

- Watling Chase Community Forest is one of 12 national community forests. It covers an area of over 70 square miles (181 sq. km) to the north of London, including the southern part of St Albans District. The vision in the Watling Chase Plan aims to achieve widespread landscape improvement with woodland planting and increased opportunities for nature conservation, leisure and recreational access.
- In 2008 the Woodland Trust announced plans to create Heartwood Forest, a 340 hectare wood on land between Sandridge and Wheathampstead. Planting began in 2009 and when fully planted, will be the largest new native forest in England. This is an exciting opportunity for the district, which will become an important area for wildlife, low intensity recreation and quiet enjoyment of the countryside.
- Ellenbrook is a new country park being created on part of the former de Havilland aerodrome site east of Smallford, near Hatfield. The country park was devised and is being delivered through cross-boundary co-operation between this Council and Welwyn & Hatfield Council, primarily through a Section 106 agreement. The plans for the country park include hay meadows, woodland, cattle grazing, footpaths and a bridleway.
- The St Albans 'Green Ring' will connect inwards to make the City centre more accessible, encourage park and walk schemes, cycling and connect around to link spaces, such as the Alban Way, creating more opportunities for recreation. Connecting outwards, the Green Ring will use routes such as the River Ver and Hertfordshire Way to make better connections with the countryside.
- Improvements to Verulamium Park in accordance with the approved Masterplan.

10.18 A key feature of the district is its rich heritage and archaeology. The sensitive incorporation of heritage and archaeological features into green infrastructure projects such as the St Albans Green Ring will be positive in strengthening local identity and facilitating interpretation of the past.

10.19 A green urban environment is of vital importance to ensuring an attractive and pleasant place to live, work and shop. Trees and vegetation in an urban setting can help improve the local microclimate; help wildlife to thrive in urban habitats; and provide health and wellbeing benefits.

10.20 The proposed Green Infrastructure Network for the district is shown in Figure 13. This has been taken from the St Albans District Green Infrastructure Plan, which is an important document in guiding green

infrastructure improvements over the plan period. It incorporates existing green infrastructure assets, ongoing projects and proposed new projects and opportunity zones. There are some areas with a deficiency in Green Space in the district and areas where upgrading or improved management of existing green spaces is needed. The Council's evolving Green Spaces Strategy is also important in guiding improvements in this regard.

- 10.21 Sport is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities. The ongoing maintenance and improved availability of high quality facilities for outdoor sport and recreation across the district, ranging from playing pitches and pavilions to outdoor pools, parks and open spaces, is essential.

Policy SLP27 - Green Infrastructure

The Council will actively support the creation, enhancement and conservation of and access to the district's green infrastructure network.

The Council will refuse proposals for development on existing green space or recreational land unless it can be clearly demonstrated that it is no longer required or that the proposal provides at least equal or better replacement facilities that are convenient for users. The Green Spaces Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy will help inform the Council's decision on availability, quality, need and utility.

Opportunities to deliver the creation and enhancement of green infrastructure should be taken with reference to the Strategic and District Green Infrastructure Plans. New development should refer to these documents when preparing proposals and plan positively for provision across boundaries (particularly in terms of green infrastructure connections and need).

Identified green infrastructure deficiencies in the south of the district will be particularly addressed with the delivery of policies SLP13, SLP14 and SLP16.

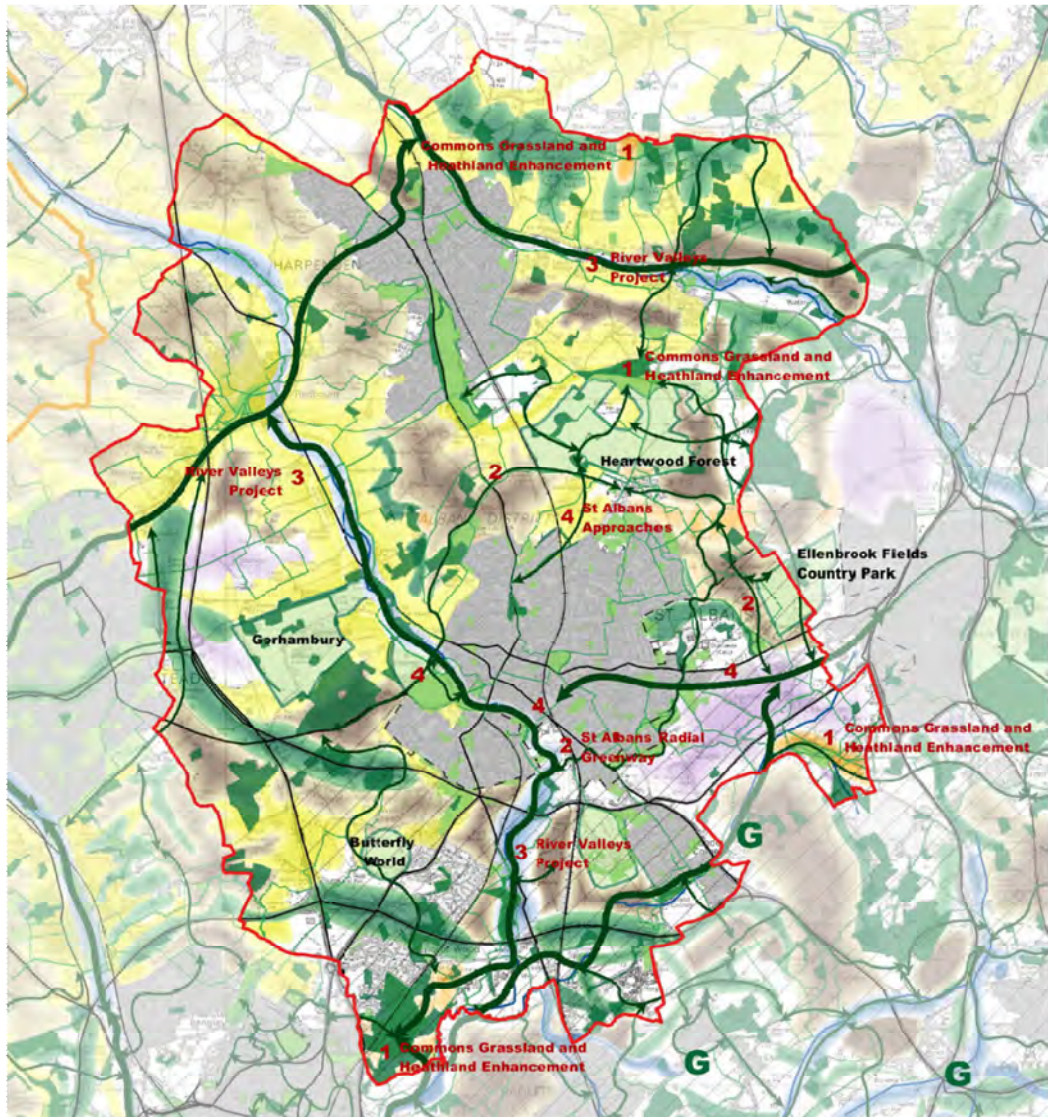
The Council encourages:

- Implementation of the Watling Chase Community Forest Plan.
- Establishment of Heartwood Forest in accordance with the Environmental Statement as approved by the Forestry Commission.
- The creation and promotion of the St Albans 'Green Ring' route as set out in the City Vision.
- The creation and promotion of other 'Green Ring' routes in other settlements.
- Improvements to the green spaces throughout the district in line with the

Green Spaces Strategy.

- The enhancement of Verulamium Park in accordance with the approved Conservation Management Plan and Park Development Plan.
- The creation of new green recreation and/or wildlife routes at all scales.
- Greening of the urban environment, including tree planting, green roofs and green walls.

Figure 13: St Albans District Green Infrastructure Plan



Legend

Proposals	Existing	Barriers
↔ Strategic link	— Long distance and promoted routes	— Major road network
↔ Local link	— Rivers	— Railway
1 Green infrastructure projects	— Disused Railway	
Green box Strategic GI assets	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Strategic / regional & sub-regional GI asset)	
Brown box Farmland conservation & enhancement zone	Accessible open space	
Blue box Wetland habitat zone	G Watling Chase gateway site	
Dark green box Woodland enhancement/creation zone	Woodland	
Yellow box Chalk valleys conservation zone	Main settlements	
Orange box Heathland/grassland creation zone	Watling Chase Community Forest	
Purple box Landscape restoration		

Land Use Consultants 2011

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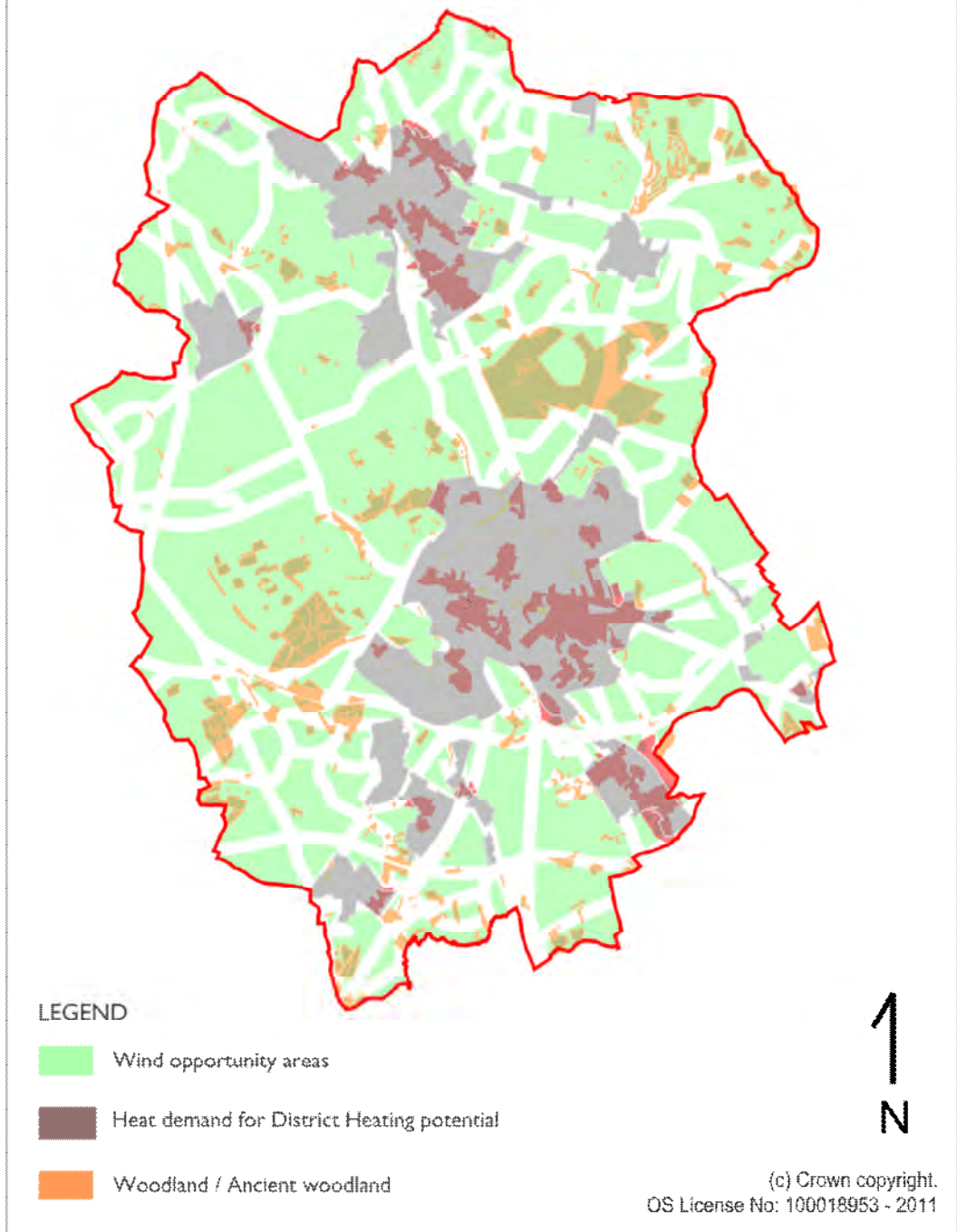
Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

- 10.22 One of the key priorities is to reduce the district's impact on the environment, encourage green sustainable travel and work towards carbon neutral status. In providing new homes, jobs and infrastructure there is a need to reduce the district's carbon footprint. A target of 3% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions year on year from 2006 to achieve a 60% reduction by 2025 is set out in the Nottingham declaration on climate change. Ultimately, the Council is seeking energy efficient buildings with low running costs across all types of development, including homes, businesses, leisure, retail and infrastructure.
- 10.23 The overall approach to renewable energy and to sustainable construction will be to support renewable energy infrastructure and to ensure that development is designed and built as energy efficiently as possible, before considering renewable energy use (Figure 15 The Energy Hierarchy).
- 10.24 There are a number of energy opportunities which exist in the district (see energy opportunities plan below). The technologies with the greatest potential in the district are wind, district heating and micro generation. There is also significant potential for the district to utilise its parks and woodlands, including Heartwood Forest, as a fuel source for district heating (DH)/Combined Heat and Power (CHP).
- 10.25 Areas with high energy demand and carbon dioxide emissions from existing buildings are concentrated in the higher density urban areas. These are considered as feasible locations for decentralised low carbon energy infrastructure. Energy opportunities, particularly district heating to serve existing and new development, will need to be considered by developers when bringing forward development sites. Given the comprehensive redevelopment opportunities that exist in the City centre, there is potential opportunity to deliver CHP in this location
- 10.26 There are significant opportunities to deliver DH or CHP through large scale development. Therefore, any such developments, including those proposed in the SLP and DLP, will have to maximise realistic opportunities for delivering decentralised energy technology.
- 10.27 Opportunities for wind energy have also been identified on the Energy Opportunities Plan. As these are all in the Green Belt, any proposals would require clear justification to be taken forward by demonstrating very special circumstances. This may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.
- 10.28 The potential benefits of proposals for new renewable energy facilities, whether small scale, large scale, standalone or as part of a development

package, will be assessed against all potential environmental and other disbenefits, including noise, vibration and impact on landscape and historic character.

- 10.29 Standalone energy schemes are normally considered suitable where there is already an existing mix of land used or where a mix of land uses will be created through future development, which will benefit from energy from a renewable or low carbon energy source. Existing heat and electricity demand maps can be viewed in the Hertfordshire Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Study.

Figure 14: Energy Opportunities Plan



Policy SLP28 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Development related renewable energy proposals

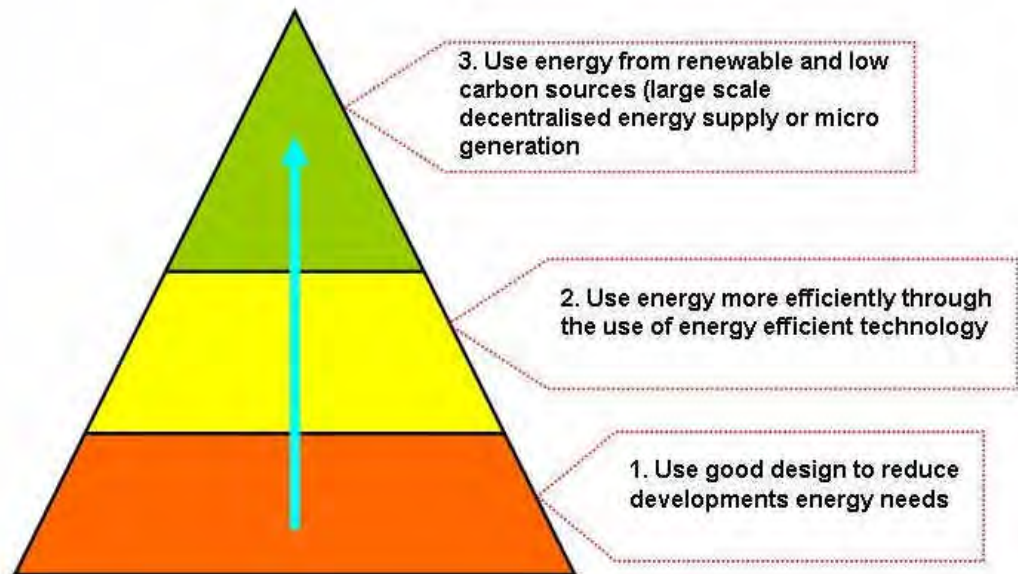
All new development of 10 homes or more (gross) and 1000sqm for non residential development (gross) will provide opportunities to deliver renewable and low carbon energy supply to nearby existing development and planned new development. All development proposals must demonstrate how they have considered and maximised opportunities identified on the energy opportunities plan (figure 14) and that they have made best use of the most appropriate design and technology.

Standalone renewable energy proposals

Such proposals will be supported in or close to locations where there is sufficient demand arising from a mixture of land uses (existing and planned). If such proposals would have substantial disbenefits, the Council will consider whether any environmental or other harm is clearly outweighed by the benefits, including those arising from increasing renewable energy supply and reducing carbon dioxide and other emissions.

- 10.30 There are a number of other associated benefits of reducing carbon emissions and mitigating and adapting development for climate change. These include reducing use on natural resources, supporting the local economy through promoting the use of locally sourced materials and ensuring that buildings have a prolonged, adaptable and flexible life span.
- 10.31 The Government's target is for all new homes to be zero carbon by 2016 and all new non residential development to be zero carbon by 2019. The zero carbon targets will be achieved through the Code for Sustainable Homes and progressive changes to Building Regulations.
- 10.32 In achieving the targets the first priority is to work through the energy hierarchy and improve the efficiency of the buildings, prior to the use of renewables. This will ensure the most efficient use of renewable technology to meet a developments' energy needs. Following the Energy Hierarchy will ensure that through design and build there will be less energy demand and less demand for the amount of renewable energy infrastructure required to meet the energy needs of a development. This will assist in cost effective solutions to be used in achieving requirements of Policy SLP28.

Figure 15: The Energy Hierarchy



10.33 The Hertfordshire Low and Zero Carbon study assessed the application of different code level targets. Given the energy and heat demands and the energy opportunities available in the district, requiring one code level in advance of the changes to the building regulations is considered feasible. Furthermore, the St Albans Development Economics Study found that requiring Code level 4 would not hinder site viability. For non residential development applicants will be required to achieve the equivalent Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating.

10.34 Whilst changes to the building regulations are planned, changes only reflect the energy and water aspects of the Code. There a number of other ways in which development can contribute to sustainability. These include increasing the amount of insulation, reducing water consumption, implementing green roofs to reduce water run off and increase carbon recycling, retaining and enhancing biodiversity delivering ecological benefits. The Council will therefore seek all design categories of the Code to be fulfilled.

10.35 The Hertfordshire local authorities have produced the 'Building Futures' guide. This provides practical guidance for developers in preparing development proposals and for planning officers in assessing proposals on how to make new development more sustainable. Topics include water, waste, energy, air, noise, design and the efficient use of land, climate change adaptation and materials. The guide is updated on an ongoing basis with additional modules continually added.

Policy SLP29 – Sustainable Design and Construction

All new developments will meet the levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes and non residential equivalent as set out below. To demonstrate how sustainable design and construction has been fully considered in the location, design, construction and future use of their proposal, a sustainability checklist or statement will need to be completed and submitted with all such applications.

Step changes in the Code for Sustainable homes and non residential equivalent (BREEAM)		
	Residential development	Non residential development
2010	Code Level 3 (25% reductions*)	25% reductions* (BREEAM Very good**)
2013	Code Level 4 (44% reductions*)	44% reductions* (BREEAM Excellent**)
2016	Code Level 6 (Zero Carbon)	44% reductions* (BREEAM Excellent**)
2019		Zero Carbon (BREEAM Outstanding**)

* Reductions in building emissions rate compared to the target emission rate, defined by Building Regulations 2006.

** Equivalent to BREEAM rating.

All new development should take into account the potential to incorporate renewable energy technologies and have the ability to be connected to a decentralised renewable or low carbon energy supply in the future.

11. Infrastructure

Strategic Objective 7 – Delivering Infrastructure

The Council will take appropriate measures throughout the plan period to ensure that an historic infrastructure deficit is redressed and that new development fully addresses current and future physical, social and green infrastructure needs.

- 11.1 The prosperous and sustainable future for the district outlined in previous chapters depends on the delivery of new infrastructure and the enhancement of existing infrastructure to support communities. This infrastructure provision encompasses green, physical, social and community networks, facilities and services which are delivered by public, private and third sector suppliers.
- 11.2 An infrastructure deficit has grown in the district through a variety of factors including the lack of infrastructure funding secured alongside development in the past. A result of this is that some key infrastructure and services within the district are stretched through the cumulative impact of development.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Schedule

- 11.3 In order to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided and that this deficit does not worsen, the Council is producing an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The IDP sits alongside the SLP and analyses the spatial strategy and what the impacts on networks, facilities and service needs will be. A key output of this plan is the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (IDS), included at Appendix 5, which comprises of a list of infrastructure projects essential to the delivery of the SLP policies over the plan period. In order to implement SLP policies, the IDP has identified that there are no “showstopper” items of infrastructure essential to deliver any one specific element of the strategy. Instead it is the cumulative and interconnected impacts of the strategy that will require maintained, enhanced and new infrastructure. The Hertfordshire Infrastructure Investment Strategy (HIIS) identified that Hertfordshire has a measurable infrastructure deficit totaling over £2.4bn. This is the financial shortage against standards required for infrastructure and what is currently provided. The majority of this comes from highways and education infrastructure need.
- 11.4 The IDS reflects both current priorities and planned delivery over time. The schedule is based upon up to date information and is not intended to be exhaustive. Delivery in the earlier years of the strategy is more detailed and is based on capital programmes. As the process of implementation will constantly be responding to local circumstances and utilising new avenues and drivers to prioritise spend over the life of the SLP, the IDS will be updated on a regular basis and will be web based. Where the delivery of infrastructure requires the provision of sites this will be set out in the forthcoming Detailed Local Plan. The IDS includes the following details of each of the principle infrastructure projects:
- Infrastructure Type/Project
 - Description, Purpose and Location of Project
 - Lead Delivery Body/Delivery Mechanism in LDF
 - Phasing and Timing

- Estimated Costs and Funding arrangements
- Risk and Contingencies

Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

11.5 On site works and developer obligations, either in kind works or financial contributions, are required. They will provide and enhance infrastructure, services and facilities that support sustainable development, mitigate the impact of development and make development acceptable in planning terms. Currently these obligations are secured through section 106 (S106) agreements.

11.6 As a two tier authority area, obligations essential to support development are sought from developments by both Hertfordshire County Council (strategic infrastructure) and St Albans District Council (local level). These are set out below.

Hertfordshire County Council:

- Highways
- Passenger Transport
- Education (nursery, primary and secondary)
- Fire and Rescue
- Libraries
- Youth Facilities
- Child and Adult care including Special Needs
- Waste and Utilities
- Green Infrastructure
- Health Facilities

St Albans District Council:

- Affordable Housing
- Child Play Areas
- Open Space Improvements
- Sports, Leisure and Recreation Facilities
- Community Safety
- Site Specifics including some Utilities.

11.7 The Council already has in place comprehensive measures to ensure that S106 contributions are fully accounted for as part of a transparent process. It is necessary to ensure that agreements include a sum to cover the cost of negotiation, delivery and monitoring. This will be essential as contributions are extended to include lower thresholds for intervention on affordable housing. It is important to consider that for some developments there may be viability constraints such that there may be a degree of trade-off between different priorities, such as between maximising levels of

Affordable Housing and maximising levels of provision of social or community infrastructure.

- 11.8 In relation to housing and commercial growth-related infrastructure, utility providers will be required to demonstrate that adequate provision is available and/or additional capacity will be met through the development at no cost or detriment to existing local occupiers.
- 11.9 The Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Investment Strategy (HIIS) investigated the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) model at some length. CIL became law under Section 206 of the 2008 Planning Act. The only authorities that may charge under the Act are local planning authorities. The Council supports and is involved with a Partnership Model approach. This approach looks at the delivery of Strategic Infrastructure elements across the County.. This Partnership Model is between all the district / borough authorities in Hertfordshire and the County Council.
- 11.10 A greater proportion of development will be required to make CIL contributions than under the existing planning obligations' system. The aim is that the cumulative impacts of large and small developments are mitigated. When setting a CIL level and charging schedule the Council will balance: the requirements of infrastructure need arising from development; affordable housing; securing site specific obligations; and development viability.
- 11.11 The use of planning obligations and S106 agreements is likely to continue to be an important element in infrastructure provision in the short term until a CIL is adopted (likely late 2013/2014). After this planning obligations will still be used for site specific mitigations and for non-infrastructure requirements.
- 11.12 The Council may continue to utilise its own capital funds to meet identified local infrastructure needs and will actively explore opportunities to forward fund important new developments through appropriate mechanisms. Such mechanisms could include Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP), Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Local Asset Backed Vehicles (LABVs) and the use of the New Homes Bonus.

Policy SLP30 - Delivery of Infrastructure

The Council supports the programmed delivery of a wide range of infrastructure and related facilities within the district to meet identified needs arising from new development and to address the infrastructure deficit. This will be set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Schedule which will be updated through the plan period.

Where new development or redevelopment creates a need for new or improved physical, social or green infrastructure, the Council will require financial or in kind contributions to enable the provision of the additional and improved infrastructure. Obligations and contributions will be sought through S106 agreements and, in future, through a combination of S106 agreements and CIL.

Developers with the Council and partners will explore reasonable opportunities to address any historical infrastructure deficit.

Where piecemeal development forms part of larger development areas they will be treated as part of the wider area and expected to make infrastructure contributions as part of the wider development.

12. Plan Delivery

12.1 The Council will not deliver all the elements of the Strategic Local Plan itself. It will work with partners and investors and require interventions to ensure that the plan is delivered over the plan period. One of the strengths of the Local Plan lies in the additional benefits gained from the inter-relationships with other plans, policies and programmes created and delivered by and with partners. For minerals and waste planning, Hertfordshire County Council is the planning authority. The District Council will work with HCC on such issues that affect the district, including waste developments and minerals extraction. Key delivery partners include the following:

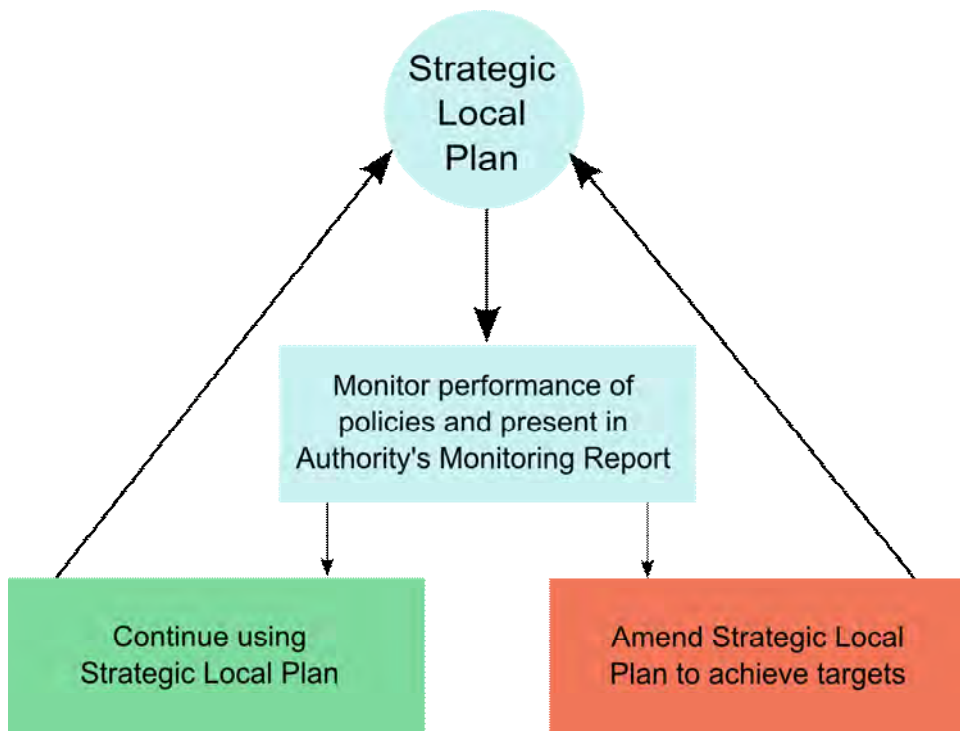
- St Albans Strategic Partnership
- Hertfordshire County Council and other Hertfordshire District Councils
- Town and Parish Councils
- The Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Local and Regional Infrastructure Providers
- Developers, Landowners and Consultants
- Charities and Community Groups
- A future Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership

12.2 It is very important that the objectives, milestones and policies contained in the Local Plan are able to be monitored. Monitoring allows the effectiveness of the Local Plan to be measured and allows the Council to react to changing circumstances.

12.3 Appendix 4 sets out the monitoring framework for measuring the effectiveness of the SLP policies and whether the plan objectives are being

met. This progress will be set out in the annually produced Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR). It will present an analysis of the effectiveness of the policies in the SLP and identify relevant actions to be taken where policies and targets are not being met. The AMR will also report on infrastructure delivery as set out in the Infrastructure Schedule.

12.4 The monitoring arrangements will allow the Council to react to changing circumstances. The SLP is a flexible document and following a Plan-Monitor-Manage approach the AMR will help identify any areas for review or where further work is required, as indicated in the diagram below.



12.5 A full review or amendment of the SLP is only one of the potential actions that can be taken if the Plan is not being implemented as intended. Other actions that can be taken include the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents and re-prioritising infrastructure and plans to deliver development.

12.6 As well as monitoring targets, it is important to set out key milestones to be achieved by the delivery of the plan, across the plan period. They have been developed to help monitor the delivery progress of the SLP along its critical path up to 2028. The plan period and milestones have been broken down into three 5 year phases, as set out in Appendix 5.

12.7 The housing trajectory will be a key item in the AMR which will be used to monitor progress against the Local Plan housing requirement of 250

dwellings per annum and will demonstrate a land supply to meet this going forward. The most recent AMR contains the up-to-date housing trajectory.