.2. Comparison of the social, environmental and economic effects of the options 5.3. How social, environmental and economic issues were considered in choosing the preferred options 5.4. Other options considered, and why these were rejected 5.5. Proposed mitigation measures
6. Plan policies	6.1. Significant social, environmental and economic effects of the preferred policies 6.2. How social, environmental and economic problems were considered in developing the policies 6.3. Proposed mitigation measures 6.4. Uncertainties and risks
7. Implementation	7.1. Links to other tiers of plans and programmes and the project level (environmental impact assessment, design guidance, etc) 7.2. Proposals for monitoring

#### **5.2.4 Stage D: Consultation with the public and statutory bodies**

The SEA Regulations set specific requirements for consultation with the Statutory Environmental Bodies, the public and other interested parties (these could include NGO's, community groups and academia for example). The SA/Environmental Report will be made available for all these parties so that they can provide a response to the contents of the report.

A SA/SEA statement will be published with the final adopted DPD. The purpose of this statement is to update the environmental information available with the final plan in order to outline how the environmental assessment and consultation have influenced the final DPD.

#### **5.2.5 Stage E: Monitor the effects of the plan on the environment/sustainability**

The SEA Regulations include a requirement for the monitoring of "*the significant environmental effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action*" (regulations 17.1). The Environmental Report should provide "*a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring*" (schedule 2.9).

The development of a monitoring strategy will allow the actual effects of the DPDs to be tested against the predicted impacts, enabling significant problems to be identified and tackled over time, and environmental baseline information to be gathered for future plans. Some of the indicators set out in the Appraisal Framework and existing monitoring programmes might form the basis for the monitoring strategy, and will be linked to measuring progress towards the SA/SEA objectives. The proposed monitoring system and arrangements will be agreed with key stakeholders in terms of their current and future monitoring responsibilities and a programme for monitoring, with due consideration for how this will fit into future reviews of the DPDs.

## 6 Summary of Questions for Consultees

**Q1:** Do you think the LDF might impact on Natura 2000 sites? If so, on which sites and what might be the likely impacts?

**Q2:** Are there any other policies, plans or programmes (PPPs) that contain environmental protection objectives or identify issues that are not covered by this list of PPPs?

**Q3:** Are there any other issues or information related to the topics covered in section 2.3 that are relevant to St Albans' development plan documents and should be included?

**Q4:** Are there any potential interrelationships, cumulative or synergistic effects which should be considered in more detail?

**Q5:** Are there any other problems, opportunities or issues that are relevant to St Albans' development plan documents and have not been covered?

**Q6:** Where do you see the main issues in the area and which topics to you want see addressed with priority within the SA/SEA?

**Q7:** Do the SA/SEA objectives, criteria and indicators provide a reasonable framework through which the likely significant environmental effects of the development plan documents can be assessed?

**Q8:** Are there any other potential conflicts between the proposed SA/SEA objectives and the core strategy objectives that have not been identified in the compatibility assessment?

**Q9:** How could potential conflicts be addressed?

**Q10:** How would your organisation like to be involved in the rest of this SA/SEA process?

**Q11:** Do you believe that the significant effects of the development plan documents can be identified using this approach?

**Q12:** Are there other/additional methodologies that could be used to identify the significant effects of the development plan documents?

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## **Appendices**

### **Review of Other Related Policies, Plans and Programmes**

See volume 2.