

# Forest Plan Review 2001

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# Introduction

- Summary
- Introduction

# Summary

**1.1** This document reviews and updates the Watling Chase Forest Plan endorsed by the government in March 1995. It is written against the background of the audit of the Community Forest Programme undertaken by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR).

**1.2** This audit endorsed the Community Forest programme, and also provided the basis for setting targets for the next five years. Each Forest partnership was required to determine their local targets against 7 specific headings. Those for Watling Chase are set out below:

Five year targets for the seven key indicators

1. Creating well-designed woodland:

Number of new woodlands of at least 20h	2
New woodlands < 20ha planted adjacent to existing Woodlands < 20ha combined to give area > 20ha	1
Smaller woodlands adjacent to housing	10
Smaller woodlands adjacent to other woodlands	6
Smaller woodlands as part of recreational network	5
Smaller woodlands planted on damaged/reclaimed land	5

2. Securing access to, and good management of, existing woodlands which meet the same criteria above:

Hectares of woodland with new dedicated access 125ha

3. Creating and re-opening good quality walking/cycling/riding networks for leisure, recreation and/or commuting:

New access routes 30km

4. Securing involvement in Watling Chase from a wide range of local communities, especially those socially excluded from their environment:

Number of Events 100

5. Securing financial and in-kind investment from local businesses and external sources to support major restoration and recreation projects leading to environmental regeneration, and to develop a woodland economy:

Total target from commercial sponsorship, landfill tax, lottery, etc £300,000

6. Creating woodland on sites other than those in 1, where there are significant landscape, heritage and/or biodiversity gains:

Total five year target for woodland creation (para 1 and 6) 325 ha

7. Securing landscape, heritage and biodiversity benefits in the non-wooded parts of Watling Chase where opportunities are presented by new development or on agricultural or reclaimed land, including hedgerow restoration:

New CSS agreements secured on agricultural holdings 20  
New hedgerows planted 60km  
New habitats sites created 8

# Introduction

**2.1** This document reviews and updates the Watling Chase Forest Plan endorsed by the funding partners and by the Government in March 1995. Whilst the vision and timescale of the plan is 30 years, a review was required to 're-assess its content and direction in the light of changing circumstances.'

**2.2** Quite correctly the original Forest Plan was all-inclusive. The visions expressed within it were a consensus view held both by those who drafted it, and also by those who engaged in the very wide consultation which was taken on its content.

**2.3** The 1995 Forest Plan set the national and local context. It outlined a forest-wide vision with policies on community, landscape, planning and development, agriculture, forestry, nature conservation, archaeology and history, sport and recreation, arts and education. It described forest strategies for eight different landscape zones, and finally set out proposals for implementation and monitoring. In its draft form the plan had been subject to extensive public consultation during 1994, which influenced and fine-tuned the final Forest Plan. The illustrative visions in particular generated a good deal of public interest and debate on how the Community Forest concept could change the landscape in the different forest zones.

**2.4** Whilst the Forest Plan is the visionary blueprint for the 30 year period 1995-2025, implementation on a year on year basis is guided by a three year business planning process. The Forest Plan should also be considered a material consideration in the planning context. It is intended to prepare a Supplementary Planning Guidance to guide further the ways in which appropriate development within the Forest can contribute to the delivery of the Forest vision.

**2.5** Watling Chase Community Forest is unusual in not now having a dedicated team to implement the vision on behalf of the partners. In 1998, the delivery mechanism was discussed in depth by the funding partners and it was agreed that the wider partnership should be the main delivery agent, with the Project Director and his administrative support acting as central co-ordinator, catalyst and ambassador for Watling Chase, both locally and nationally.

**2.6** The plan review process was started early in 1999 by the Forest Director and project partnership. An issues paper was produced for comment by the funding partners. After some debate and with consideration to the very limited staff resources available, the Project Advisory Board decided to focus on specific topics. These included achievements to date, changes in the national and local policies and circumstances, the new landscape zones, the boundary issue and its impact on targets, and setting new targets to reflect the new opportunities and changes.

**2.7** As one of its actions, the 1995 Forest Plan set out the



need to influence government policy in order to encourage changes which would assist in the delivery of the Plan. Although there are many areas of policy still to be addressed, very many changes have occurred over the past five years. Some of these changes have been so profound that many of the Community Forest objectives have become Government policy. During the 1998 team and partnership review process, the Watling Chase partnership agreed to concentrate on delivering tree and woodland related initiatives. Within the changing policy context, it is now necessary to seize opportunities in other areas to assist the delivery of forest targets.

**2.8** The 1998 discussions within the sponsoring partnership concluded that there was a need to establish a priority on the delivery of land for tree planting. It also recommended that the responsibility for this delivery should rest with a wider partnership, and not with a Forest Team. Whilst these two recommendations are valid as the main focus, they do not take account of other work with which the partners are engaged, and which will contribute to the delivery of the Forest vision. Nor do they take account of changes in Government policy and emphasis. The objectives for Watling Chase Community Forest therefore remain those of the national programme, with the short-term focus on tree planting. This document addresses these objectives.

**2.9** The Forest Plan Review serves as a supplement to the 1995 Forest Plan, and endorses the vision set out within it. It is the intention that the Plan Review should set the agenda for the next decade, and make the objectives of the Watling Chase partnership accessible to all who might have need for the information.

# Context

- National Context
- Local Context



# National Context

- Introduction
- Aim and Objectives
- Current Policy framework
- Countryside Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Funding regimes
- Conclusion





# Introduction

**3.1** To many people the word 'forest' conjures up an image of dense, closely grown trees stretching as far as the eye can see. Eight hundred years ago, in mediaeval times, it meant something quite different. Then, the great forests of England were not only trees, but a magnificent mix of woods, heaths, farmland, wetlands, ponds and streams. Here also were settlements - hamlets, villages and small towns - where people lived and worked. Today, the concept of Community Forests is breathing new life into this ancient meaning of the word. This echo from our past is now set to become a signpost to a better future.

**3.2** Community Forests cover large areas around the edges of towns and cities. They are not continuous plantings of trees but a rich mosaic of landscape, within which land uses include farmland, woodland, villages, leisure enterprises, nature areas and public open space.

**3.3** The Forests for the Community programme, which consists of 12 Community Forests in England, is now over five years into implementation. Established by the Countryside Agency (then the Countryside Commission) and the Forestry Commission in partnership with a wide range of local partners, much has been achieved in the first few years. In total over 6,000 hectares of new woodland planting has been created, along with numerous benefits to the landscape and to local people. Importantly, Community Forests have become a mainstay of environmentally led regeneration and sustainability.

**3.4** The 12 Community Forests are:

- Forest of Avon around Bristol
- Forest of Mercia in southern Staffordshire
- Great North Forest in south Tyne and Wear and north-east Durham
- Great Western Community Forest around Swindon
- Greenwood Community Forest north of Nottingham
- Forest of Marston Vale to the south of Bedford
- Mersey Forest on Merseyside
- Red Rose Forest in Greater Manchester
- South Yorkshire Forest near Sheffield
- The Tees Forest around Cleveland



*Community Forests of England*

- Thames Chase to the east of London
- Watling Chase in south Hertfordshire/north London

**3.5** Each Community Forest has a non-statutory plan, approved by Government, which describes the proposals for developing that forest over the next 30 years and guides its implementation.

**3.6** In each forest the Countryside Agency, the Forestry Commission and 58 local authorities have appointed dedicated project teams to oversee implementation. Many other national and local organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors have become involved and are now supporting the partnerships. All are valued partners, critical to the success of the forests.

# Aim and Objectives

**3.7** The aim of the national programme of Community Forests is to achieve major environmental improvements around towns and cities, creating areas rich in wildlife, with associated provision for access, leisure and education, thereby making them more attractive places in which to live, work and enjoy leisure time.

**3.8** The corporate objectives agreed by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food which each Community Forest has adopted are:



- To regenerate the environment of the Green Belt and equivalent areas, where it is public policy to keep it open, and help to ensure that it is permanently green and open.
- To improve the landscape of the area, including reclamation of derelict land, to create a visually exciting and functionally diverse environment.
- To increase opportunities for sport and recreation, including artistic and cultural events, and access.
- To protect areas of high quality landscape or historical or archaeological interest.
- To protect sites of nature conservation value and create new opportunities for nature conservation.
- To provide new opportunities for educational use of the area, and ensure that the mosaic of habitats in the forest can be used for the full range of environmental education needs of the surrounding schools. Also to ensure that urban schools are not disadvantaged in meeting the needs of the National Curriculum.
- To protect the best agricultural land and increase opportunities for farm diversification elsewhere in accordance with Government agricultural and local planning policies.
- To establish a supply of timber and other woodland products.
- To achieve a high level of local community commitment to the concept and involvement in its implementation.
- To give public and private sector confidence in the long-term prospects for the area and to provide a proper base for investment.
- To improve the environment near housing and local industry and to increase the value of properties and businesses.
- To seek private sector support to implement the forest and to invest in leisure and other relevant service sectors.
- To create jobs in the new woodland industries, both

management of woodland and use of the raw materials.

- To create jobs in the leisure industry developed in and around the Community Forest.
- To sustain other local jobs by providing an outstanding environment as a comparative economic advantage over competitor areas.
- To complement the Government's priorities for inner cities, by providing for associated leisure and open space needs at the physically closest locations.
- To remain flexible in the light of changes, such as in the leisure market.

**3.9** In 1998 the DETR carried out an evaluation of the first five years of the Forests for the Community programme. The conclusions were positive and confirmed the success of the first five years of implementation. It also confirmed that the objectives remain valid.

**3.10** Existing tree cover within the 12 forests at the start of the programme averaged 6.9%, with an average of 170 hectares of woodland planted each year. The aim is to increase tree cover to about 30% over about 30 years. This implies a significant increase in tree planting. In the first five years, 6,000 hectares were planted throughout the 12 forests.

# Current policy framework

**3.11** As the Community Forests develop, so too does the policy framework which embraces them. Community Forests have pioneered an approach to regeneration through community-based partnerships that give them life well into the 21st century. They are well placed to respond to future policy changes across a broad spectrum of interests, including environmental, economic and social.

**3.12** Internationally, the Rio Earth Summit of 1992 acknowledged the essential nature of forestry for the well being of the planet and marked the first ever global agreement on forest principles. The need to make future development sustainable was clearly recognised. Community Forests embrace the government's four objectives for sustainable development:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources; and
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

**3.13** Nationally, the Government has begun a programme of devolution in Scotland and Wales, and regionalisation in the creation of Regional Development Agencies in England. There has also been an increasing emphasis on 'sustainability' as a fundamental attribute of government-funded regeneration and development programmes. The Community Forests offer the Regional Development Agencies a tried and tested model that combines a strategic mechanism for delivering environmental improvement alongside sustainable economic regeneration.

**3.14** Community Forests operate in a climate of Common Agricultural Policy reform through Agenda 2000 which is designed to pave the way for European Union enlargement and to address international trade concerns by bringing EU farm prices nearer to world market prices. This simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy is a further step towards decoupling farm support from production, and pave the way for a new "second pillar of the CAP" designed to promote environmental action, forestry and rural development.

**3.15** The introduction of the new Rural Development Regulation provides the framework for making rural development a "second pillar" of the CAP as more resources are diverted from mainstream CAP support. The Regulation is a small step in the transition towards fully integrating agricultural policy with rural policy to meet the environmental, social and economic needs of rural areas. The Regulation brings together nine separate measures into a single framework which provides the foundation on which to build a long term, integrated, rural policy, linking agriculture, forestry and support for the wider rural economy.



# Countryside Agency

**3.16** On 1 April 1999 the Countryside Commission became the Countryside Agency, merging with elements of the Rural Development Commission. The Countryside Agency is the new statutory body working:

- to conserve and enhance the countryside;
- to promote social equity and economic opportunity for the people who live there; and
- to help everyone, wherever they live, to enjoy this national asset.

**3.17** The Countryside Commission's publication England's Trees and Woods (1993) expresses the Agency's overall policy and remains valid as a context for increasing tree cover in England, especially through the principles of multi-purpose forestry embraced by the Community Forests.

**3.18** The Countryside Agency's objectives cover the full breadth of sustainable development - social, economic and environmental - and the Agency intends to use Community Forests to test innovative approaches. The Urban and Rural White Papers published in 2000 are very important in setting the context for this work. The broad framework of the Countryside Agency will allow it to make full use of the Community Forests as test-beds for a wide range of policies.

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# Forestry Commission

**3.19** The Government decided following devolution that the Forestry Commission would continue to be the department with responsibility for forestry throughout Great Britain. The Forestry Commission is now organised to meet the requirements of devolution with structures in place to serve the needs of England, Scotland and Wales, while drawing upon central resources where needed. These arrangements allow the Forestry Commission to develop policies tailored to the particular needs and circumstances of each country. In England this will involve building on the England Forestry Strategy, launched in December 1998.

**3.20** The England Forestry Strategy sets out the Government's strategic priorities and programmes over the next five to ten years. It demonstrates the strengthened commitment to social forestry in England as well as focusing on areas of greatest opportunity and need. The strategy has four key programmes: Forestry for Rural Development; Forestry for Economic Regeneration; Forestry for Recreation, Access and Tourism and Forestry for the Environment and Conservation. The delivery of these programmes can be greatly assisted through the Community Forest programme and the Forests will remain major partners with the Forestry Commission in achieving these goals. The Community Forests are therefore seen as a major delivery mechanism to achieve large scale, multi-purpose, sustainable forestry where it is most required.

**3.21** Forest Enterprise, together with the Forestry Commission, have set up the Land Regeneration Unit, with the aim of greater involvement in restoring derelict land, targeting, where possible, within the Community Forest areas. This innovative approach is opening up a significant number of opportunities where substantial areas of new woodlands are already planned or under way.

**3.22** The Countryside Agency and the Forestry Commission remain committed to the Forests for the Community programme. Their roles as national lead partners are undiminished.



# Funding Regimes

**3.23** Creating Community Forests is not dependent upon large-scale changes in land ownership. The main approach is to encourage farmers, landowners and businesses to consider the opportunities which the forests might present, while at the same time recognising the essential role that productive and profitable farming will continue to have for the landscape, wildlife and recreation within the community forest areas.

**3.24** Finance for the development of Community Forests comes from a number of sources. Grants from the Forestry Commission, the Countryside Agency, MAFF, the DETR and other bodies help with planting, management, restoration of derelict land and provision of facilities for sport and recreation. Further money comes from local government and industry. Private investment will be attracted from companies who see a market potential such as those for wood products or in the leisure sector. Resources from the voluntary sector have an equally valuable role. Sound business partnerships are the key for those responsible for planning, developing and managing a Community Forest.

**3.25** Since the establishment of the programme, Community Forests have drawn in substantial funds from other sources such as the National Lottery, Europe, landfill tax, business sponsorship, developers' contributions for projects on the ground, and donations from charitable trusts for land acquisitions and tree planting. The gearing ratio, for example, of the Countryside Agency's expenditure on Community Forest teams and project work is excellent. The forests are well placed to make the most of new funding opportunities, offering strategic vision, local, regional and national partnerships and a proven record of delivery.



# Conclusion

**3.26** Community Forests will take 30 years to mature, perhaps 30 years to develop, but the improvements are already tangible. We will not reap all the advantages in one lifetime, but significant benefits will flow from the early years. Community Forests will be a legacy for the future, to be used, cherished and enjoyed by our children and our children's children.

# Local Context

- [Achievements 1995 - 2000](#)
- [Structure and Implementation](#)
- [Picture Gallery](#)

# Achievements 1995 - 2000

**4.1** The Watling Chase Community Forest Plan gained Government approval in March 1995. A condition of that approval was that certain monitoring data should be collected, and a report published each year in which the figures for the individual forests would be set out, together with the overall total for the programme.

**4.2** These figures demonstrate the considerable achievements of the partnership since that time. Those relating to Watling Chase Community Forest between 1995 and March 2000 are summarised below:



- 150 hectares new planting - representing 54% of the target for these years. However, between the creation of the Forest in 1991 and the beginning of 1995 additional planting occurred, much of it initiated by the sponsoring partners as a statement of commitment to the project. Therefore between 1991 and 2000 a total of 222 hectares of planting had been achieved, not far short of the 275 hectares set as the target by the end of that year (80.6%). These figures represent a significant increase in woodland planting over earlier periods.
- 1,174 hectares existing woodland brought into management. This represents 91% of the existing woodland within the Forest area.
- 843 hectares existing woodland have been opened for recreation and access.
- 86 hectares of non-woodland opened for recreation and access.
- 106 kilometres of footpaths, bridleways and cycleways have been opened up or improved for recreation and access.
- 306 hectares of non woodland habitat created or brought into management.
- 19.3 kilometres of hedgerow created or brought into management

**4.3** These figures demonstrate considerable success within the first five years of implementation. They also reflect the massive community support and activity which took place over the same period. The photographs within these pages and demonstrate the wide range of community and educational activities which were stimulated and made possible through the wider Watling Chase partnership.

# Structure and Implementation

**4.4** The Review of the Watling Chase implementation carried out in 1998 proposed a number of significant changes to the administrative structure of WCCF, and the way in which it was to be delivered.

**4.5** Acknowledging the importance of the county, borough and district planning system, a Project Advisory Board was established to provide an overall steer to, and monitoring structure for the implementation of the Forest vision.

**4.6** Represented on this Board are the Heads of Planning or their departmental equivalents from each of the sponsoring authorities, together with representatives from land owning and educational interests. The organisations and their respective representatives are set out in the table below:

## Members of the Project Advisory Board

Authority/Organisation	Officer
Countryside Agency	Director - East of England Region
Forestry Commission	Conservator - Eastern Region
Hertfordshire County Council	Assistant Director - Environment
Hertsmere Borough Council	Head of Planning
St Albans City and District Council	Assistant Director Policy and Planning
Welwyn Hatfield Council	Head of Planning Policy
National Farmers Union	Representative
Country Landowners Association	Representative
University of Hertfordshire	Head of Environmental Sciences

**4.7** The Project Advisory Board (PAB) meets quarterly, and fulfils the role of a Steering Group to guide the policy direction of the Forest. The PAB is essentially the owner of the business plan which identifies the action to be undertaken to ensure delivery of the Forest Plan. The Board will ensure that targets are set, and monitor performance. The members of the Board will also act as ambassadors for the Forest, both within their own organisations, and beyond.

**4.8** A Project Development Group (PDG) informs the work of the PAB. The Group includes representatives from those organisations that form the PAB, and other organisations whose work is contributing to the delivery of the Forest vision. These include the Environment Agency, Highways Agency, Countryside Management Service, Groundwork Hertfordshire, and the University of Hertfordshire, together with private sector input from Lafarge Redland plc.

**4.9** The PDG also meets quarterly. Its members independently or collectively develop a range of projects to take forward the Forest objectives, determine priorities for these projects, and make recommendations to the PAB. The PDG is then responsible for taking forward approved projects, and reports back on progress to the PAB.

**4.10** This structure ensures that the full partnership plays a part in the development of priorities, and works to a common agenda, whilst fulfilling their own. The synergy of the group adds also to its capacity to secure funding for the various projects it brings forward.

**4.11** The Watling Chase Project Director and administrative support act as the secretariat to both the PAB and the PDG. The Project Director is



*1,174 hectares existing woodland brought into management*



*843 hectares existing woodland open for recreation and access*



*86 hectares of non-woodland open for recreation and access*

**FOOTPATH**



*106 kilometres of footpaths, bridleways and cycleways opened or improved*



*306 hectares of non-woodland habitat created or brought*

responsible for the Forest Plan and documents associated with it, and also for ensuring that the strategic context is in place, within which projects are developed.

**4.12** The Project Director will act as the catalyst between and within partner organisations, ensuring that strategic projects are brought forward, and identifying funding to achieve these projects. It is also the role of the Director to establish and maintain links with the national programme, and partners derived from it.

*into management*



*19.3 kilometres of  
hedgerow created or  
brought into  
management*



# Picture Gallery



# Landscape

- Boundary Endorsement and Two New Landscape Zones
- Landscape and Landscape Character
- Landscape Character Zones - Map
- Boundary Endorsement and Two New Landscape Zones - Map

# Boundary Endorsement and Two New Landscape Zones

**5.1** The consultation on the original draft of the Forest Plan suggested the inclusion of two new areas into the Forest. These were approved by the steering committee in late 1994. However, the time available for the completion of the Forest Plan did not allow for the additional landscape appraisals and cost benefit analysis to be included in the document to be submitted to Government. Nevertheless, since March 1995, the sponsoring partnership has operated within the wider Forest area. It is this 72 square mile area which appears in the County Structure Plan, and in those District Plans which have been modified since 1995. This Plan Review is therefore also the opportunity to endorse this position.



**5.2** The map shown in the 1995 Forest Plan illustrates the original Forest area, together with three potential future boundary extensions. These were proposed during the 1994 public consultation process, and the two referred to above (St Albans/Hatfield and Bushey) were agreed by the then steering group. However, a consensus was not reached on the non-urban part of the third area to the north of Potters Bar. A minor change in the boundary around urban Potters Bar to be consistent with the Hertsmere Borough boundary, was agreed.



*Hatfield Aerodrome - Pic by Aerofilm.*

**5.3** There is a consensus both within the sponsoring partnership, and within the wider community, with regard to the larger Community Forest boundary. There is therefore not a local issue in relation to the revised Community Forest boundary, since it is this area which is already within the public perception.

**5.4** Nor is there a problem in relation to the planning documents which have been developed, consulted and now become statutory instruments since the Forest Plan was approved. In all cases the text and the accompanying maps or key plans define the larger area. These are listed under the section dealing with statutory planning documents relating to the Community Forest.

**5.5** In addition, work has been undertaken on the landscape survey of the two extension areas. Information therefore exists on the landscape character of these areas which will serve to inform future decisions on them.

**5.6** The one outstanding issue relates to the cost benefit analysis of the wider Community Forest. It is suggested that, for the additional area between StAlbans and Hatfield, the work undertaken for the development relating to the Hatfield Aerodrome site is extensive and in great detail. It is unlikely that any further study will add to this body of work. Since the development of this site will provide a benefit both in economic and in environmental terms, the net gain to the Community Forest will be positive.

**5.7** The extension to the south contains the urban area of Bushey, together with significant open space which acts as a buffer to Bushey, Watford, Stanmore and Greater London. Much of this area is golf course. Of the remaining open land, a significant proportion comprises the Merry Hill farm site, which was acquired by the Woodland Trust with grant aid from the Countryside Commission. About 40% of this site has now been

planted, and the social and environmental benefits are already being enjoyed. The benefits of this extension are quite clearly positive.

**5.8** It is therefore argued that the time and expense needed to conduct a cost benefit analysis of the extended area of the Community Forest would not provide additional useful information to inform the delivery of the Forest Plan. The Forest Plan Review therefore endorses the two additional areas to Watling Chase Community Forest as shown on the map in the 1995 Forest Plan.

**5.9** In order to address the need for landscape assessments of these extension areas, a supplement to the Forest Plan has been produced, and published in parallel with the Forest Plan Review. This supplement sets out the landscape character of the areas, and the future visions for them. As with the original Forest Plan, this work was undertaken with considerable input from community consultation.

**5.10** The extension does have implications for the overall targets, and also for the targets of the relevant landscape zones, and those adjacent to them. These are discussed further in the following chapter.



Gobions Ridge	392	36	356	45	12.6%	20%	71	26
Aldenham Plateau	2,140	585	1,555	104	6.7%	19%	295	191
South Mimms & Arkley Plateau	3,061	756	2,305	101	4.4%	30%	692	591
North London River Valleys	2,235	703	1,532	220	14.4%	16%	245	25
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>18,848</b>	<b>4,857</b>	<b>13,991</b>	<b>1,689</b>	<b>12.01%</b>	<b>26%*</b>	<b>3,619</b>	<b>1,929*</b>

\* This does not include amenity and urban tree and woodland planting, which would bring the woodland cover over the whole of the Community Forest area to over 30%.



# Landscape Character Zones - Map



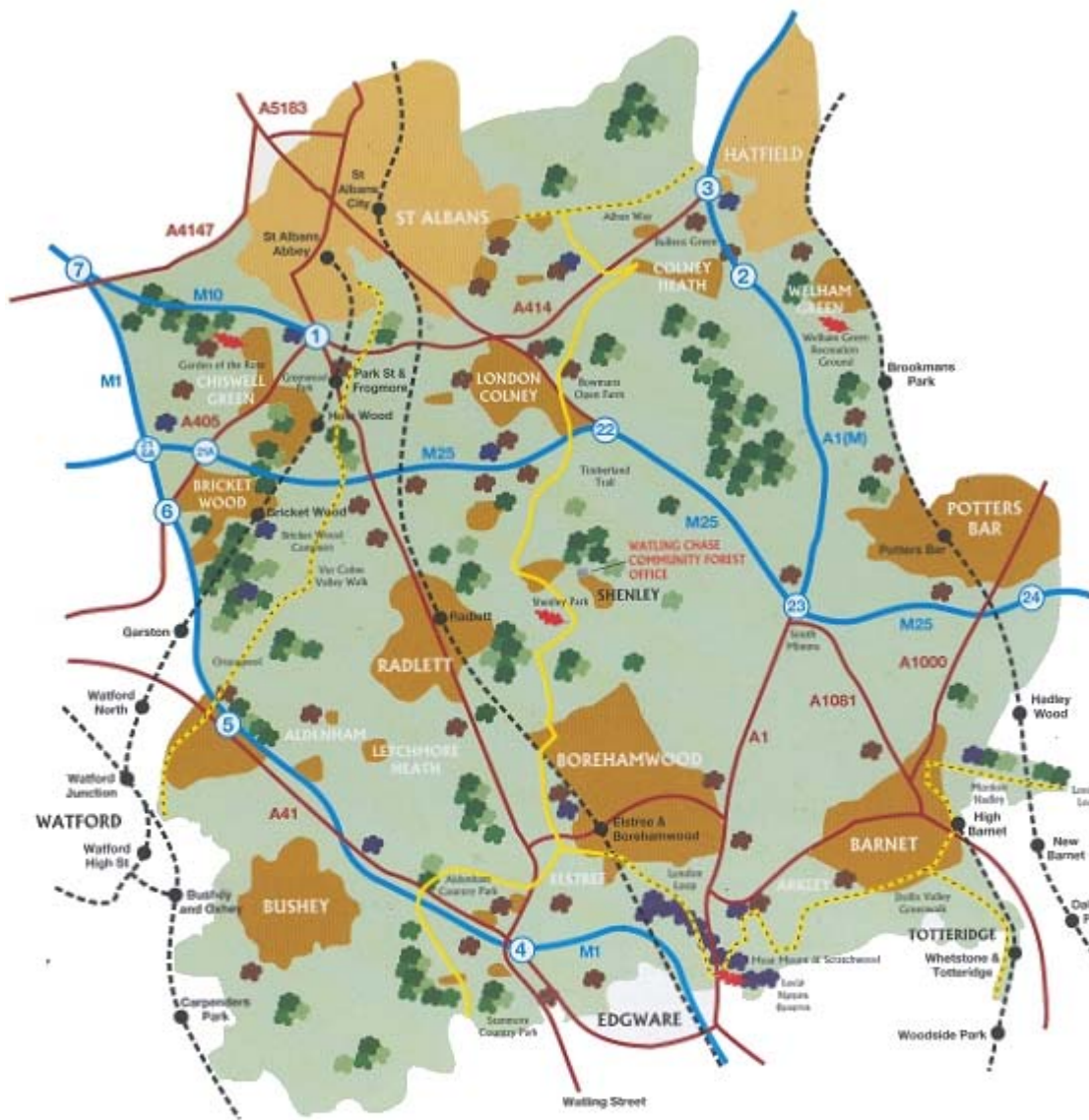


# Landscape Character Zones - Map





# Boundary Endorsement and Two New Landscape Zones - Map



## Watling Chase Community Forest

- |                                   |                                                   |                                         |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Countryside                       | Existing woodland                                 | Railway                                 |
| Urban areas                       | New woodlands planted since 1991                  | Motorway                                |
| Urban areas outside Watling Chase | Existing woodlands now under management agreement | Main Road                               |
|                                   | Family Tree Scheme Initiative                     | Waymarked Paths (existing and proposed) |
|                                   |                                                   | Existing routes                         |

# Changing Policy Background

- Introduction
- CAP Reforms and Rural Development Regulations
- England's Forestry Strategy
- A joint accord between the Forestry Commission and England's Community Forests
- Other Policy issues
- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Energy Crops

# Introduction

**7.1** The potential to realise WCCF objectives has been greatly increased by a series of policy changes and other initiatives. These are briefly outlined below.

**7.2** Although many other activities will contribute to the delivery of the forest vision, it is still tree planting which is the main focus. The broader target of 30% woodland cover, which was strongly endorsed by public consultation during the development of the Forest Plan, was confirmed by the sponsoring partnership during the 1998 review of the Forest Plan delivery.

**7.3** What has changed is the policy and economic context within which this target will be delivered. These changes have come about from a number of sources. The downturn in the agricultural economy has changed the relative financial position between agriculture and forestry. Changes in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) have created the potential for structural changes which will favour the adoption of Agri-Environmental schemes and forestry.

**7.4** Much of the philosophy and many of the concepts expressed within the Forest Plan have since become main line thinking, and indeed are now encapsulated within many elements of Government policy. At the same time there are many structural changes which have been put into place or are in the process of being so. These factors together will greatly reinforce the culture within which the Forest Plan is to be delivered.



# CAP Reforms and Rural Development Regulations

**7.5** Although the end result of the Agenda 2000 negotiations was a disappointment to the British Government, a number of changes were agreed which will provide the basis for significant alterations in the next round. Perhaps of most importance is the start of the process to move away from support linked to agricultural production, and to look instead at the full range of benefits which society as a whole might expect from the rural support measures.

**7.6** The whole Agenda 2000 process aimed to take a holistic view of the rural economy and related social and environmental considerations. It recognised that the needs of a rural area were much broader than the direct support for food production.

**7.7** The CAP reform negotiations were being finalised during the period of an unprecedented collapse in the fortunes of British agriculture. They were also being completed in the knowledge of the timetable for the World Trade talks. It was known that there would be a resistance from the WTO to any unfair competition that might be associated with support mechanisms linked to production.

**7.8** As the result of the Agenda 2000 agreements, member states were required to produce a national Regional Development Regulation (RDR) for submission to the EU by the end of 1999. The UK Government achieved this deadline, and published its RDR document in February 2000. For England, the document contains a national chapter setting out the overall framework, together with regional chapters.

**7.9** The East of England Regional Chapter of the England Rural Development Plan (ERDP) sets out an aspiration statement which ties in with the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy. The statement agreed by the Regional Planning Group reads:

*"To achieve sustainable and thriving rural economies, and to protect and enhance the natural and cultural heritage characterised by generally low lying farmland and coastal features, in order to strengthen the distinctive character and economy of the East of England"*

**7.10** The ERDP offers increased opportunities for funding for relevant initiatives within Watling Chase.



# England's Forestry Strategy

**7.11** The Government's Strategy for Forestry in England was published in December 1998. It sets out for the first time the forward projection of the government's aims for woodland expansion and development, together with a series of actions for their delivery.

**7.12** The Strategy is based on two main aims of forestry policy:

- The sustainable management of our existing woods and forests
- A continued steady expansion of our woodland area to provide more benefits for society and our environment.

**7.13** the delivery of the aims is identified within four clear programmes:

- Forestry for rural development
- Forestry for economic regeneration
- Forestry for recreation, access and tourism
- Forestry for the environment and conservation

**7.14** A set of actions is identified within these programmes. Some of these actions will be undertaken by the Forestry Commission or others, and will have a direct impact on the way in which Watling Chase Community Forest will be delivered. There are other actions which closely mirror the aim and objectives of Watling Chase itself, and will be delivered by its wider partnership. All of the action points are of relevance to the realisation of the Watling Chase vision.

**7.15** The strategy spells out the priorities for woodland creation, and the incentive changes which will occur. The key target areas are:

- the creation of larger woodlands where they can bring greater benefit
- the creation of woodland in the urban fringe
- the restoration of former industrial land
- reversing the fragmentation of ancient woodland

**7.16** The strategy explicitly states that it will continue to support the Community Forest programme. This commitment is within the Recreation, Access and Tourism programme in which it identifies the wish to develop opportunities for recreation close to people's homes. Within this context the Government clearly identifies woods and forests as a key element of their overall policy to improve the quality and availability of access to the countryside. It is made clear within their Rural Development Programme, that within Community Forest areas there is a relevance for smaller woodlands where these can be seen to make a significant





contribution to local biodiversity, amenity, environmental health and sustainable development.

# A Joint Accord between the Forestry Commission and England's Community Forests

**7.17** Re-enforcing the changing agenda expressed in the previous section, a Joint Accord has been published between the Forestry Commission and England's Community Forests. This describes how the Commission and the Forests will work together to meet shared objectives. The six major priorities are set out in paragraphs 7.18 to 7.23.



## Creating woodlands on the urban fringe

**7.18** A priority of the England Forestry Strategy is to create new woodlands that bring the greatest benefit to the largest number of people. These woodlands should maximise public access, establish new landscapes, support urban regeneration and where possible help to integrate town and country. England's Community Forests are focused on the countryside closest to where people live - the urban fringe. They have a primary role in restructuring and enhancing these areas to improve the health, well being and quality of life of local communities.

## Restoring former industrial land

**7.19** Forestry has an important role to play in reclaiming derelict, degraded and neglected land to a sustainable end use as well as the long-term restoration of active mineral workings. The revitalisation of such areas will deliver economic, social and environmental benefits. Community Forests contain significant areas of such land and reclamation will both improve the landscape and create new opportunities for access, recreation, habitat creation and sustainable economic investment.

## Reversing the fragmentation of ancient woodlands

**7.20** A priority of the England Forestry Strategy is to reverse the fragmentation of our heritage of valuable ancient woodlands. Management of existing woodland and the planting of new native woodlands will also make a significant contribution to local Biodiversity Action Plans. By their nature England's Community Forests focus on those landscapes which are historically low in tree cover. The conservation and management of these remaining woodlands is a key priority to maintain their landscape and ecological value and provide a foundation for woodland expansion and linkage.

## Creating larger woodlands

**7.21** It is important to the long-term sustainability and environmental diversity of our woodlands as well as future wood processing and market infrastructure, that we encourage the creation of large-scale woodlands. This will enhance the social and environmental benefits that they offer. It is agreed that the full benefits of urban forestry will only be realised through the creation of large areas of woodlands. England's Community Forests will establish networks of large woodlands maximising

their recreational, ecological and economic potential.

## **Gaining public confidence and support**

**7.22** As a major national resource, it is vital that people understand and appreciate the environmental, social and economic value of forests and woodlands as well as having the opportunity to be involved in their planning, management and enjoyment. The concept of community involvement through environmental education, arts and cultural activity and environmental volunteering is fundamental to the creation and future management of England's Community Forests.

## **Enhancing the economic value of our forest resource**

**7.23** The England Forestry Strategy emphasises the importance of enhancing the quality and sustainability of our existing woodland resource. This must be achieved by working with landowners and managers to encourage the development of new marketing initiatives and improved management systems. England's Community Forests will play a significant role in regional regeneration, securing economic investment and promoting job creation through the establishment of a sustainable woodland resource on which to develop viable timber, recreation and leisure enterprises. The benefits that England's Community Forests can contribute to regeneration programmes are already acknowledged.

# Other Policy Issues

## Sustainability

**7.24** The government is committed to sustainable development, and in 1999 it produced a sustainability strategy. It has declared that it will use the strategy as the framework to guide its policies.

**7.25** The delivery of Community Forest objectives will contribute to the delivery of the objectives set out within the Sustainable Development Strategy.

### **7.26** Sustainable Development Objectives

- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone. Everyone should share in the benefits of increased prosperity and a clean and safe environment. We have to improve access to services, tackle social exclusion, and reduce the harm to health caused by poverty, poor housing, unemployment and pollution. Our needs must not be met by treating others, including future generations and people elsewhere in the world, unfairly.
- Effective protection of the environment. We must act to limit global environmental threats, such as climate change; to protect human health and safety from hazards such as poor air quality and toxic chemicals; and to protect things which people need or value, such as wildlife, landscapes and historic buildings.
- Prudent use of natural resources. This does not mean denying ourselves the use of non-renewable resources like oil and gas, but we do need to make sure that we use them efficiently and that alternatives are developed to replace them in due course. Renewable resources, such as water, should be used in ways that do not endanger the resource or cause serious damage or pollution.
- Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment, so that everyone can share in high living standards and greater job opportunities. The UK is a trading nation in a rapidly changing world. For our country to prosper, our business must produce the high quality goods and services that consumers throughout the world want, at prices they are prepared to pay. To achieve that, we need a workforce that is equipped with the education and skills for the 21st century. And we need businesses ready to invest, and an infrastructure to support them.

# Biodiversity Action Plan

**7.27** The Rio Earth Summit in 1992 has been followed by a series of other international meetings, not least those at Kyoto and Lisbon. The former was important in the agreements made on a broad spectrum of environmental measures, and the latter focused more on forestry.

**7.28** The agreements and commitments generated by these meetings will have a significant effect on the way in which society as a whole operates. This in turn will have a relevance to the way in which the Forest Vision is achieved. Not least of the actions generated from these meetings have been the National Biodiversity Action Plans. The production of 'A 50-year Vision for the Wildlife and Natural Habitats of Hertfordshire - a Local Biodiversity Action Plan' is a significant step forward and takes forward the surveys referred to within the Forest Plan, and proposes specific actions.

**7.29** The Action Plans within the Biodiversity Plan were signed by the various partners in April 1999. These will be used to guide the responses to be made on the re-targeting of Countryside Stewardship. The habitat survey, which was developed in association with this plan, will identify the sites of particular interest in this context. It is intended to use this information to develop a whole area plan in association with landowners. This moves away from the whole farm plan concept into an attempt to develop a wider environmental structure, which will in turn be used to guide the respective landowners in the way in which they prepare Stewardship applications, should they so wish.

**7.30** The value of some of the degraded sites for nature conservation is well recognised within the Community Forest. Watling Chase will be developing a detailed assessment and prioritising of sites with a view to establishing a long-term vision for the restoration of the mineral sites, the order in which this is achieved and the way in which it is taken forward. This strategy will aim to maximise the environmental potential of all the sites within the area.

**7.31** The assessment work will also look at the river corridors and combine any needs for buffering along these corridors with the need to develop habitats for specific species. For example, the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust study on otters provides information on the need to develop quiet wooded spots, which will provide lay-up sites for otters, and therefore will provide the habitat which might in the long-term be used by the otters as they move into the area.

**7.32** Aside from the human selection of tree types, nature itself is making adjustments. This provides an additional rationale for the establishment of environmental corridors, which will allow and assist species migration.

**7.33** The political pressure to look for development on brownfield sites also has an implication for biodiversity. The fact that the old mineral sites have a much richer ecology than their surroundings has been referred to elsewhere. Watling Chase is taking aboard this fact. It is essential in seeking land to fulfil tree planting targets, that a similar energy is also applied to seeking opportunities for other environmental protection and enhancement. Indeed it is essential that those environmental



bodies which currently see the Forest as a potential threat should be persuaded that it is in fact a major opportunity.



# Energy Crops

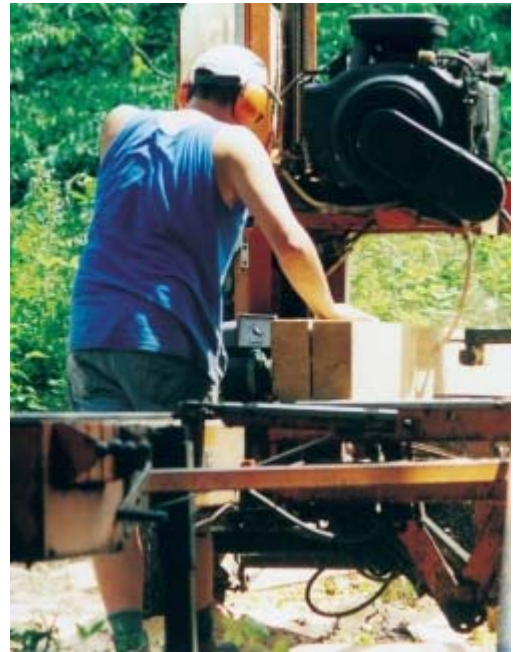
**7.34** Government policy is set out in Department of Energy Paper 55 - 'Renewable Energy in the UK: The Way Forward'. The UK has now signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change which commits all developed country parties to take measures aimed at returning emissions of each greenhouse gas to their 1990 levels by 2000. The Environment White Paper 'This Common Inheritance' published in September 1990, described the Government's strategy for limiting CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gas emissions.

**7.35** The Government wishes to encourage the production of non-food crops and renewable energy. In particular, short rotation coppice has significant potential. Annexes to PPG22 give advice on wood fuel, and on the combustion and anaerobic digestion of farm waste and slurry, including the planning implications of generation facilities.

## Wood as a Renewable Energy Source

**7.36** The acceptance of wood as a biomass resource is already being demonstrated in a number of large scale schemes. True sustainability will be achieved with small units supplied from local sources. There are a number of potential sites within the Community Forest where sustainable energy production could be achieved. For example, many of the schools within Watling Chase are immediately on the urban rural boundary, and could be supplied with biomass from the arable land to which they are adjacent.

**7.37** In addition, developments at the Hatfield Aerodrome site, and housing development at Napsbury or Harperbury, should be explored to further these objectives.



# Land for Tree Planting

**8.1** Although a substantial area has been planted within Watling Chase since 1991, it is quite clear that the lack of land availability is the main restraint on target achievement, certainly in the short term. Earlier sections within this Review have drawn attention to a range of policy changes which have the potential to change the financial and social culture within which the programme is operating. It is expected that some of these changes will, in due course, release land for additional planting. The main areas within which this might occur are discussed below.

## Local Authority Land

**8.2** Approximately a quarter of the area of Community Forest is in local authority ownership. This land is held for a number of reasons ranging from school grounds and school properties to commercial, agriculture, recreation and strategic considerations. During 1999 a review of Hertfordshire County Council's Rural Estate resulted in the production of an Environmental Management Plan for that part of the estate within the Community Forest. This identified a number of potential opportunities for additional tree planting. It also identified areas of importance within the context of the Biodiversity Action Plan, opportunities to increase public access into the countryside, and also ways in which environmental improvements might bring additional revenue resources to those farming the land.

## Agricultural Land

**8.3** The main financial return from 65% of the surface area of Watling Chase is from agriculture. As stated above, a certain proportion of this land will be in local authority ownership, but the decisions made on its management will be little different from that for private sector held land. Financial and political changes are likely to greatly influence the way in which land owners and land occupiers face the future. It is hoped that forestry and other diversification will provide one mechanism by which this landed interest will be able to maintain their financial security.

## Mineral Extraction

**8.4** An active commercial operation in aggregates exists within the Community Forest, and substantial new sites are being opened up or being prepared for such an operation. There are therefore sites which will be working over the next twenty years, but will nevertheless contribute to the new landscape of the Forest. There are also sites which have recently been completed where the after use has not yet been determined. And there are also sites, infilled some years ago, many of which will need remedial work. Each of these areas will require a different approach, but they collectively represent a significant potential for increasing woodland cover. There should be a presumption towards forestry rather than agriculture in the restoration of these sites.

## Planning Pressures

**8.5** The demand for housing and the way in which land for it



might be delivered is a strongly contested issue. The Community Forest Plan is not a mechanism by which unwelcome development will be allowed on the promise of additional tree planting. Planning guidance, and the policies within Local Plans quite clearly establish this position. However, there will be developments acceptable within the planning context which will benefit from screen planting. These benefits work both ways. Visual intrusion within the landscape can be mitigated by trees, whilst at the same time intrusive noise affecting a development from road or rail links can be reduced by appropriate planting.

**8.6** Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance is being prepared to give additional direction on the way in which acceptable development can contribute to the delivery of the Forest Plan

# Plans

- Policy Context - Structure and Local Plans
- Action Points

# Policy Context Structure and Local Plans

- Introduction
- Guidance notes
- Regional Plans
- Local Authority Plans
- Other Relevant Strategies
- Sites mentioned within policy statement

# Introduction

**9.1** Supplementary Planning Guidance referred to in the previous section will be drafted to fit within the framework of existing national regional and local guidances. The drafting, consultation and adoption of these guidances is an ongoing iterative process, which has already brought many changes since the Forest Plan was approved in March 1995. This section draws attention to the changes which have already occurred and the timetable for future changes.

**9.2** The relevant Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPG) and Regional Planning Guidance notes (RPG) are as stated on page 16 of the 1995 Forest Plan. However, several guidance notes have been amended since the production of the Plan. The relevant PPG's and their publication dates are set out below.





## Guidance notes

PPG 1	General Policies and Principles	February 1997
PPG 2	Green Belts	January 1995
PPG 3	Housing	March 2000
PPG 7	The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development	February 1997
PPG 9	Nature Conservation	October 1994
PPG 12	Development Plans	December 1999
PPG10	Planning and Waste Management	September 1999
PPG 13	Transport	March 1994
PPG 16	Archaeology and Planning	November 1990
PPG 17	Sport and Recreation	September 1991
PPG 21	Tourism	November 1992
PPG 22	Renewable Energy	February 1993
PPG 24	Planning and Noise	September 1994
MPG 14	Minerals Planning Guidance	September 1995
Rights of Way Advice Note No.1		June 1998

**9.3** Most of the Strategic and Local Plans listed will contain policies relating to the commitment of the relevant authorities to the delivery of the Community Forest vision. However, it is important that other sections and policies within these plans are also referenced, since very many of them will impact on the objectives of the Forest. Many sites within Watling Chase are specifically mentioned in the policy statements within the district plans referred to below.

**9.4** Policies relating to the topics listed below are likely to be of relevance to the delivery of the Forest Plan.

- Conservation in the countryside
- Cycling
- The Hatfield Aerodrome site
- Trees, woodlands and hedgerows

- Nature conservation
- Local Nature Reserves
- Agriculture
- Agricultural land
- Reuse of buildings in the countryside
- Recreation in the countryside
- Footpaths and bridleways
- Public Rights of Way
- Access in the countryside
- Riding stables
- Golf courses
- Green burials
- Public open space
- Energy efficiency
- Biomass
- Sustainable energy
- Green Belt
- Minerals extraction
- Safe routes to schools
- Commuting routes
- Local Transport Plan
- Greenways
- Archaeology
- Wildlife Sites
- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Rural diversification
- Disabled access
- Social exclusion

# Policy Context Structure and Local Plans

- Introduction
- Guidance notes
- Regional Plans
- Local Authority Plans
- Other Relevant Strategies
- Sites mentioned within policy statement

# Regional Plans

**RPG3** - Strategic Guidance for London Planning Authorities, May 1996

**RPG 9** - Regional Planning Guidance for the South East, March 1994

**SERPLAN - RPG 9** - Proposed changes issued in March 2000.

**EEDA Strategy - Moving Forward** - A Strategy for the East of England, 1999



# Local Authority Plans

## Hertfordshire County Council

Hertfordshire County Structure Plan 1998 - 2011. Adopted April 1998

Hertfordshire County Council's Minerals Local Plan - 1991 - 2006. Adopted July 1998.

Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan 1995 - 2005, Adopted January 1999



## Hertsmere Borough Council

Hertsmere Borough Council District Plan Adopted May 1990. 1990 - 1996. Pre-deposit consultation received June 1988. Statement of Conformity letter sent 24th July 1998. Plan formally placed on Deposit from the 14th August until the 25th September. Public Inquiry 11th May 1999. Inspector's report published 6th March 2000.

## St Albans City and District Council

St Albans City and District Council District Plan Adopted November 1994. 1994 - 2001. Public Consultation on Deposit Draft to be completed May 2001

## Welwyn Hatfield Council

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan  
Adopted March 1993. Alterations No 1 adopted March 1998 (to 2001 including the Hatfield Aerodrome site).  
Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Review to 2011 - Issues paper September 1999, First stage deposit May 2001.

## London Borough of Barnet

London Borough of Barnet Unitary Development Plan Adopted 1991. Start of Statutory process UDP on deposit - September 1999. Revised UDP on deposit February 2000. Public inquiry July 2000. Inspectors report March 2001. Consultation on UDP modifications. Adoption December 2001. The UDP will be divided into 4 themes of which "Enhance the quality of the built and natural environment" will be of most relevance to WCCF.

## London Borough of Enfield

London Borough of Enfield Unitary Development Plan Existing plan adopted in 1994, and amendments made to it since that date. Timetable for review is not yet finalised. It is intended to place the new plan on deposit in 2001.

## London Borough of Harrow

London Borough of Harrow Unitary Development Plan Consultation undertaken in March 1998. It is likely that the new

plan will be placed on deposit at the end of June 2001.

## **Watford District Council**

Watford District Local Plan

written statement June 1996

Adopted 11th April 1996 - 1996 - 2001.

Have been following a twin track with Alterations (spring/summer) followed by a full review. Public Questionnaire for the full review produced July 1998. The Deposit Plan is anticipated for March 2000.



## Other Relevant Strategies

**Landscape Strategy for Hertfordshire** - approved by Hertfordshire County Council's Environment Committee in 1996.

**The Woodland Strategy for Hertfordshire** - approved 1997

**The Countryside Strategy for Hertfordshire 1996 - 2001** - was approved in 1996, and plans are currently underway for its review.

**Review of the HCC Rural Estate** was completed with the publication of "A Guide to the Management of the Rural Estate 1998 - 2050", in September 1998. This document has significant and positive implications for the delivery of the Community Forest in the long term.



## Sites mentioned within policy statements

Site	Relevant Plan
Aldenham Country Park	HBC (1998) C5
Aldenham School, Letchmore Heath	HBC (1998) C19
All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney	SADC (1994) UCV.11
Arkley Lane	LBB 05.3 Site of Borough Importance
Bio Products - Dagger Lane, Aldenham	HBC (1998) C19
Birklands, London Road, St Albans	SADC (1994) UCV.6
Bowmansgreen Open Farm	HBC C5
Brockley Hill Romano-British Pottery	LBB E3.3
Bushey Hall Farm, Bushey - a moated site	HBC E8
Bushey Hall School	HBC C19
Bushey Meads School	HBC C19
Bushey Purcell School, Aldenham Road, Bushey	HBC C19
Centennial Park HBC (1998)	C19
Colney Heath Lane - land to the east	SADC (1994) UCV.9
Dame Alice Owen's School	HBC (1998) C19
Dollis Brook	LBB 03.3
Glinwell Nursery, St Albans	SADC (1994)
Haberdashers' Aske's School (Boys) - Aldenham Road, Elstree	HBC (1998) C19
Haberdashers' Aske's School (Girls) - Aldenham Road, Elstree	HBC (1998) C19
Hadley Green	LBB 05.3 Site of Metropolitan Importance
Harper Lane	HBC (1998) UCV.8
Harperbury Hospital	HBC C21
Hatfield Aerodrome, Hatfield	WHDP Alts No.1 (1998), British Aerospace Inset Bae4, Bae10, Bae11 and Bae14
Hill End and Cell Barnes Hospital sites	SADC (1994) Policy 137

Imperial Cancer Research Fund (ICRF) - Blanche Lane, South Mimms/Ridge International University - The Avenue, Bushey	HBC (1998) C19
King George's Field, Hadley	LBB 05.3 Site of Borough Importance
London Road - land adjacent	SADC (1994) UCV.7
Moat Mount, Local Nature Reserve, Mill Hill	LBB 05.3 Site of Borough Importance
Monken Hadley Common and Hadley Woods	LBB 05.3 Site of Borough Importance
Moor Mill SADC (1994)	UCV.4
Motorway Service Area	HBC M14
Napsbury Lane	SADC (1994) UCV.5
Napsbury Hospital site	SADC (1994) Policy 139
Napsbury Lane - land adjacent	SADC (1994) UCV.5
National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC) - Blanche Lane, South Mimms	HBC (1998) C19
Netherwyld Farm, Aldenham - Roman remains on	HBC (1998) E8
New Barnfield Resources Centre, Hatfield	WHDP Alts No.1 (1998), GB&, GB8
Nicholas Hawksmoor School and Sports Centre, Cowley Hill	HBC (1998) C19
Old Parkbury	SADC (1994) UCV.1
Park Street - land south of M10 roundabout	SADC (1994) UCV.1
Pastoral Centre, London Colney	SADC (1994) UCV.11
Penne's Place off Butterfly Lane, Aldenham - a moated site	HBC (1998) Policy 143 E8
Queens School, Aldenham Road,	HBC (1998) C19
Radlett Aerodrome SADC (1994)	UCV.3
Rowley Green Common	Local Nature Reserve Site of Metropolitan Importance LBB 06.1
Royal Veterinary College, North Mymms	WHDP Alts No.1 (1998), GB7, GB8
Saffron Green Shooting Ground	LBB 05.3 Site of Borough Importance
Scratchwood	Site of Borough Importance
Shenley Park	HBC (1998) C5
South Mimms - Motorway Service area	HBC (1998) C5
South Mimms - a motte & bailey	HBC (1998) E8/10

castle at	
St Margarets School, Merry Hill Road	HBC (1998) C19
Sulloniacis (Edgwarebury)	LBB 05.3 Site of Borough Importance
Totteridge Fields	LBB 05.3 Site of Borough Importance
Tythenhanger, Colney Heath	SADC (1994) UCV.10
Water End Swallow Holes	WHDP Alts No.9 1998 CR8A SSSI 3
Watford Campus, University of Hertfordshire, Wall Hall, Aldenham	HBC (1998) C19

# Action Points

**11.1** In paragraph 3.8 of the national chapter, the objectives of the Community Forest Programme are set out. Within Watling Chase a number of action points for each of these objectives have been agreed by the partnership. These action points will remain valid for the next five years.

**11.2** The partnership's three year rolling business plan will be structured around these objectives and action points, by relating them to specific sites and targets. The business plan will identify the delivery mechanisms and funding sources.

**11.3** These action points will be delivered by a wide range of partnerships and organisations, some already identified, others yet to be so. The funding local authority and national partners will play a major part in this. However, changing funding, such as that represented by the New Opportunities Fund, together with the maturing Agenda 21 initiative, have the potential to increase community involvement, and this is essential if the Community Forest culture is to be realised and expanded. Details of key partners and players are set out below.

**WCCF1 - To regenerate the environment of the Green Belt and equivalent areas, where it is public policy to keep it open, and help to ensure that it is permanently green and open.**

- By working with the Forestry Commission to deliver England's Forestry Strategy
- By working with Forest Enterprise to assist them to fulfil their commitment to the Community Forest programme.
- By identifying the optimum areas for woodland creation, and working with landowners to bring forward planting schemes.
- By delivering 65 hectares of tree planting per annum over the next 5 years, and 100 hectares subsequently.
- By working with landowners and farmers to develop whole farm environmental management programmes and to use these as the basis for making submissions for Countryside Stewardship Schemes.
- By working with Hertfordshire County Council to ensure delivery of the Rural Estate Actions Plans, with particular reference to the potential offered through the ERDP regional programme.
- By increasing the resources available to landowners and farmers to ensure the delivery of high quality applications within the context of the ERDP regional programmes.

**WCCF2 - To improve the landscape of the area, including reclamation of derelict land, to create a visually exciting and functionally diverse environment.**

- By promoting research to determine a priority for the



restoration of sites in the gravel extraction areas of the Upper Colne Valley.

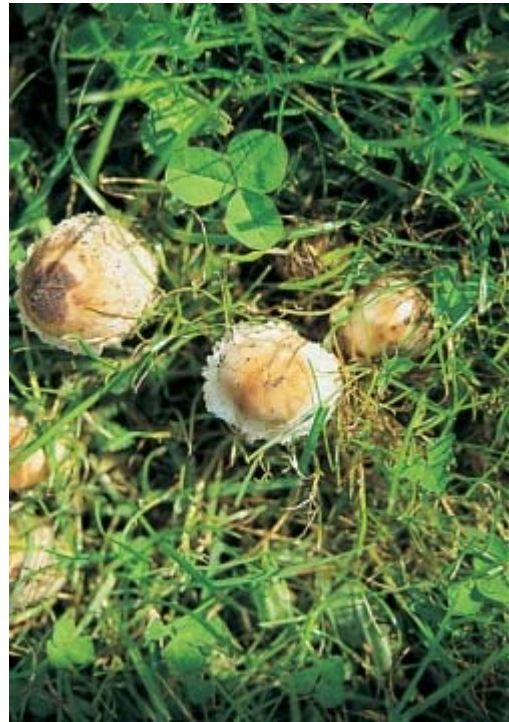
- By promoting research to determine the most effective reclamation design to achieve the environmental, aesthetic and financial aspirations of landowners and local communities.
- By bringing forward proposals for the restoration of sites which will increase public amenity, and where appropriate achieve greater public access. Where appropriate to restore a site to a level at which it will support tree planting, in order to fulfil targets set out within England's Forestry Strategy.

**WCCF3 - To increase opportunities for sport and recreation, including artistic and cultural events, and access.**

- By progressing the Greenways Pilot, funded by the Countryside Agency, and currently being progressed by Hertsmere Borough Council.
- By implementing the delivery of section 15 London LOOP through Hertsmere, with the assistance of CMS.
- By implementing the Timberland Trail to link the LOOP to the Alban Way.
- By supporting Hertfordshire County Council's Sustainable Transport in Rural Areas Project (STRAP).
- By working with Hertfordshire County Council to ensure that strategic Rights of Way routes, commuting links and safe routes to schools are integrated into the Local Transport Plan.
- By continuing to develop walking routes linked to the Countryside Agency/British Heart Foundation "Walking the Way to Health" project and other health related initiatives.
- By working with Groundwork Hertfordshire to secure the funding for and ensure the implementation of suitable multi-user routes brought forward as the result of these initiatives.
- By working with partners in the development of bids to the Sports England Lottery Fund in line with the guidance provided by them.

**WCCF4 - To protect areas of high quality landscape or historical or archaeological interest.**

- By ensuring that all planting or restoration proposals are developed in close consultation with those authorities with a responsibility for safeguarding such sites.
- By consultation with the Hertfordshire County archaeologist and the Hendon and District Archaeological Society on all proposals affecting their areas of interest.





- By ensuring that full consultation takes place on all landscape proposals, particularly those relating to woodland establishment.

**WCCF5 - To protect sites of nature conservation value and create new opportunities for nature conservation.**

- By ensuring that all planting or restoration proposals are developed in close consultation with those authorities with a responsibility for safeguarding such sites.
- By working with the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, The London Wildlife Trust and the Countryside Management Service and other partners to maximise the potential of sites to deliver the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- By working to deliver the "Woodland Wildflowers" initiative in appropriate sites within Watling Chase.

**WCCF6 - To provide new opportunities for educational use of the area, and ensure the mosaic of habitats in the forest can be used for the full range of environmental education needs of the surrounding schools. Also to ensure that urban schools are not disadvantaged in meeting the needs of the National Curriculum.**

- By developing a strategic awareness and marketing programme to encourage greater use of existing environmental education centres within the area, and to encourage greater use of the wider Community Forest area.
- By continuing the principals established with the Trees of Time and Place project, and working with BTCV and others on the delivery of projects with and within schools.

**WCCF7 - To protect the best agricultural land and increase opportunities for farm diversification elsewhere in accordance with Government agricultural and local planning policies.**

- By working with landowners and farmers to develop management proposals in line with the criteria set out within the England Rural Development Plan (ERDP).
- By working with landowners to develop proposals for the creation of multi-use woodland.
- By informing and assisting landowners to take full advantage of tourism, access or environmental initiatives from which they might benefit.
- By promoting agro-environmental and agro-forestry schemes to farmers and landowners, with the assistance of CMS.
- By developing learning initiatives within the ERDP framework.
- By promoting biomass production for energy to landowners, and seeking potential third party markets

with schools, light industrial units and others for energy production.

- By promoting best practice schemes on the Hertfordshire County Council and London Borough of Barnet Rural Estates.
- By ensuring the delivery of the New Implementation Options programme.

**WCCF8 - To establish a supply of timber and other woodland products.**

- By working with Hertfordshire County Council's Woodland Officer to develop potential market outlets.
- By exploring the possibility for the Group Certification of woodlands within Watling Chase.
- By encouraging woodland owners to seek Certification for their woodlands.
- By developing the Timber Station concept within the Community Forest, and using this resource to promote local sources of timber.
- By working with Anglia Woodnet to promote the marketing of woodland products.

**WCCF9 - To achieve a high level of local community commitment to the concept and involvement in its implementation.**

- By working with the Countryside Management Service to support communities, landowners and farmers in the delivery of projects.
- By ensuring that the Community Forest, and all projects and events held within it, achieve and maintain a high profile through the production of a quarterly newsletter.
- By engaging with Parish Councils and local residents and amenity groups on all projects planned and implemented within the Community Forest.
- By encouraging local groups to come forward with their own projects, and providing or securing the resources for their implementation.
- By working with local communities to bring forward proposals, and seeking funding from the Local Heritage Initiative (LHI), New Opportunities Fund (NOF) and similar initiatives.

**WCCF10- To give public and private sector confidence in the long-term prospects for the area and to provide a proper base for investment.**

- By working with the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) to promote Watling Chase and the advantages that may be found within its boundaries.

**WCCF11 - To improve the environment near housing and local industry and to increase the value of properties and businesses.**

- By ensuring that all planning applications are assessed for their potential to provide environmental improvements which will benefit the application itself, as well as those properties adjacent to them.
- By identifying under-used and despoiled sites, and working with the owners of these sites to develop proposals for their enhancement.
- By the drafting of a Supplementary Planning Guide to focus attention on the benefits that the delivery of the Forest Plan can bring to appropriate developments within the Community Forest.

**WCCF12 - To seek private sector support to implement the Forest Plan and to invest in leisure and other relevant service sectors.**

- By working with landowners to bring forward projects and to seek appropriate funding for them. By seeking company involvement as sponsorship in appropriate schemes.

**WCCF13 - To create jobs in the new woodland industries, both management of woodland and use of the raw materials.**

- By working with a range of partnerships, including EEDA, to identify training needs, and to deliver suitable courses through existing and new mechanisms.

**WCCF14 - To create jobs in the leisure industry developed in and around the Community Forest. | By identifying opportunities for farm diversification and working with farmers and landowners to assist them in their development.**

- By ensuring that a strategic bridleway network is developed as part of the Greenways project and that this network is integrated with riding school and livery facilities

**WCCF15 - To sustain other local jobs by providing an outstanding environment as a comparative economic advantage over competitor areas.**

**WCCF16 - To complement the Government's priorities for inner cities, by providing for associated leisure and open space needs at the physically closest locations.**

- By working with Government departments and local authorities to ensure delivery of relevant policies within the Forest area.
- By working with a wide range of partners to ensure an awareness of the countryside and its resources are brought to as wide an audience as possible.

- By working with Groundwork Hertfordshire and other partners to maximise the potential of urban and sub-urban open space, and to engage local communities in the planning of environmental enhancement of such areas, the implementation of these plans and the subsequent management of the sites.
- By delivering grass roots "Doorstep Greens" through the Countryside Agency's New Opportunities Fund programme.
- By working with the Greater London Authority in the delivery of the Tree Strategy for London.
- By working with Trees for London in the delivery of the London Tree Manifesto.

**WCCF17 - To remain flexible in the light of changes, such as in the leisure market.**

- By testing and reviewing established views against changing circumstances.
- By developing projects, and the partners to deliver them, in order to take full advantage of those changes which will assist in the delivery of the Forest vision.
- By maintaining an awareness of the experiences gained by the Community Forest Programme, and seeking to apply best practice measures where appropriate.
- By promoting the successes of the Community Forest project, and seeking to assist others to apply the experiences gained to a wider area.
- The Watling Chase Community Forest initiative is supported by the Countryside Agency and the Forestry Commission in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City & District Council and Welwyn Hatfield District Council. It was established under a memorandum of agreement between the partners in September 1991, and this agreement was amended and endorsed by that partnership in 2001.

# Five Year Targets 2000 - 2005

- Introduction
- Five year targets for seven key indicators

# Introduction

**10.1** The national Community Forest programme has introduced a new set of priorities against which to measure its achievements. This requirement came out of the DETR's evaluation of the progress made by the twelve Community Forests during the first five years of implementation.

**10.2** Whilst the Forest Plan gives the long-term strategic context for Watling Chase, the annual business plan sets out the targets for 2000-2005 and provides the main planning/monitoring tool.

**10.3** There has been an annual monitoring system in place to collect data on a range of Community Forest outputs since the programme began. The intention is to streamline the procedures and link them very clearly to target setting for forest business plans, and provide a sharper focus on the Forest's core activities.

**10.4** These targets for 2000-2005 were agreed by the Project Advisory Board in May 2000 in the context of changing policies, proposed new funding streams and other intelligence available at the time.





# Five year targets for the seven key indicators

## 1. Creating well-designed woodland:

Number of new woodlands of at least 20ha	2
New woodlands < 20ha planted adjacent to existing woodlands < 20ha combined to give area > 20ha	1
Smaller woodlands adjacent to housing	10
Smaller woodlands adjacent to other woodlands	6
Smaller woodlands as part of recreational network	5
Smaller woodlands planted on damaged/reclaimed land	5

## 2. Securing access to, and good management of, existing woodlands which meet the same criteria above:

Hectares of woodland with new dedicated access	125ha
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## 3. Creating and re-opening good quality walking/cycling/riding networks for leisure, recreation and/or commuting:

New access routes	30km
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## 4. Securing involvement in Watling Chase from a wide range of local communities, especially those socially excluded from their environment:

Number of Events	100
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## 5. Securing financial and in-kind investment from local businesses and external sources to support major restoration and recreation projects leading to environmental regeneration, and to develop a woodland economy:

Total target from commercial sponsorship, landfill tax, lottery, etc	£300,000
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## 6. Creating woodland on sites other than those in 1, where there are significant landscape, heritage and/or biodiversity gains:

Total five year target for woodland creation (para 1 and 6)	325 ha
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## 7. Securing landscape, heritage and biodiversity benefits in the non-wooded parts of Watling Chase where opportunities are presented by new development or on agricultural or reclaimed land, including hedgerow restoration:

New CSS agreements secured on agricultural holdings	20
New hedgerows planted	60km
New habitats sites created	8



# Key partners and Contacts

## Status of the Plan

The Forest Plan was drafted by the Watling Chase team on behalf of the partners, specialist groups and local communities.

The Forest Plan Review underwent consultation with existing partners, amenity groups, and residents groups during 2000. This consultation period ended on the 30th October 2000. The Forest Plan Review has been approved by all the sponsors and endorsed by the Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions. In association with the original 1995 Forest Plan, it is seen as the blueprint for the development of Watling Chase over the next 10 years.

## Further Information

If you would like more information about Watling Chase Community Forest, please contact

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web site: [www.watlingchase.org.uk](http://www.watlingchase.org.uk)

Contact details of sponsoring partners

### **The Countryside Agency - East of England Region**

Ortona House  
110 Hills Road  
Cambridge, CB2 1LQ  
01223 354 462

### **Forestry Commission**

East of England Conservancy  
Santon Downham  
Brandon  
Suffolk, IP27 0TJ  
01842 815 544

### **Hertfordshire County Council**

County Hall  
Hertford  
SG13 8DN  
01992 555 250

### **Hertsmere Borough Council**

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Herts. WD6 1WA  
020 8207 2277

### **St Albans City & District Council**

Civic Centre  
St Peter's Street  
St Albans



Herts. AL1 3JE  
01727 866 100

**Welwyn Hatfield Council**

Council Offices  
The Campus  
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Herts. AL8 6AE  
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