

## **20. POLICIES BY AREA**

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**Introduction**

**20.1** This chapter summarises the main policies as they relate to specific areas. It is meant to give an indication of the developments that are likely to occur. The relevant policy numbers are given in brackets.

**20.2** This section should not be taken as being comprehensive. It serves only to give the broad outline of the detail which is in the other chapters.

**EPPING**

**20.3** Epping is tightly constrained by the Green Belt and has few sites available for development.

**Development Possibilities**

**20.4** The shopping centre is considered to be relatively successful and not suffering very badly from the effects of the recession. The overall street-scene is attractive although it would benefit from the completion of the improvement scheme.

**20.5** The extent of primary shopping frontage has been reduced in conjunction with a tightening of the amount of non-retail frontage permitted within it to 20%. A limit of 60% has been imposed on the amount of non-retail frontage in the secondary frontages (STC7).

**20.6** Industrial areas at Centre Drive and Bower Hill are to be retained as such (E1).

**20.7** The Plan refers to the likelihood of St. Margaret's Hospital becoming a 'community hospital' under the Health Authority's proposals. The on-site facilities have already been down-graded quite markedly with the closure of the Accident and Emergency Service. Redevelopment for other uses will be resisted unless it is clearly demonstrated that the site will not be necessary for health care facilities (CF3).

**20.8** If the existing ambulance station becomes surplus to requirements it may be incorporated into the St. Margaret's site. Failing that, any redevelopment proposals will be expected to have regard to the current local need for community facilities (CF4).

**The Central Line**

**20.9** In 1994 London Underground Limited (LUL) closed the Epping to Chipping Ongar branch of the Central Line. The Council opposed this on the grounds that it provided an important local service. However, the Council will endeavour to secure its

future by promoting its use for leisure purposes (e.g. a steam railway) (T2).

**LOUGHTON/BUCKHURST HILL/CHIGWELL**

**Shopping Facilities**

**20.10** A Shopping Strategy for the District has been formulated in the context of the preparation of this Plan. The Plan includes policies aimed at maintaining and enhancing the shopping function of the existing town centres (STC1 and 2). It also incorporates a policy which sets out criteria against which proposals for retail stores will be assessed (STC3).

**20.11** The Council commissioned consultants to examine the scope for additional food retailing provision in the area. They concluded that:-

- both the amount and quality of shopping provision in the Loughton area is adequate;
- there may be scope for a superstore in the area without an excessive adverse impact on Loughton town centre;
- there are three possible sites for additional food shopping provision in, or on the edge of, the town centre:-
  - (a) an extension to the existing Safeway's store;
  - (b) development on the site of the Traps Hill car park; and
  - (c) development on the site of the former Council Offices (and adjoining land) at Old Station Road.

**20.12** The consultants found that any one of these options would be likely to satisfy the inadequacies in the town centre for the period of the Plan and that two most certainly would. An extensive public consultation took place on the basis of these possibilities. It also had regard to Tesco's proposed superstore at Langston Road, Loughton - an appeal on which was then outstanding. On the basis of the findings, the appeal being dismissed by the Secretary of State, and the subsequent granting of planning permission (on appeal) for Safeway's expansion, the Council has decided to:-

- (a) allocate the Traps Hill site for community facilities (CF1); and
- (b) not allocate the site at Old Station Road for retail development.

**20.13** The site of the former Lamb's Garage is allocated for retail development (STC6). The limit on the extent of non-retail frontage in the primary shopping frontages has been tightened to 20% and a 60% limit introduced to the secondary frontages. (STC7)

### **Employment**

**20.14** The main reason for the Council's successful opposition to Tesco's proposed superstore was the loss of this important Langston Road site from industrial use. Land for industry is at a premium in this District, particularly in the Loughton area. Although a superstore would create job opportunities, the local economy would not benefit to anything like the extent it would if the site were put to industrial use - even if it was not developed immediately.

**20.15** The site is very attractive for commercial development. It will become even more so when the north-facing slip roads are installed at junction 5 on the M11 (T6). The types of use that will be permitted on the Langston Road and Oakwood Hill industrial estates are therefore industry and offices (E2). In view of the site's attractiveness and the fact that modern large warehouses employ relatively few people, the Council has decided to resist proposals for new warehouses unless they trade locally and there are no suitable alternatives (E3). A further site, between the existing industrial area and the M11, has been taken out of the Green Belt for development for industrial/commercial purposes as an extension of the Langston Road industrial estate.

**20.16** The Council is working with some adjoining authorities to establish a 'material sorting facility' for the collection and recycling of dry household waste. Part of the Council's Langston Road depot has been identified as an appropriate site and is being promoted as such (RP2). Its development would, however, be subject to appropriate conditions on the hours of operation and the types of material handled (i.e. only solid and non-toxic substances).

### **School Sites**

**20.17** The Plan incorporates a policy reflecting the Council's concern about the loss and development of school sites (CF6). It is concerned because:-

- the sites may be needed again in the foreseeable future (when the school rolls increase or schools change their admission arrangements (as a possible consequence of gaining grant-maintained status);
- once the sites are lost any future demand would place pressure on the Green Belt;
- many of the sites provide open spaces contributing to the townscape; and
- the playing fields and playgrounds provide an important recreational facility.

**20.18** The sites of several former schools have been released for housing (H2), incorporating the provision of affordable housing, as required by the Council (H4 - H6). These are:-

- the Brook School and B.R. sports field adjacent to Roding Road;
- Epping Forest High School (site of buildings only), Homecroft Gardens; and
- Fairmead Annexe, Pyrles Lane.

### **Urban Open Spaces**

**20.19** There are a number of important, major areas of urban open space in the south and east of Loughton, although many are little more than major expanses of grass. Many of these are protected spaces at the moment although some have witnessed development. In view of both some of the spaces having been lost (either in whole or in part) and the current function of those remaining, the Council is looking to establish a more positive approach to these areas (LL5 and LL6).

**20.20** Such an approach would entail:-

- continued protection from development (although limited building might be acceptable if the open nature of the site is retained and there are resulting landscaping benefits); and
- management of the spaces to enable wider uses. This could include tree and shrub planting or creating flower rich meadows in certain areas. More attractive areas which are of greater benefit to wildlife would result.

### **Motorways**

**20.21** The DETR intends to install the north-facing slip roads on the M11 at junction 5 (T6). The Council opposed the scheme on the grounds of the effect of the increase in traffic upon the residential amenity of the area (T5). It is therefore looking to the DETR and the County Council to fund the necessary improvements that would make this impact acceptable.

**20.22** The DETR recently changed its guidelines regarding the development of motorway service areas (MSAs). The minimum gap between them has been reduced from 30 to 15 miles opening up the prospect of demand for such a facility on the M11 in this area. Scope for an MSA on the M11 is very limited but proposals will be assessed against appropriate criteria (T9).

## **NORTH WEALD BASSETT**

### **Radio Station Site**

**20.23** The Radio Station site is identified for predominantly recreational development of an open nature which has no adverse effect upon its Green Belt status. Those buildings and other features which are of historic or archaeological interest on the site are to be protected and enhanced (GB18). The bowling club will be either retained on site or replaced elsewhere (e.g. the Airfield) and additional land is to be dedicated for the village hall. Those buildings on the site which are to be cleared may be replaced, possibly by some different form of development (e.g. housing) on the edge of the site adjacent to Station Road.

### **Airfield**

**20.24** The airfield is to continue to be developed as a recreation and leisure centre, and a showground (RST27). This means continuing the air shows/displays and the Saturday markets and enabling more indoor sports facilities. The western part (i.e. next to the safety fence) is to be promoted as a 'working airfield'. That will involve aircraft parking and the provision of facilities to repair, service and store aircraft and helicopters.

**20.25** To enable the airfield to continue to function it should be self-financing, if at all possible. Existing uses will therefore be allowed to continue. This means that Hangar 2 (adjacent to the M11) will continue as a warehouse, if necessary, although air-related uses are preferred (RST30). It may also be appropriate to permit further development on the airfield if its full potential is to be realised within its intended role (RST29). Consequently it is proposed that further major buildings may be permitted in two areas:-

- (i) in the area south of the gymnasium and shooting ranges - this would be for further recreational activities; and
- (ii) adjacent to the M11, west of the perimeter road - this would be for recreational or airfield-related use.

**20.26** Any new development would, however, respect the existing character and historic interest of the airfield which is to be retained (RST28).

### **Scope for Development**

**20.27** This Local Plan makes only four changes to the Green Belt boundary in the District, the main one of which is at North Weald Airfield. It takes the concrete apron (on which the Saturday markets are now held) out of the Green Belt and allocates the site for industrial purposes (E6). This is in the context of implementing the Council's Employment Strategy. It also serves as an alternative for the existing industrial allocation at Hallsford Bridge, Chipping Ongar which is set in the countryside and poorly served by existing roads. By contrast, the site at the Airfield is adjacent to an existing commercial area and has ready access to the A414 and the M11. The Saturday markets will be relocated to the eastern section of the east-west runway which is now closed and which is being widened to accommodate the market.

**20.28** The existing residential land allocations at Pike Way/Park Close adjacent the railway are retained (H2).

**20.29** Essex Police are looking to extend the library to accommodate a police office. The existing office on the High Road may then become an ordinary house (CF11).

**20.30** The Canes Lane improvement of the A414 has already been completed. The section between the Talbot Roundabout at Tylers Green and Aukingford Gardens, Chipping Ongar is still the subject of an improvement scheme (T7).

### **Central Line**

**20.31** London Underground Limited (LUL) closed the Epping to Chipping Ongar branch of the Central Line including the station at North Weald Bassett. The Council opposed the closure on the grounds that the line provided an important local service. The Council will now endeavour to secure its future by promoting its use for leisure purposes (e.g. a steam railway). To this end, the site of the station and the land adjacent will be protected from development which would prevent this occurring (T2).

## **CHIPPING ONGAR**

### **The Bypass**

**20.32** The Plan reiterates the long-established need for the Chipping Ongar by-pass on the eastern side of the town. The County Council, as the highway

authority, is responsible for building the road. However, given the limited financial resources available and other priorities elsewhere in the County, it has been estimated that construction is still at least 15 years away and possibly almost 40 (i.e. 2030).

**20.33** It is as a consequence of the by-pass being unlikely to be built in the foreseeable future that two 'enabling' schemes have been put before the Council by private landowners. One of these is the 'Fresh Face for Ongar' (which has been widely publicised locally). The other is 'An Alternative Development for Ongar'. Both involve the developer making a substantial financial contribution to the by-pass (thereby 'enabling' the by-pass to be brought forward) in exchange for planning permission to build houses on approximately 30 acres of Green Belt land adjacent to the town. Both schemes have been rejected for the following reasons:-

- there is no current "need" for additional private housing in Ongar;
- the sites identified for development are not suitable; and
- the schemes appear contrary to current Government guidance and are therefore likely to be unacceptable.

**20.34** However, the situation will be reconsidered when the Plan is reviewed (in about 5 years). It may be that, by that time, circumstances will have changed and there may be scope for such a scheme.  
Town Centre Development

**20.35** It is proposed that the site of the former infants school at Basons Lane be developed as a supermarket in response to local demand (STC6). The site is not large enough on its own, however, and consequently the car park is to be located on the former school playing fields in the Green Belt.

### Central Line

**20.36** London Underground Limited (LUL) has closed the Epping to Ongar branch of the Central Line. The Council opposed this on the grounds that it provided an important local service. However, the Council will endeavour to secure its future to promote rail based transport and its use for leisure purposes (e.g. a steam railway). To this end, the site of the station yard will be protected from development which would prevent this occurring (T2).

### Other Development Sites

**20.37** The site of the former Ongar Comprehensive School is in mixed-use (including B1 (business) and adult education). That part of the site which is outside the Green Belt is allocated for community uses (including the continuation of the leisure centre, enterprise centre, adult education and youth facilities) with any surplus land being available for residential development (CF7)

**20.38** All plant and buildings at the Leca Works have now been removed from the site. There are proposals for the creation of a Parish Park. Tipping and waste disposal on the adjacent site will continue although that is to cease by 2004 and the filled area returned to agricultural use.

**20.39** The previous allocation of land for industrial development at Hallsford Bridge is removed. An alternative allocation is made at North Weald Airfield (E6).

### **ROYDON/NAZEING/SHEERING**

#### Land Allocations

**20.40** The northern part of the District is virtually all Green Belt, with the only exceptions being these three main settlements which it surrounds tightly. There is consequently little scope for development in this area with the Lee Valley Regional Park being likely to witness the greatest change.

**20.41** South of Sheering Mill Lane, Lower Sheering retains its allocation for residential development (H2). The Maltings at Lower Sheering are to remain in industrial/commercial uses together with the sites of the Nazeing glassworks and Marshgate works (E1).

#### Residential Extensions

**20.42** The policy covering the nature of residential extensions that will be permitted in the Green Belt (GB14) is somewhat less restrictive than previously. This is in order to be more responsive to changing living standards in recognition of people's expectations of progressively more living space. Extensions will, however, continue to be tightly controlled. They will be considered in the light of their effect on the character and appearance of both the building and the countryside as well as the adequacy of the living accommodation.

#### Shops

**20.43** The Plan seeks to protect corner shops and village shops from changing to other types of use

(STC10) and promotes the development of small village shops (STC4). This applies particularly to those which provide a post office or other essential local need.

**20.44** Farm shops are permitted, subject to strict criteria about the origin of the goods sold, the nature of the building and traffic generation (GB12). New buildings to be used as garden centres will, however, not be permitted. (GB6).

#### **Lee Valley Park**

**20.45** The Plan incorporates a presumption in favour of outdoor leisure uses in the Park (GB10) and permits built development subject to criteria including scale, location, design and landscaping (RST24). One such development is a possible watersports centre at Glen Faba (RST25) which could incorporate leisure chalets (RST26).

**20.46** Development within the chalet estates at Carthage and Riverside will not be permitted where this would prejudice the Park Authority's intentions (RST9).

#### **Roads**

**20.47** Whilst scope for any Motorway Service Area to serve the M11 is very limited in this locality, any proposals will be assessed against appropriate criteria. (T9).

**20.48** Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils have previously considered link roads between the A414 and M11. Four possible routes were considered, each one crossing the District south west of Sheering. The District Council considers all four to be unacceptable in environmental and traffic terms and the scheme has been abandoned. In the event of the scheme being resurrected the District Council will consider any proposal in the light of appropriate criteria (T5).

#### **WALTHAM ABBEY**

#### **Key Sites**

**20.49** Waltham Abbey includes some of the key development sites in the District following the demise of the armaments and explosives industry locally. There are two such sites, both of which are mainly, if not entirely in the Green Belt. Development of the sites is justified, despite their Green Belt status, as the only means of bringing them back into some form of beneficial use given that they are heavily contaminated with explosive material. Each site is the subject of a specific policy in the Plan. The main points relating to each site

are set out below:-

#### **(i) Former Royal Ordnance Site**

**20.50** This is the site immediately south of the M25. The proposals entail industrial uses and housing on the area north of Black Ditch Road. To the south of that land outdoor recreational uses and/or other 'open air' uses will be sought - e.g. a golf course(GB20).

**20.51** Proposals also incorporate a new road linking junction 26 on the M25 with Highbridge Street. This will effectively form a southern by-pass to the town. The London Borough of Enfield is promoting a new 'east-west' link road (NGAR) between this by-pass and the North-South road in Enfield. The District Council will consider such a link road in terms of its impact upon both traffic locally and the appearance of the landscape (T5).

#### **(ii) Former Royal Gunpowder Factory Site**

**20.52** This site is a Conservation Area and the greater part of it is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Emphasis must be placed on preserving and enhancing that which is of merit on the site. Its development potential is therefore limited with the scope focusing on tourism and heritage-related facilities including the establishment of a gunpowder museum and possibly a natural history museum. There will, however, be some scope for business/residential/leisure development (HC16).

#### **Other Development Sites**

**20.53** Scope for additional retail development in or adjacent to the town centre is very limited.

**20.54** There is a potentially extensive site, currently in multiple-ownership, on the south side of Highbridge Street. Its prominent location at the approach to the town from the west is such that its development would have to be in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area (STC5).

**20.55** Part of the former Honey Lane site was earmarked for a replacement ambulance station but was declared surplus to NHS requirements as a whole. The Ambulance Service does not consider this to be a problem and does not anticipate a new station being necessary until the late 1990s at the earliest. It has not specified a need in terms of either size or location and, consequently, this Plan makes no provision for a new ambulance station.

**20.56** The existing housing allocation at Honey Lane (on the site of the former hospital) is

maintained (H2). This follows the Health Authority having declared it surplus to requirements despite 2 hectares having been reserved for health care facilities when the hospital was closed.

### **Open Spaces**

**20.57** The existing major open spaces within the Ninefields estates are to be protected from development. However, the Council will consider alternative management schemes for them. This could entail tree and/or shrub planting to promote more attractive and functional areas, similar to a park (LL5 and LL6).

### **Motorway**

**20.58** The DETR currently has no intentions to widen the M25 in this vicinity. However if any widening is considered in the future it is likely to entail incorporating an additional (fourth) lane by:-

- (1) minor widening of the existing carriageway;
- (2) narrowing the existing lanes;
- (3) utilising the existing hard shoulder; or
- (4) some combination of (1), (2) and (3).

**20.59** The minimum gap between motorway service areas has been reduced from 30 to 15 miles. This means that there is potential for an MSA on the M25 between Waltham Abbey and Theydon Mount, although 4 applications on 3 sites were dismissed following a Public Inquiry. The Council will therefore consider applications for MSAs in that vicinity having regard to the extent of the need for the MSA and the effect it would have upon the landscape and the Green Belt (T9).

### **Other Roads**

**20.60** The Council has previously stated that it views the construction of a link road between Upshire Road and the M25/A121 junction (junction 26) as an essential step in the proper management of traffic in the area. Such a road (Old Shire Lane) has already been partially built. However, its completion would attract more traffic onto Upshire Road to the detriment of the residential environment. Consequently, a new road around the northern edge of the town would also be desirable at the same time as the completion of Old Shire Lane. The County's priorities mean that this is unlikely in the foreseeable future, by which time a bypass may have been created around the southern side of the town.

**20.61** The B194 (Crooked Mile) has previously been earmarked for improvement by the County Council. The scheme has now been abandoned but the District Council considers that more modest improvements should be undertaken to rectify the current danger to road safety.