

## POLICY LINKAGES

The matrix below cross-refers Development Policies to other Structure Plan policies which are, or may be, of particular relevance. The Plan however should be read as a whole.

Structure Plan Policy	Links to other policies
D.1 Overall Level of Provision	D.2, D.3, D.4, D.5, D.6, D.7, D.8, D.9, D.10, D.11, D.12, D.13, D.14, D.15, D.16
D.2 Phasing the Release of Land	D.1, D.4
D.3 New Housing Provision	D.1, D.5, D.13
D.4 Distribution of Housing Provision	D.2, D.5
D.5 The Contribution of Previously Developed Land to Meeting the Housing Provision	D.3
D.6 'Affordable' Housing Needs	D.4, D.7
D.7 Site Size Thresholds - 'Affordable' Housing Needs	D.6
D.8 Affordable Housing for Local Needs in Rural Areas	
D.9 Density of Housing Development	D.5
D.10 Housing in the Open Countryside Outside the Green Belt	D.8, D.16
D.11 Unidentified Sites (Windfall Sites)	D.1, D.4
D.12 Housing in the Green Belt	
D.13 Mixed-Use Developments	D.3, D.4, D.5, D.6
D.14 Housing Developments in Rural Settlements Beyond, and Excluded from, the Green Belt	SD.8
D.15 Reappraisal of Planning Permissions and Local Plan Allocations	D.4
D.16 Reuse and Conversion of Buildings	D.29, CTC.13
D.17 Residential Mobile Homes	
D.18 Gypsy Sites	CTC.1, CTC.3, CTC.4, CTC.11, CTC.12, CTC.14, CTC.16, CTC.17
D.19 Employment Land Requirements	D.20, D.21, D.22, D.23
D.20 Employment Land Portfolio	SD.7, D.19, D.21, D.22, D.23

Structure Plan Policy	Links to other policies
D.21 Allocation of Land for Economic Development	SD.6, SD.7, D.19, D.20
D.22 Criteria for Additional Employment Allocations	D.19, D.20
D.23 Review of Existing Employment Commitments	D.20, D.22
D.24 Location of Employment Uses in Class B8	T.1, T.15
D.25 Use of Employment Land for Specific Uses within Class B	D.20
D.26 Office Development (Class A2 and Class B1)	SD.6, SD.9
D.27 New Building for Business Uses Outside the Green Belt	SD.8
D.28 New Building for Business Purposes in the Green Belt	
D.29 Change of Use of Buildings in Rural Areas for Employment Purposes	D.16
D.30 Farm Diversification	
D.31 Retail Hierarchy	D.32
D.32 Preferred Locations for Large Scale Retail Development	SD.9
D.33 Retailing in Out-of-Centre Locations	IMP.1
D.34 Retail Development in District and Local Centres	
D.35 Retailing in Rural Settlements	D.37
D.36 Farm Shops	D.16
D.37 Shops in Community Buildings in Rural Settlements	D.35
D.38 General Extent and Purposes of the Green Belt	D.40
D.39 Control of Development in the Green Belt	D.12
D.40 Green Belt Boundary Definition	D.38
D.41 Areas of Development Restraint	SD.4, SD.5, SD.7, D.38
D.42 Reuse of Major Developed Sites in the Countryside Outside the Green Belt	SD.3, SD.4, SD.5, D.20
D.43 Crime Prevention and Community Safety	
D.44 Telecommunications	

## 6. DEVELOPMENT

### Introduction

**6.1** The Vision for the County to 2011 recognises that whilst we need to be concerned for the well-being of future generations and that this is dependent on maintaining the health and integrity of the natural environment, there will still exist a need for development. Indeed the Vision acknowledges that certain quality of life aspirations can only be met through development. What is important though is not solely the nature of the development but how that development is undertaken and secured. In this respect the objectives of the Plan are intended to ensure that the development requirements of the County can be achieved in a way which is moving towards sustainability over the plan period.

**6.2** This Chapter deals with the following specific aspects of development and the control of development which require strategic policy guidance: Housing; Employment; Shopping; Green Belt; the Reuse of Major Developed Sites in the Countryside; Crime Prevention and Community Safety; and Telecommunications.

### Housing

**6.3** A main objective of the Plan is to meet the housing requirements of the population of Worcestershire through the provision of an adequate range of housing, including affordable and social housing, in a way which protects the environment and makes the most effective use of the existing settlement pattern. It is also an objective of the Plan to work towards a better balance between housing, employment, social and community facilities within settlements.

**6.4** The policies below, set out in the context of the development strategy described in Chapter Four, show how it is intended that the Plan's housing requirements should be met in a sustainable way.

### Policies

#### Overall Level of Provision

##### Policy D.1

**Sufficient land will be provided in the County to enable the construction of 28,100 dwellings between April 1996 and March 2011.**

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.5** Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11 April 1998) proposes that 41,300 dwellings should be constructed in Worcestershire between April 1991 and March 2011. Between 1991 and 1996 about 13,200 dwellings were completed in the County, leaving a balance to be provided of 28,100 dwellings between 1996 and 2011. This provision forms part of the 335,000 dwellings to be provided in the West Midlands Region between 1991 and 2011 as indicated in RPG11.

**6.6** 41,300 dwellings are to be provided in the County between 1991 and 2011 to accommodate the needs of the natural growth in the households in Worcestershire; migrant households from the rest of the West Midlands Region; migrant households from elsewhere; and makes an allowance for existing unmet need, demolitions and vacancies.

#### Phasing the Release of Land

##### Policy D.2

**Local Plans will include appropriate phasing policies. Prior to the adoption of Local Plans the overall provision of dwellings in the County to 2011 will be phased according to the following table which gives indicative amounts for each District.**

District	Housing Provision 1996-2006	Housing Provision 2006-2011	Total 1996-2011
Bromsgrove	3,000	950	3,950
Wyre Forest	2,400	600	3,000
Redditch	3,600	950	4,550
Worcester	4,150	1,100	5,250
Malvern Hills	2,900	1,000	3,900
Wychavon	5,900	1,550	7,450
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,950</b>	<b>6,150</b>	<b>28,100</b>

### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.7** In order to help ensure that the levels of housing development in Policy D.1 are achieved, Policy D.2 seeks to phase the release of land for housing in each district until local plan policies are in place. The policy recognises that phasing is a matter for local plans to address in accordance with PPG3 (Housing), in order to ensure the managed release of housing sites, over their plan periods, which control the pattern and speed of housing growth, ensure that new infrastructure is co-ordinated with new housing development and delivers the authority's recycling target.

**6.8** Indicative amounts are set out in Policy D.2 for each district on the following basis. In the period 1996-2006 the amount of dwellings to be provided comprise: housing completions 1996-1998; estimated windfalls 1998-2001, planning permissions as at 1998, and one half of the remaining District housing requirement for the Plan period. In the period 2006-2011, the figures represent one half of the remaining District housing requirement at 2006. It is expected that phasing policies in local plans will be broadly in line with the indicative amounts set out in Policy D.2.

**6.9** Decisions on the release of allocated land for housing, and on granting planning permissions for housing on windfall sites, should be made by District Councils taking into account their contribution to meeting the phasing requirements of the development plan. Should suitable land for housing come forward towards the end of the first period of phasing which would

result in an overprovision in the period 1996-2006, its release should be delayed until post 2006. Conversely if an under-provision is anticipated in the first period, additional releases of land may be necessary. The release of land for housing in the second period should not result in an overall overprovision in relation to the Structure Plan housing provision.

**6.10** Policy D.2 will apply prior to the adoption of the reviews of district local plans for the Structure Plan period to 2011. Its successful implementation (and that of superseding local plan policies on phasing) will depend upon annual monitoring of planning applications for housing and housing completions. District Councils should refer to Government good practice guidance in Planning to Deliver – The Managed Release of Housing Sites: Towards Better Practice (July 2001) for advice on how to manage the release of sites over phased periods of time.

### New Housing Provision

#### Policy D.3

**In identifying sites for housing in accordance with the development strategy, District Planning Authorities should maximise the contribution to the overall housing provision set out in Policy D.1 made by:**

- (i) the reuse of previously developed land and buildings in accordance with Policy D.5; and**
- (ii) mixed-use development in accordance with Policy D.13.**

### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.11** Policy D.3 reflects PPG3 (Housing) in ensuring that District Councils maximise the reuse of previously developed land and the conversion of buildings for housing in order both to promote regeneration of settlements and to minimise the amount of greenfield land being taken for development. Similarly maximising mixed-use developments which include housing will help to achieve these ends.

**6.12** Moreover, where such land is located within town centres it will contribute to their vitality and viability.

**6.13** In allocating new sites for housing in reviews of District Local Plans in line with this policy, due regard will need to be given to the need to safeguard the quality of life in urban areas.

## Distribution of Housing Provision

### Policy D.4

The overall housing provision in the County of 28,100 dwellings between April 1996 and March 2011 will be distributed within the County as follows:

about 3,950 in Bromsgrove District;

about 3,000 in Wyre Forest District;

about 4,550 in Redditch District;

about 5,250 in Worcester City District;

about 3,900 in Malvern Hills District; and

about 7,450 in Wychavon District.

## Explanatory Memorandum

**6.14** Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11) proposes that 41,300 dwellings should be constructed in Worcestershire between April 1991 and March 2011. In the period 1991-1996 13,200 dwellings were constructed in the County, leaving a balance to be provided of 28,100 dwellings between 1996-2011. Completions 1996-99 and commitments at 1999 (local plan allocations and planning permissions), and an allowance for windfalls and replacements totalled 21,650 dwellings. The residual housing requirement of 6,450 dwellings has been allocated to the Districts in accordance with the development strategy for the County set out in paragraph 6.17.

**6.15** The distribution of the overall housing provision of 28,100 dwellings for the County and the balance of sites to be found at April 1999 is set out in the table below:

District	Completions 1996-99	Commitments April 1999	Windfalls allowance 1999-2011	Replacements 1999-2011	Total of columns 2-5	Allocation 1996-2011	Balance of sites to be found at April 1999
Bromsgrove	760	1,348	550	37	2,695	3,950	1,255
Wyre Forest	664	1,152	550	37	2,403	3,000	597
Redditch	926	1,691	458	37	3,112	4,550	1,438
Worcester	1,891	1,100	615	300	3,906	5,250	1,344
Malvern Hills	1,175	639	1,379	165	3,358	3,900	542
Wychavon	2,152	2,081	1,815	128	6,176	7,450	1,274
Total	7,568	8,011	5,367	704	21,650	28,100	6,450

**6.16** In accordance with the Examination in Public's Panels view a lapse rate of 2% has been applied to the commitments totals in the above table and a lapse rate of 5% has been applied to the windfalls allowances, which exclude the final year of the plan period to allow for those permissions that are not built during the life of the Plan.

**6.17** The distribution of the overall housing provision set out in Policy D.4 reflects the following elements underpinning the development strategy for the County for the accommodation of the outstanding housing needs:

- to accommodate development in accordance with the sequential approach outlined above;
- as far as possible meet the housing requirements generated by the expected natural increase in population during the plan period in the districts where it arises;
- enable Worcester City as the largest urban area and the main service and employment centre in the County to retain and develop its sub-regional role through an appropriate level of growth; and
- to ensure the majority of the housing needs of the County during the plan period are met within the Central Crescent, in accordance with Regional Planning Guidance.

**6.18** Housing outside the Central Crescent will primarily be to meet local needs arising in the area, and some migration to the County and will allow for some outward movement of population from the Central Crescent as a result of migration into the Central Crescent from the Metropolitan Area. (Known as the 'ripple' effect).

## The Contribution of Previously Developed Land to Meeting the Housing Provision

### Policy D.5

**District Councils will make provision for the development of housing on previously developed land.**

**Indicative targets for the proportion of overall housing provision between April 1996 and March 2011 to be made on previously developed land in each District are as follows:**

District	Total Housing Provision	Indicative % on Previously Developed Land
Bromsgrove	3,950	40
Wyre Forest	3,000	60
Redditch	4,550	25
Worcester	5,250	45
Malvern Hills	3,900	70
Wychavon	7,450	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,100</b>	<b>48</b>

**The indicative targets shown above will be subject to individual assessments of sites suitable for housing development by District Councils.**

### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.19** As part of its commitment to sustainable development policies the Government is committed to preferring the development of land within urban areas, particularly on previously developed sites, provided that this creates or maintains a good living environment, before considering the development of greenfield sites. Making the best possible use of previously developed land and existing buildings will contribute to the regeneration of urban areas, by reusing derelict

and disused sites; it will avoid the unnecessary loss of countryside; and it will help reduce the need to travel.

**6.20** Regional Planning Guidance (RPG11) indicates that each development plan should indicate the number of additional dwellings to be provided within urban areas from previously developed land and conversions as part of the overall dwellings provision.

**6.21** The Plan's objectives and development strategy encapsulate the above advice. In accordance with them, Policy D.5 provides indicative targets for each District based upon preliminary assessments by the County Council and the District Councils of previously developed land within urban areas of the County with the potential for reuse for housing. RPG11 indicates that regionally the target for housing on land previously built on should maintain and, if possible, improve on the 61% of the total completions achieved on such sites in the region between 1991 and 1995. Within the County during the first 2 years of the plan period (1996-1998) about 36% of housing development took place on previously developed land.

**6.22** The indicative percentages in Policy D.5 vary between the Districts, reflecting the varying scope within the urban settlements for contributions by previously developed land to the overall housing provisions. The percentages are necessarily indicative and will be subject to detailed assessments of individual sites by the relevant District Councils. By the completion of the Plan in 2011 it is anticipated that the percentage of housing development on previously developed land will have increased to almost 50%.

### **'Affordable' Housing Needs**

#### **Policy D.6**

**As part of the overall housing provision in each District as set out in Policy D.4, District Planning Authorities should make adequate provision in their Local Plans**

**for affordable housing which will be provided within the District during the Structure Plan period.**

**This provision should be based upon District Councils' assessments of the affordable housing needs arising from both local and migrant households.**

**The level, range and type of provision to be achieved on individual sites, including suitable windfall sites, should be agreed through negotiation with developers at the planning application stage. Local Plans should set indicative targets for the level of affordable housing to be provided on suitable individual sites to inform this process.**

**Planning conditions or planning obligations may be used to control the occupancy of affordable dwellings to ensure the benefit of such dwellings accrue to both the initial and any subsequent occupiers.**

#### **Explanatory Memorandum**

**6.23** Government policy indicates that a community's need for a mix of housing types, including affordable housing is a material consideration which should be taken into account in formulating development plan policies and in deciding planning applications involving housing (PPG3, Housing). The provision of affordable housing helps encourage the development of mixed and balanced communities.

**6.24** Regional Planning Guidance indicates that Structure Plans provide a link between regional analysis and proposals in local plans by setting down clear planning guidelines for the provision of affordable housing. Each District local plan should make proposals in the plan for the provision of affordable housing, taking into account Government policy, regional estimates of housing need and the results of any local studies, including local needs surveys.

**6.25** The policy should be applied to all suitable sites, including proposals for the conversion of buildings and for the reuse of

previously developed land. Affordable housing comprises both low-cost market housing and subsidised “social” housing. Reference should be made to the glossary for a fuller definition. For the purpose of applying Policy D.6, the term should be defined in detail by District Councils in the context of the individual District Council areas.

**6.26** Reference should be made to national planning policy guidance on assessing affordable housing contained in PPG3 Housing (March 2000), and DETR Circular 6/98 for advice on: assessing the need for affordable housing; the criteria for assessing the suitability of sites where an element of affordable housing may be sought; and securing the occupancy of affordable housing. In order to ensure a consistent approach to assessments across the County and to assist District Councils in assessing the affordable housing needs of migrant households, the County Council will issue guidelines in the form of Supplementary Planning Guidance drawn up in conjunction with District Council Housing and Planning Officers.

### Site Size Thresholds – ‘Affordable’ Housing Needs

#### Policy D.7

**In assessing the suitability of sites for the development of affordable housing, District Planning Authorities should consider whether the site size thresholds in DETR Circular 6/98 Affordable Housing are appropriate, in the light of their local housing needs assessments.**

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.27** DETR Circular 6/98 sets out site size thresholds below which it is considered that it would be inappropriate to seek affordable housing. These are below sites of 1 hectare or with a capacity of 25 dwellings. However it recognises that in settlements in rural areas with populations of 3,000 or fewer there may be justification for lower thresholds based on local authorities’ local needs assessments and the available supply of land for housing and adopted

through the local plan process. In view of the rural settlement pattern of much of Worcestershire, Policy D.7 allows District Councils this flexibility. This should help to ensure the provision of affordable housing during the Plan period, particularly in Malvern Hills District where historically many housing sites are very small.

**6.28** In accordance with Circular 6/98 it may also be appropriate for local authorities to seek to generally adopt a lower threshold than sites of 1 hectare or with a capacity of 25 dwellings, where exceptional local constraints can be demonstrated, through the reviews of District Local Plans.

### ‘Affordable’ Housing for Local Needs in Rural Areas

#### Policy D.8

**Exceptionally in rural areas planning permission may be granted for affordable housing on land that would not normally be released for general housing development, provided that:**

- (i) the scheme would meet a genuine local need for housing that otherwise would not be met;
- (ii) the site is within or adjacent to an existing rural settlement; and
- (iii) arrangements are in place through the use of planning conditions or planning obligations to ensure that the housing will be reserved for subsequent occupiers as well as the initial occupiers.

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.29** In many rural areas there can be particular difficulties in securing adequate provision of affordable housing for local needs. A supply of such housing may be needed to secure the viability of the local community. In such circumstances the release of sites may be justified as an exception to general policies

controlling development. It will be for the district planning authority to make a judgement on whether the case for allowing development under Policy D.8 has been shown and to identify existing rural settlements for the purposes of applying Policy D.8. These settlements need not be restricted to those identified under Policy SD.8.

**6.30** Any provision for affordable housing made under Policy D.8 cannot be predicted and therefore an allowance should not be made for such housing to be provided under Policy D.8. Affordable housing completions arising from Policy D.8 however should be counted towards meeting the Structure Plan dwellings requirements.

**6.31** Reference should be made to Annex B of PPG3 (Housing) for further advice on 'exceptions' housing sites.

## Density of Housing Development

### Policy D.9

**In order to make efficient use of land, District Planning Authorities in carrying out their planning functions will be expected to discourage low density housing development, of less than 30 dwellings per hectare net, unless there are local circumstances including the character of the surrounding area which indicate otherwise. Sites within or adjacent to urban areas or rural settlements should be developed at densities of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare net. Within town and local centres where there is good public transport accessibility and around major nodes along good quality public transport corridors, densities of about 70 dwellings per hectare net should be achieved.**

### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.32** National planning policy (PPG1: General Policy and Principles) indicates that a key objective for the location of development is to make effective use of land within urban areas by allocating the maximum amount of housing

to previously developed sites within existing larger urban areas which have access to a range of transport and other facilities, whilst protecting open space, playing fields and green spaces in cities and towns. Seeking increased densities on such sites will contribute to this objective and help to promote a more sustainable pattern of development. PPG3 Housing also promotes an increase in densities compared with past developments to help make the best use of land.

**6.33** Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands amplifies this approach by advising that in planning new residential development, authorities should pay particular attention to the density of development and that local planning authorities should consider the use of minimum density policies which encourage developers to raise the density of low-density housing schemes, especially on greenfield sites.

**6.34** Policy D.9 reflects the approaches in RPG11 and PPG3 by setting densities for new development which are related to the location of the proposed development.

**6.35** Policy D.9 has a strategic role in that it will influence decisions on local plan allocations for housing and ensures a degree of consistency throughout the County. It helps to make more efficient use of land. The policy also contributes to implementing the development strategy of the plan which seeks to meet outstanding development needs within or adjacent to the principal urban areas and helps to sustain local services and public transport. Increasing residential densities will also help to secure a mix of size and types of development to help meet the needs of different types of households. It is important to the successful achievement of the aims of this policy that higher density schemes are of good design which will prove attractive to occupiers. This may require acceptance by District Planning Authorities of a more creative approach to the design of schemes. The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions' publication "Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice" states that "Determining density standards is a matter for Local Plans and UDPs; but structure plans provide an opportunity to promote the use of standards, bring some

uniformity of standards across districts; and to set minimum standards to discourage low-density development". Policy D.9 recognises that it may not be appropriate to seek the densities set out in the policy in locations where development could lead to an unacceptable change detrimental to the overall character of the area.

**6.36** The densities set out in Policy D.9 are net site densities as described in Appendix C of PPG3 and exclude areas such as major distributor roads and open spaces serving a wider area than the planning application.

**6.37** For the purpose of applying Policy D.9, town and local centres comprise city, town and district centres (see Glossary). Reference should be made to the explanatory memoranda to Policies T.1 and SD.4 for further guidance on good public transport accessibility.

**6.38** Policy D.9 will also apply to the development of mixed-use schemes which include housing.

**6.39** Overall it is important that the density levels set out in Policy D.9 are adhered to by District Councils for the development strategy of the Plan to be successfully achieved. Also of importance to the successful implementation of the policy is the need for them to examine critically the standards applied to new development, for example those concerning highways layouts and design standards.

### **Housing in the Open Countryside Outside the Green Belt**

#### **Policy D.10**

**Housing in the open countryside outside the Green Belt will not be permitted except where it is:**

- (i) clearly necessary for the purposes of agriculture or forestry and cannot be sited in a settlement; or**

- (ii) it is a necessary accompaniment to the establishment and success of an existing or new enterprise which itself needs to be located outside a settlement; or**
- (iii) an environmentally acceptable reuse (in the terms of Policy D.16) of a rural building of a substantial and permanent construction, where it is capable of reuse without major or complete reconstruction and where the applicant can demonstrate that the building cannot be reused for suitable business use or where residential use is subordinate to the reuse of the building for business use; or**
- (iv) a replacement of, and comparable in size with, an existing building with established residential use rights; or**
- (v) an extension to an existing dwelling which is in scale with the original dwelling and does not become the dominant feature; or**
- (vi) in accordance with the 'rural exceptions policy' Policy D.8.**

#### **Explanatory Memorandum**

**6.40** The protection of the countryside for its own sake and the prevention of a dispersed development pattern are both key to the achievement of the sustainable development objectives of the Plan. Policy D.10 is accordingly intended to ensure that isolated development does not occur in the open countryside whilst recognising that in certain circumstances housing may still need to be allowed, for example where it is either necessary to support the economic viability of a business or will enable the continued use of existing built development. Where permission is granted for housing for the purpose of agriculture or forestry, arrangements should be made to ensure that the dwelling

remains for agricultural or forestry use. Wherever possible, dwellings for agricultural and/or forestry purposes should be sited within the agricultural or forestry complex.

**6.41** For the purposes of Policy D.10 an 'enterprise' comprises farm diversification businesses or other businesses where a location outside a settlement is essential to their successful operation.

**6.42** In the context of criterion (iv) of Policy D.10, "size" means the volume, scale, and height of a building.

### Unidentified Sites (Windfall Sites)

#### Policy D.11

In providing for the overall number of dwellings set out in Policy D.1, an allowance will be made for the contribution that it is reasonable to expect will be found by way of 'windfall' sites. Any proposed development of such sites will be judged against the development strategy of the Structure Plan as well as the need to maintain the character of residential areas, where relevant, in addition to other relevant policies in the Structure Plan.

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.43** Each year a considerable number of sites become available for housing development in the County as a result of planning permissions on sites which have not been identified in Local Plans. These are known as "windfall" sites. By definition the precise location of such sites cannot be known but an overall estimate of the scale of their contribution to the overall housing provisions can be made based on past trends, adjusted to take account, where appropriate, of changes in planning strategies and policies. Policy D.11 allows for windfalls contributions to meeting the housing provision of the Structure Plan provided their location is appropriate.

**6.44** For the purposes of Policy D.11, windfall sites may be brownfield or greenfield. Although PPG3 states that windfall sites comprise previously developed sites (i.e. brownfield sites) only, the Panel who conducted the Examination in Public into the County Structure Plan accepted that there are particular local circumstances in Worcestershire that warrant a different line being taken on greenfield windfalls to that in Government guidance. Windfall sites are those with a threshold of 10 dwellings (5 dwellings in Malvern Hills District in recognition that many housing sites in the District are very small). Sites with a threshold greater than 10 dwellings should generally be brought forward in the context of reviews of local plans, and in urban areas particularly, through urban capacity studies.

### Housing in the Green Belt

#### Policy D.12

Housing in the Green Belt will only be allowed in those circumstances detailed in national planning guidance, currently PPG2. Where housing proposals are such that in the terms of PPG2 they constitute inappropriate development this will only be allowed where very special circumstances can be demonstrated which outweigh their inappropriateness. Housing permitted under this policy will be for local needs only in accordance with the development strategy of the Structure Plan. Proposals for housing development on major developed sites in the Green Belt are acceptable where they accord with this policy and PPG2, Annex C.

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.45** There is a presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt, but this does not preclude all forms of housing development. PPG2 (Green Belts) 1995, details those circumstances when new housing development may not be inappropriate and may be acceptable, primarily in relation to agricultural and forestry needs, limited extensions, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings, limited infilling in existing villages and the reuse of

buildings. The appropriateness of housing proposals will be assessed against the guidance set out in PPG2 or any subsequent replacement. The policy makes clear that major developed sites in the Green Belt may be suitable for housing.

**6.46** Policy D.12 applies to new dwellings. Proposals for the redevelopment of existing dwellings do not have to demonstrate local need.

### Mixed-Use Developments

#### Policy D.13

**Provision will be made in Local Plans for mixed-use developments. In identifying suitable sites, and in determining appropriate uses for the sites, District Planning Authorities should have regard to the contribution they could make to the development strategy of the Structure Plan and to Policies D.4 to D.6 where housing forms an element of a scheme.**

**Particular consideration should be given to the scope for locating mixed-use developments which include community services close to public transport nodes.**

**Planning conditions and/or planning obligations may be used to secure an appropriate mixture of uses or to ensure that certain parts of the scheme are implemented as proposed.**

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.47** National planning policy guidance (PPG1: General Policy and Principles), PPG3 (Housing) and RPG11 (Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands) encourage mixed-use development on appropriate sites. In addition Regional Planning Guidance advises that authorities should make provision for housing development which contributes to mixed-use developments in urban areas and on suitable sites in suitable rural settlements. Mixed-use developments can contribute to promoting sustainable patterns of development and help create and maintain vitality and diversity in settlements.

**6.48** Policy D.13 seeks the identification of suitable sites for mixed-use developments through the local planning process. Particular benefit in terms of minimising the need to travel may accrue from locating mixed-use developments close to public transport nodes and this should be a consideration in identifying potential sites for mixed-use development.

**6.49** PPG1 advises that plans should indicate whether planning conditions and planning obligations are likely to be used in determining planning applications. Policy D.13 makes clear that this will be the case in mixed-use developments.

### Housing Development in Rural Settlements Beyond, and Excluded from, the Green Belt

#### Policy D.14

**Housing development in existing rural settlements beyond, and excluded from, the Green Belt will be restricted to development within or adjacent to the boundary of the settlements that accord with the provisions of Policy SD.8.**

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.50** RPG11 (Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands) indicates that in the rural parts of the Region some development in existing rural settlements can help sustain local services and employment. However in many smaller settlements it will be appropriate to limit housing development to that for local needs only.

**6.51** The rural settlements to which Policy D.14 applies, and the definition of the boundaries of such settlements, will be determined in District Local Plans, but will include some of the County's larger settlements such as Tenbury and Upton. Much of the local need within the rural areas of the County is likely to be met by existing allocations in Local Plans and "windfall" development during the plan period. Any additional allocations will need to be in accordance with the application of Policy SD.8.

**6.52** National Planning Guidance in PPG3 (Housing) advises that Local Planning Authorities should make sufficient land available either within or adjoining existing villages to enable local housing needs to be met. Policy D.14 reflects this advice in respect of the suitable locations for housing land in rural settlements. The policy cross-refers to Policy SD.8 which sets out the factors to be taken into account in determining the appropriate sustainable rural settlements in which local housing needs should be met. It will be for District Planning Authorities to interpret the phrase “adjacent to” in Policy D.14 having regard to the requirements of the policy, in the context of the rural settlement.

### **Reappraisal of Planning Permissions and Local Plan Allocations**

#### **Policy D.15**

**In making provision for dwelling requirements set out in Policy D.4, District Councils will re-examine the appropriateness of Local Plan housing allocations where planning permission has not been granted and of approving applications for the renewal of outstanding planning permissions against the development strategy of the Structure Plan.**

#### **Explanatory Memorandum**

**6.53** PPG3 (Housing) indicates that issues of sustainability mean that local planning authorities should review thoroughly all applications to renew planning permissions and may, as a result, determine that some existing planning permissions no longer meet the requirements of current policy guidance and should not be renewed. Policy D.15 reflects this guidance and extends it to existing local plan allocations. The re-examination of applications to renew planning applications should take place when such applications are made. The re-examination of local plan housing allocations where planning permission has not been granted should take place in the context of local plan reviews. In both cases assessments should be

made against the development strategy of the Structure Plan. When renewal of planning permission is appropriate, consideration should be given to revising planning conditions relating, for example, to the reduction in car parking provisions and to increasing the density of development.

### **Reuse and Conversion of Buildings**

#### **Policy D.16**

**Proposals for the conversion of buildings in rural areas to other uses will be judged against the following criteria:**

- (i) whether the building is of a permanent and substantial construction;**
- (ii) the extent to which the form, bulk and general design of the converted building is in keeping with its surroundings;**
- (iii) the potential impact on town or village vitality;**
- (iv) if located in the Green Belt, whether the proposal constitutes appropriate development within the Green Belt in terms of PPG2; and**
- (v) the effect of the proposal on the character of the building and its setting.**

**Proposals for conversion to residential use will be examined with particular care to ensure that they will not have an adverse impact on local economic activity and where this is likely they will not normally be permitted.**

**Conversions to other uses will only be allowed where they can be achieved without extensive or damaging alteration and/or extension or rebuilding.**

## Explanatory Memorandum

**6.54** PPG7 (The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development) makes it clear that the reuse and adaptation of all existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of rural areas for commercial and industrial development, as well as for tourism, sport and recreation. Reuse and conversion can reduce the demand for new building in the countryside and should be seen as being acceptable in principle. However care needs to be exercised to ensure that reuse is acceptable in terms of scale and impact, that it does not undermine the sustainability objectives of the Plan, beneficial or harmful effects on town and village vitality are considered, and that it does not undermine the rural economy. In respect of the latter point particular attention will need to be paid to the likely impact of proposals for the conversion of industrial or commercial buildings for residential purposes. Reference should also be made to Policy D.29 which deals with the change of use of buildings in rural areas for employment purposes. Proposals should include the consideration of the presence of protected species, in accordance with Policy CTC.13.

### Residential Mobile Homes

#### Policy D.17

**The use of caravans for full-time homes is discouraged although temporary permission may be granted for sites from time to time to meet special needs which may arise. In such circumstances residential caravans and sites will be subject to the same locational requirements as permanent housing development.**

## Explanatory Memorandum

**6.55** PPG3 (Housing) indicates that local planning authorities' assessments of housing needs should include housing to help meet the needs of specific groups including occupiers of mobile homes. Nonetheless, it is considered that mobile homes are not an adequate

substitute for affordable traditional bricks and mortar housing and as such should only be considered as a short-term solution to meet special circumstances. In such circumstances they should only be permitted if they meet the same locational requirements as normal housing development.

### Gypsy Sites

#### Policy D.18

**The development of gypsy caravan sites by any agency with a genuine desire to help gypsies, or gypsies themselves, will be encouraged provided that the sites are in a satisfactory location and meet required standards.**

**The location of sites should minimise any adverse environmental effects, in particular in relation to the County landscape, conservation, and archaeological and historical assets. In general terms sites should:**

- (i) be reasonably close to or easily accessible from a main traffic route;
- (ii) be within reasonable distance of a settlement;
- (iii) be already screened or capable of being screened;
- (iv) have essential services available or capable of being made available; and
- (v) be of a size to enable them to be assimilated within the local community.

**It may be necessary in exceptional circumstances to accept the establishment of sites in designated areas of restraint.**

## Explanatory Memorandum

**6.56** Government Circular 1/94 Gypsy Sites and Planning makes clear the expectation that gypsies should be encouraged and supported in providing their own sites. The Circular also makes it clear that Structure Plans should set out broad strategic policies and provide a general framework for site provision, whilst Local Plans should provide detailed policies. In this respect it will be for District Planning Authorities to set out the standards required on proposed sites. Policy D.18 is intended to encourage, where acceptable, sites to accommodate gypsies and to give guidance at a strategic level on site location. It should be acknowledged that gypsy sites are not regarded as being among uses of land which are normally appropriate in the Green Belt. As such very special circumstances would need to be proven to outweigh their “inappropriateness” and for permission to be granted in a Green Belt location.

## Employment

**6.57** Ensuring that sufficient land is available for employment creation is an essential part of the development planning process, both in terms of the amount likely to be needed for business uses over the plan period, and its quality and general distribution in the County. Although it is difficult to quantify the link between the amount of land developed for employment use and the number of jobs created on it, it is important to ensure that the lack of suitable land for economic development does not act as a constraint to job creation and that the land identified for development is attractive to prospective occupiers. About 405 hectares of land for employment is considered to be necessary to provide a balance between new homes and jobs.

**6.58** The characteristics of the urban settlements of the County vary, both in terms of the composition of their employment structure and also in terms of their relative self-containment. In all cases however a common objective is to seek to widen the economic base by attracting new businesses and encouraging the expansion of existing businesses. In this

regard, although employment in manufacturing has been declining in the County the provision of land for manufacturing industries continues to be important in order to ensure that the County plays its part in building upon the West Midlands success as an advanced manufacturing region, a part of the vision for the Region as set out in Regional Planning Guidance.

**6.59** In the rural parts of the County agriculture underpins the economy although the decline in numbers employed in the industry and falling farm incomes has been well documented. It is recognised that many rural residents look to the urban areas for employment, however the workforce in the rural areas is expected to increase by over 5000 people up to 2011. The strategy in the superseded Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan to help rural economic diversification and to encourage the provision of local employment opportunities will be continued in the current Structure Plan.

**6.60** In drawing up policies on economic development regard has been given to both national planning policy and Regional Planning Guidance, including sub-regional strategies described in Chapter Two.

**6.61** The economic development strategy to be supported in the Plan will be to maximise the opportunities for growth and development by local businesses and quality inward investment to meet County rather than regional or sub-regional needs, including tourism related development. Development will be within a sustainable environment, the context of Regional Planning Guidance, the Plan’s objectives and the development strategy for the County. In particular:

- The Plan will seek to provide a District-wide portfolio of employment sites in the County which are attractive to differing businesses in order to facilitate job creation and widen the County’s economic base.
- Employment land will be identified at a level which will work towards a better balance between housing and employment in the main settlements in the County.

- Public/private sector speculative development of economic infrastructure on employment sites will be encouraged.
- Within the rural areas the diversification of the rural economy will be sought. Encouragement of local employment opportunities will help reduce commuting to work to the larger settlements in the County and beyond.

**6.62** The strategy is consistent with the land use elements of the priorities for action as set out in the County Council's Economic Development Plan.

## Employment Land Requirements

### Policy D.19

**The amounts of land to be provided for employment uses within Classes B1, B2 and B8 in each District in the County between April 1996 and March 2011 are as follows:**

**about 55 hectares in Bromsgrove District, not including that required to meet some of the needs of Redditch District;**

**about 45 hectares in Wyre Forest District;**

**about 65 hectares to meet the needs of Redditch District, some of which is to be provided in Bromsgrove District;**

**about 75 hectares in Worcester City District;**

**about 55 hectares in Malvern Hills District; and**

**about 110 hectares in Wychavon District.**

### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.63** There is no universally accepted method for calculating the amount of land that may be required for employment use. Criticism was made of the methodology used in the now replaced Hereford and Worcester County

Structure Plan, which was based upon projecting past rates of take up of employment land, on the grounds that there was no relationship between the provision for housing and the provision for employment in the Plan. This criticism is accepted and therefore this approach has been rejected in the current Plan. A different methodology has been used by other strategic authorities, based upon estimating the amount of land that may be required by those seeking work during the plan period, but is not considered to be sufficiently robust due to the number of assumptions that would have to be made to calculate the land requirements; for example in relation to the types of jobs expected to be created and expected job densities (jobs per hectare).

**6.64** The methodology used in the Plan attempts to link the provisions of land for new housing and new employment uses. The amounts of land to be provided in each District are set at a level which work towards achieving a better balance between housing and employment in the larger settlements in the County in accordance with national and Regional Planning Guidance and the Plan's objectives.

**6.65** In order to ensure consistency with the housing requirements in each District which are expressed as 'about', given the inter-relationship between housing and employment land provision, the employment land requirements are also expressed as 'about'.

**6.66** The provision of about 65 hectares to meet the needs of Redditch District will include the existing employment land at Ravensbank Business Park in Bromsgrove District which has already been allocated to help meet the employment needs of Redditch. The same allocation at Ravensbank should not be included as part of the employment provision of about 55 hectares in Bromsgrove District. No additional land over and above that already allocated as employment land at Ravensbank Business Park is required in Bromsgrove District to meet the needs of Redditch set out in Policy D.19.

## Employment Land Portfolio

### Policy D.20

The employment land to be provided in each District under Policy D.19 will comprise a portfolio of sites in terms of size, location and quality, including the redevelopment and reuse, where appropriate, of previously developed land.

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.67** Regional Planning Guidance (RPG11) indicates that strategic authorities should develop a portfolio of sites as part of the Structure Plan process. Policy D.20 accords with this by making provision for a range of sites in each District in order to meet the differing requirements of new and existing businesses, both local and potential inward investors. The policy seeks to ensure that previously developed land in urban areas is brought back into productive use for employment, where this is a suitable use of the site, in order to encourage urban regeneration, help reduce the need to travel and make the best use of existing infrastructure. There should be a reasonable expectation that land identified in accordance with this policy will be readily capable of being developed during the plan period in order that a genuine contribution is made to the achievement of the economic strategy.

**6.68** In determining the appropriate portfolio of sites, local planning authorities may consider the need for quality greenfield sites. Reference should be made to the Explanatory Memorandum to Policy SD.7 which makes provision for their consideration. In assessing the appropriate employment land portfolio, District Councils should have regard to local employment needs, particularly in rural areas.

## Allocation of Land for Economic Development

### Policy D.21

Land should be allocated for economic development in accordance with Policies

SD.6 and SD.7 and only where there is a reasonable expectation that it will be available for development during the Structure Plan period. In all cases land proposed for economic development should be well served, or capable of being well served, by public transport.

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.69** In order to implement the development strategy of the Plan, the allocation of land for economic development in local plans should accord with Policy SD.6, which concentrates outstanding development needs within or adjacent to named settlements, and with the sequential approach to development set out in Policy SD.7. There should be a reasonable expectation that land identified in accordance with Policy D.21 will be readily capable of being developed in order that a genuine contribution is made to the achievement of the economic strategy.

**6.70** Consideration should be given to whether land and buildings formerly occupied by Class B uses should be recycled for employment use (and therefore count towards meeting the requirements of Policies D.19 and D.20) or re-allocated for other uses.

**6.71** All sites should be readily accessible by means other than the private car in order to provide the opportunity to minimise harmful vehicle emissions and reduce road congestion.

## Criteria for Additional Employment Allocations

### Policy D.22

District Councils may provide for additional releases of employment land where:

- (i) there are clear and justifiable reasons why a balanced portfolio of sites in accordance with Policy D.20 cannot be achieved without the allocation of additional land; or

- (ii) as part of the review of Local Plans it is shown that existing employment commitments are not all in the correct location to balance new housing growth; or
- (iii) it is shown to be essential to ensure a continuing supply of readily available land during the Structure Plan period taking into account take-up rates since the beginning of the Structure Plan period.

## Review of Existing Employment Commitments

### Policy D.23

District Councils should review existing employment land allocations and planning permissions for employment use proposed for renewal in order to comply with Policy D.20 and to avoid over provision where additional allocations are made in accordance with Policy D.22.

### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.72** Policy D.22 allows flexibility in the provision of employment land to take account of the possibility that, whilst sufficient land may have been identified to meet the requirements of Policy D.19, the range of such sites may fail to provide a suitable employment land portfolio required under Policy D.20. Policy D.22 also allows District Councils to identify additional employment land allocations in those circumstances where, through the process of reviewing local plans, existing commitments are considered not to be suitably located to help achieve a better balance of new housing and employment, which is one of the objectives of the Structure Plan. The third criterion in Policy D.22 seeks to ensure that a lack of readily available land for employment does not inhibit job creation. It will be for District Councils to make a judgement on whether such a situation exists, taking into account rates of employment land development during the Structure Plan period to help inform their decisions. Local planning authorities must be satisfied that the development of sites in the existing employment land portfolio is genuinely constrained in implementing criterion (iii) of Policy D.22.

**6.73** Annual monitoring of employment land in all Districts will be required for the successful operation of Policy D.22.

### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.74** In implementing Policy D.23, the review of existing employment land allocations in local plans should take place in the context of local plan reviews. Existing allocations which are considered to have little prospect of development in the Plan period or which are in inappropriate locations having regard to the development strategy of the Structure Plan should not be carried forward. Reviews of applications to renew planning permissions against Policy D.23 should be carried out when such applications are made.

**6.75** In reviewing existing employment land commitments, land and buildings occupied by Class B uses at the time of the local plan review should not be included unless the local planning authority are satisfied that the land and buildings will become vacant and is not expected to be reoccupied during the local plan period.

## Location of Employment Uses in Class B8

### Policy D.24

The location of new wholesale warehouse and distribution centre development within Class B8 of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) will be such that access to railways and/or waterway termini is maximised. Any change in navigation status of rivers will be subject to the requirements of the Environment Agency.

## Explanatory Memorandum

**6.76** Warehouse and distribution development within Class B8 of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) often requires major land take and generates significant vehicle movement, in particular heavy goods vehicles. In order to reduce the impact of this on urban areas and to reduce the need to transport goods by road haulage, such uses should be located where alternatives to road transport can be utilised, including sites with access to railways and/or waterway termini. Reference should be made to Policies T.1 and T.15 in the Plan which set out additional factors to be taken into account when considering the location of industrial development, in particular the accessibility profile of proposed locations and development type, and the transference of freight from roads to other forms of transport.

**6.77** Where it is proposed to make use of rivers for the movement of freight which would lead to an increase in the present length of navigable rivers or which would require the development of marinas it will be necessary to take account of the requirements of the Environment Agency. This will include undertaking an assessment of both the environmental consequences and the effects on other river users.

### Use of Employment Land for Specific Uses Within Class B

#### Policy D.25

In order to ensure that a range of employment opportunities are encouraged and that the full employment potential of individual sites are realised, the development of suitable individual sites may be restricted to a specific use within Class B of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended).

## Explanatory Memorandum

**6.78** The allocation of sites for employment use in Local Plans generally allow development within Class B1, B2 and B8 of the

Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended). To help ensure that a portfolio of employment sites is provided to meet the needs of different users, Policy D.25 allows District Planning Authorities to restrict the development of suitable individual sites to uses within Class B of the amended Use Classes Order. For example the most appropriate use of a site may be for Class B1 (office, high technology and light industry) in order to achieve greater job creation than its use for warehousing.

### Office Development (Class A2 and Class B1)

#### Policy D.26

The preferred location for new office development within Classes A2 and B1 of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) in the County will be within the town centres of the following urban areas in the County: Worcester, Redditch, Kidderminster, Bromsgrove, Malvern, Droitwich, Stourport, Evesham, Pershore, Bewdley, Tenbury and Upton.

Where a suitable site is not available in the town centre, the following sequential approach will be adopted to identifying whether a suitable alternative location exists: in an edge-of-centre site, a district or local centre, and only then out-of-centre locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport.

It will be for the developer in proposing a site to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority that the above approach has been followed.

District Councils should follow the above approach in identifying sites in Local Plans for office uses.

## Explanatory Memorandum

**6.79** Office developments can attract a large number of trips, often of considerable distances, both by employees and visitors. In order to minimise the number and length of

vehicular trips made and to provide reasonable access by alternative modes of transport to the private car, office developments within Classes A2 and B1 of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) will generally be located in town centres where major public transport facilities are to be found and where they can contribute to the vitality and viability of town centres. It is recognised however that suitable sites may not always be available for office developments in town centres. In such circumstances it may be appropriate to permit office uses on the edge of the town centre where access by public transport is an attractive alternative to the car and where access may also be gained by walking or cycling. Only in those cases where neither town centre nor edge-of-town locations are suitable should office development in out-of-centre locations be favourably considered. For the purposes of Policy D.26 a town centre location comprises the main centre of the urban area, and not district or local centres, which provide a broad range of facilities and services and which fulfil the function as a focus for the community and for public transport. "Edge-of-centre" locations are those outside the town centre but within reasonable walking distance of it. "Out-of-centre" is a location that is clearly separate from the town centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

**6.80** It will be for District Councils in their Local Plans to interpret Policy D.26 in the light of the local characteristics of settlements and the scale and type of office proposed.

**6.81** The policy enables the application of the sequential approach to identifying suitable sites for commercial and public offices which attract a lot of people in line with Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 (Town Centres and Retail Development). The suitability of a site for development should be judged in particular in terms of its size, parking, traffic generation, servicing arrangements and effect on the urban character of the surrounding area as well as against other policies in the Plan.

## New Building for Business Uses Outside the Green Belt

### Policy D.27

**Proposals for the development of new buildings for business purposes or for the expansion of existing businesses outside the Green Belt will be permitted in or adjacent to rural settlements where proposals are in accordance with other policies in the Structure Plan, in particular Policy SD.8.**

### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.82** National planning policy (PPG7) indicates that development plans should encourage employment opportunities suitable in scale in rural centres and should indicate the circumstances in which new development will be allowed within or adjacent to villages and country towns.

**6.83** Policy D.27 helps to promote economic diversification in rural areas by encouraging employment opportunities in sustainable rural settlements that accord with Policy SD.8. It also seeks to improve the economic viability of existing rural settlements in order to support their role as foci for local communities. Moreover by providing for local employment opportunities in rural settlements, it is hoped that commuting to larger settlements will be minimised.

**6.84** The level of new employment development should be appropriate to meet the local needs generated by the local population.

## New Building for Business Purposes in the Green Belt

### Policy D.28

**Proposals for the development of new buildings for business purposes or for the expansion of existing businesses in the Green Belt will only be permitted in those settlements identified in Local Plans where infilling is acceptable, and should be of a scale appropriate to the location.**

## Explanatory Memorandum

**6.85** The construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is generally inappropriate development. However national planning guidance contained in PPG2 allows for a limited number of exceptions including development in those villages identified in local plans where limited infilling is acceptable. Policy D.28 seeks to encourage local employment opportunities in villages “washed over” with Green Belt notation in local plans whilst at the same time safeguarding the purposes of the Green Belt and the amenity of the settlements. This will help promote viable rural communities and reduce the need to commute to work elsewhere.

**6.86** Whilst Policy D.28 sets out Structure Plan policy in respect of building for business uses in the Green Belt, it is acknowledged that proposals for business uses on major developed sites in the Green Belt is the subject of Government policy guidance in Annex C of PPG2 (Green Belts). This will be a material consideration in assessing proposals in such locations.

### Change of Use of Buildings in Rural Areas for Employment Purposes

#### Policy D.29

**When considering a proposal for the change of use of a building in a rural area, priority will be given to the change of use for employment purposes and will be permitted provided that:**

- (i) the building proposed to be reused is permanent and substantial and can be converted without major or complete reconstruction;**
- (ii) where the proposal is in the Green Belt, the effect on the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in PPG2 is no greater than that of the existing development; and**

- (iii) the proposal will not generate trips by heavy goods vehicles on unsuitable roads.**

**Proposals for the expansion of reused buildings will be considered against the same criteria. Proposals for expansion of reused buildings in the Green Belt will be refused where they conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it.**

## Explanatory Memorandum

**6.87** Policy D.29 seeks to ensure that economic diversification in rural areas, including the Green Belt, is maximised by prioritising change of use proposals for employment purposes in suitable locations while at the same time protecting the rural environment generally and the Green Belt from inappropriate development. The policy also allows for suitable existing built resources to be brought back into productive use. Proposals which are likely to result in a significant increase in numbers and length of journeys to work by car are unlikely to be acceptable since they would conflict with the aim of moving towards a sustainable pattern of development.

**6.88** Examples of buildings which may be suitable for conversion under Policy D.29 include barns and other farm buildings. The policy will contribute to rural regeneration through diversification of the economy. The policy also supports the role of countryside stewardship by the farming community.

**6.89** In order to promote road safety and protect local amenity no planning permission will be granted under Policy D.29 which would result in the use of heavy goods vehicles on unsuitable roads.

### Farm Diversification

#### Policy D.30

**Proposals for the diversification of agricultural units will be supported where they meet the requirements of other**

**policies in the Structure Plan and are, where possible, sited within the farm complex.**

### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.90** Many farmers are diversifying beyond the traditional agricultural industry in order to supplement their incomes and maintain the viability of the farm and consequently benefit the local community. Policy D.30 is supportive of these initiatives subject to the protection of the rural environment and the promotion of sustainable development.

**6.91** PPG7 states that it is usually preferable for farm diversification schemes to reuse good quality existing buildings and put them to a new business use, rather than build new buildings in the countryside. However the nature of some activities may be such that new building will be required and sometimes necessarily in locations where the activity arises or is undertaken. Where possible, new buildings should be located within the farm complex (main group of farm buildings) so as to minimise the impact on the landscape and contain access needs to one area.

### Retailing

**6.92** Shopping is an essential need which is increasingly being undertaken as a leisure activity as personal incomes and personal mobility increase. The retail industry forms a major part of Worcestershire's economy, employing about 15,000 people directly and with more jobs indirectly dependent on retailing in the related distribution sector. The retail industry has undergone rapid change over the last 20 years and this has resulted, amongst other things, in many out-of-town shopping developments which can sometimes be contrary to the principles of sustainable development.

**6.93** In urban areas the long standing trend among the retailing industry towards locating large new shops outside town centres, where free car parking can be provided and

access by car is often easier than to the town centre, has resulted in concern about the continuing strength of town centres' shopping facilities.

**6.94** In rural areas, the trend towards one-stop shopping for food in superstores in and around towns and the increase in car based personal mobility which allows this to take place, have contributed to making many traditional village shops unviable. In Worcestershire the number of parishes without a shop increased from 33% to 48% between 1981 and 1997. A similar decline has occurred in the number of post offices, the number of parishes without such a facility increasing from 35% to 52% during the same period. This decline in retail outlets has resulted in increased car travel over longer distances for the purchase of even the smallest number of items. In addition local residents without access to a car or who are unable to drive are disadvantaged. National Planning Guidance PPG6 (Town Centres and Retail Developments), recognises that village shops play a vital economic and social role in rural areas.

**6.95** It is important therefore that up-to-date land use policies are in place which recognise the role of retailing in society, its importance in underpinning the health of town centres and rural communities, and the contribution it can make to achieving a sustainable pattern of development.

**6.96** A key aspect of the guidance in PPG6 is the introduction of the sequential approach to the identification of suitable sites for retail development. The preferred location for retail development is the town centre, then edge-of-centre, district centre, and only then out-of-centre sites in locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport. The guidance also advises on the key considerations that should be applied to considering proposals for retail development in out-of-centre locations.

**6.97** The Government's objective is to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres and to ensure the availability of a wide range of shops to which people have easy access. The guidance encourages employment, entertainment and leisure facilities as well as

shops in town centres by applying the above sequential approach to their location and makes clear that easy access to town centres should be by a choice of means of transport, not only by car. Mixed use development in town centres and the retention of key town centre uses are to be encouraged. Government policy also seeks to support local centres in both urban and rural areas.

**6.98** In February 1999 the Government issued a clarification to PPG6 in respect of retail proposals which, in essence, required applicants to demonstrate both the need for additional facilities and that a sequential approach has been applied in selecting the location or the site, where the site proposed is at an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location. This guidance should be applied equally to proposals for extending existing edge-of-centre and out-of-centre development.

**6.99** Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11) reflects national guidance on town centres and retailing and indicates that the emphasis in PPG6, that town centres will be the preferred location for new retail development, is appropriate throughout the Region.

**6.100** In accordance with this national and regional guidance and to help achieve the Plan's objectives of enhancing the role of settlements as centres of service provision, and encouraging development which will help retain and enhance the vitality of settlements, the following retail strategy will be pursued in the Plan: the preferred location for retail developments that attract many trips will be town centres; new retail developments which cannot be accommodated in town centres will be expected to locate in an edge-of-centre location; and only then in out-of-centre locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport.

## Policies

### Retail Hierarchy

#### Policy D.31

**Retail proposals in the following centres should be of a scale which is appropriately related to the roles of those centres and should retain and reinforce the following retail hierarchy:**

**Worcester City** Sub-Regional centre;

**Kidderminster** Major County centre;

**Redditch** Major County centre;

**Evesham** Minor County centre;

**Bromsgrove** Minor County centre;

**Malvern** District centre;

**Droitwich** District centre;

**Pershore** Minor District centre;

**Stourport** Minor District centre.

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.101** Government policy guidance (PPG6) advises that Structure Plans should provide a clear strategy for town centres and retail development within the County. Policy D.31 reflects this advice by setting out the retail hierarchy in the County.

**6.102** The retail hierarchy set out in the policy was derived having regard to the classifications in Management Horizons UK Shopping Index and the retail spheres of influence of the County's towns, and adapting the descriptions in the Shopping Index to Worcestershire's context.

**6.103** The scale and variety of shopping facilities in Worcester City contributes to its sub-regional role, the retention and

development of which is a main element of the Plan's development strategy. Policy D.31 helps ensure that this role is maintained during the Plan period. Kidderminster and Redditch both have dominant shopping functions in Wyre Forest and Redditch Districts respectively and are described in Policy D.31 as major County Centres. Evesham and Bromsgrove both perform important retail roles and serve wide catchment areas and are described as minor County Centres. The towns of Malvern and Droitwich also contain a range of shopping facilities but serve more limited catchment areas and are described as District Centres. Stourport and Pershore generally serve more local needs and are described as minor District centres.

**6.104** Policy D.31 does not prevent the introduction of new retail floorspace in the named settlements provided that the level of development does not threaten the retail hierarchy set out in the policy.

### **Preferred Locations for Large Scale Development**

#### **Policy D.32**

**The preferred location for new large scale retail developments that attract many trips in the County will be within town centres.**

**Where a suitable site is not available, or cannot be made available, in the town centre, the following sequential approach will be adopted to establish whether a suitable alternative location exists: in an edge-of-centre location, and only then an out-of-centre site that is accessible by a choice of means of transport. Where an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre site is proposed, whether for new development or an extension to existing development, the need for the development must be demonstrated.**

**It will be for a developer in proposing a site to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority that the above approach has been followed.**

**District Councils should also follow the above approach in identifying sites in Local Plans where the need or capacity warrants it.**

#### **Explanatory Memorandum**

**6.105** Policy D.32 seeks to ensure that town centres are safeguarded and where possible strengthened as the principal locations for both convenience and comparison shopping so that they continue their role as foci for the community; the best use is made of existing built resources and infrastructure; and, because town centres are highly accessible by public transport, help reduce the need to travel by private car (shops are major attractors of travel demand). For the purposes of this policy a 'town centre' is defined as a city or town centre or traditional suburban centre which provide a wide range of facilities and services and which fulfil a function as a focus for both the community and for public transport.

**6.106** It will be for District Councils in their Local Plans to identify town centres, and to determine whether a location is town centre or edge-of-centre in the light of local circumstances. In this respect an edge-of-centre location will be one which allows easy access to and from the main town centre by foot. In the circumstances where no suitable sites are available, or can be made available, in the town centre for developments that attract many trips, a site on the edge of the town centre will be the preferred alternative. The most recent Government guidance (Parliamentary Answer – 11<sup>th</sup> February 1999) establishes the requirement that the need for new or extended facilities is demonstrated and a sequential approach applied to the site selection in the case of proposals which would be located at an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location. Only where no suitable sites are found in town centre or edge-of-centre locations following the sequential approach will out-of-centre locations be considered where easy access is possible by public transport.

**6.107** In considering the suitability of alternative sites, their viability and availability should also be assessed. Applicants should where necessary accept the need for flexibility

on format, design, scale of development and car parking in applying Policy D.32.

**6.108** An impact assessment will be required for proposals over 2,500 square metres gross floorspace in line with Government guidance in PPG6. District Councils should also consider whether assessments are necessary for smaller developments, depending on the relative size and nature of the development in relation to the shopping centre.

## Retailing in Out-of-Centre Locations

### Policy D.33

**Proposals for retail development that attract many trips in out-of-centre locations will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that a need exists and no suitable site is available in a town centre or edge-of-centre location.**

**Where it can be demonstrated that no suitable site is available, and a need has been demonstrated, development in out-of-centre locations should:**

- (i) not adversely affect the vitality and viability of existing town centres. Where relevant cumulative effects of any recently completed developments and any outstanding retail planning permissions in the catchment area of the town centre should be considered in assessing the effect on vitality and viability;**
- (ii) be easily accessible, or capable of being made easily accessible, by a choice of means of transport. This may require developer contributions to improve public transport accessibility;**
- (iii) where possible be in close proximity to existing major out-of-centre developments which attract vehicular trips; and**

- (iv) not normally be allowed on land allocated for other uses in an approved development plan, especially on land allocated for industry, employment and housing, where retail development can be shown to have the effect of limiting the range and quality of sites that would be available for such uses.**

### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.109** In line with national planning policy, town centres will be the preferred location for retail developments that attract many trips. Clarification of PPG6 (Parliamentary Answer – 11th February 1999) indicates that proposals for out-of-centre locations should demonstrate the need for additional new or extensions to existing facilities. A sequential approach will be applied in selecting the location in accordance with PPG6.

**6.110** Where suitable sites in town centres or edge-of-town centres are not available, Policy D.33 seeks to ensure that out-of-centre retail developments are located as far as possible in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and that they do not have an unacceptable impact on town centres. The policy applies to both new development and extensions to existing development.

**6.111** Reference should be made to PPG6 (Town Centres and Retail Development) for useful indicators for measuring vitality and viability.

**6.112** Where there is no town centre or edge-of-centre site available, locating out-of-centre retail developments close to existing major out-of-centre developments such as office complexes where possible will allow the opportunity for multi-purpose trips by car and encourage the use of public transport.

## Retail Developments in District and Local Centres

### Policy D.34

The preferred location for retail developments primarily to meet day-to-day needs will be District and Local centres. Proposals for such development should be consistent with the scale and function of the centre and should accord with other policies in the Structure Plan.

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.113** Policy D.34 seeks the location of shops which cater generally for day-to-day needs within district and local centres in order to provide the opportunity for, and to encourage, people to shop locally and so help minimise the need to travel, particularly by car.

**6.114** In line with PPG6 (Town Centres and Retail Development) district centres are defined as groups of shops separate from a town centre usually containing a supermarket or superstore and non-retail service such as banks, building societies and restaurants. A local centre is a small grouping of shops of a local nature, usually comprising a newsagent, general grocery store and sub-post office.

**6.115** In determining planning applications District Councils should interpret Policy D.34 in relation to the characteristics, scale and function of shopping centres within their areas.

## Retailing in Rural Settlements

### Policy D.35

The preferred location for retail development to meet day-to-day needs in rural areas, including conversions and extensions to shops, will be in rural settlements provided it meets the requirements of other policies in the Structure Plan.

Proposals which result in the loss of retailing uses in rural settlements will not normally be permitted unless the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that retailing is no longer a viable use.

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.116** Shops in rural settlements can play a significant role in the social and economic life of rural communities. They also contribute to the aim of reducing the need to travel by providing for day-to-day shopping needs locally. Policy D.35 establishes rural settlements as preferred locations for shops and seeks to ensure their continued presence in rural settlements, subject to their being in accordance with other relevant Structure Plan policies.

**6.117** Combining facilities such as shops and post offices may be appropriate under Policy D.35.

## Farm Shops

### Policy D.36

Proposals for retail development on farm holdings will be permitted provided:

- (i) the development involves the reuse of an existing rural building and is ancillary to the farming use of the land. Where no suitable existing building is available new building may be acceptable; and
- (ii) the development does not have an unacceptable impact on the viability of any nearby shops in a rural settlement by ensuring that non-local produce does not comprise the predominant element of the retail offer.

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.118** Farm shops can provide a significant contribution to farm incomes and also provide rural employment opportunities. Generally such development is acceptable provided any associated environmental concerns are

adequately addressed. Normally farm shops tend to be less accessible, particularly by public transport, than shops located in rural settlements. Farm shops are usually set up primarily for the sale of fresh or processed local produce. Whilst it is recognised that the range of products sold may need to be sufficiently broad to overcome problems of seasonality, non-local produce should not be the predominant element of the retail offer to ensure that the viability of any nearby village shop is not threatened. Planning conditions limiting the range of goods sold may be appropriate in such circumstances.

### **Shops in Community Buildings in Rural Settlements**

#### **Policy D.37**

**Proposals for shops in community buildings and/or managed by the local community will be permitted provided the development does not have an unacceptable impact on the viability of a nearby shop in a rural settlement.**

#### **Explanatory Memorandum**

**6.119** Opportunities can exist in rural settlements to provide a community shop and/or Post Office within a village hall or other building funded and/or managed by the local community.

**6.120** Even where such facilities provide a limited range of goods and are subject to restricted hours of opening, they can provide a valuable local service which can reduce the need to travel by car and reinforce the building's use as a focus for the local community.

**6.121** Planning permission may not be required for the use of community buildings as shops provided the hours of opening are limited and the use is not one of the primary functions of the building. Shopping facilities in community buildings should not threaten the continued operation of any shop in a rural settlement, the closure of which could result in an overall reduction in the range of products sold locally.

### **Green Belt**

**6.122** The environmental character of the northern part of Worcestershire is in large measure due to the presence of a Green Belt in the area. Strict control of development in the Green Belt has prevented the expansion of the West Midlands Conurbation into the County, restricted the expansion of the larger towns of Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Redditch and of villages and prevented development in the open countryside. This in turn has helped to ensure that people living in towns have easy access to nearby open countryside and outdoor recreation areas as well as playing a part in conserving areas of landscape and agricultural value.

**6.123** Although proposals for a Green Belt in Worcestershire formed part of the West Midlands Plan in 1948, it was not until 1975 that the then Secretary of State for the Environment approved an amendment to the County Development Plan to include a Green Belt in Worcestershire (as part of the wider Green Belt area in the West Midlands surrounding the Birmingham Conurbation and Coventry). Later that year the Worcestershire County Structure Plan was approved which included a Green Belt notation on the Key Diagram (superseding the amendment to the County Development Plan) and policies for its protection. The extent of the Green Belt in the County has remained broadly the same since then. Most of the boundaries of the Green Belt have subsequently been defined in detail in Local Plans.

**6.124** The main aims of the Green Belt in the County of preventing the sprawl of the West Midlands Conurbation and preventing the coalescence of settlements have generally been achieved. These aims continue to be relevant in view of the continuing pressure for development in the Green Belt.

**6.125** Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11 paragraph 11.2) notes that the Green Belt has served its purpose well and will continue to do so, and hence one of its objectives, to be included in development plans in the region, is to maintain and enhance the environment by ensuring a strong, effective and permanent Green Belt. RPG11 indicates that

there is no case for a fundamental review of the Green Belts in the Region. It also advises that the Green Belt boundaries should be altered only exceptionally to accommodate development. In order to achieve sustainable development objectives, authorities may exceptionally need to review the boundaries of settlements excluded from and on the edge of the Green Belt and the criteria against which any boundary re-definition should be considered should be clearly set out in structure plans and taken forward in local plans. This guidance is reflected in the sequential approach to the location of development (Policy SD.7).

### General Extent and Purposes of the Green Belt

#### Policy D.38

**A Green Belt will be maintained in the north-east of Worcestershire, with the purposes being to:**

- (i) **check the unrestricted sprawl of the West Midlands conurbation;**
- (ii) **prevent neighbouring towns and villages from merging into one another;**
- (iii) **assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;**
- (iv) **preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and**
- (v) **assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.**

The general extent of the Green Belt (shown on the Key Diagram) will cover the area to the south-west of the West Midlands Conurbation between the County boundary with Warwickshire to the east and the River Severn to the west, extended to the south of Redditch and including land between Droitwich and Worcester.

### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.126** The settlement pattern in the north of the County is characterised by several large towns and a number of large villages in relatively close proximity to each other and to the periphery of the West Midlands Conurbation. Strong economic and social links exist between these settlements supported by good road and rail networks. As a consequence of these links pressure for development on the periphery of settlements and in the open countryside has been long standing. Without the special protection of the Green Belt, within which there is a presumption against inappropriate development, there is little doubt that the continued openness of the countryside and separateness of the settlements in the north of Worcestershire would be threatened.

**6.127** Pressure for development in the north of Worcestershire is expected to persist and therefore Policy D.38 seeks to maintain the general extent of the Green Belt as identified in previous structure plans. This reflects the view of Regional Planning Guidance that there is no case for a fundamental review of Green Belts in the West Midlands.

### Control of Development in the Green Belt

#### Policy D.39

**There will be a presumption against allowing inappropriate development in the Green Belt as described in national planning guidance currently PPG2. Where proposals constitute inappropriate development in the terms of this guidance they will only be allowed where very special circumstances exist which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. PPG2 gives details of exceptions to the general prevention of inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It will be for the applicant to show why permission should be granted.**

**Development permitted in the Green Belt must also satisfy other relevant policies in the development plan.**

## Explanatory Memorandum

**6.128** Within land designated as Green Belt there is a presumption against inappropriate development in order to achieve the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in Policy D.38. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. The intention of Policy D.39 is not to replicate National Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts (1995) to which reference should be made. PPG2 indicates the types of development which are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In summary these are: new buildings for the purposes of agriculture and forestry; to provide essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries and for other uses which preserve the openness of the Green Belt; a limited extension alteration or replacement of existing dwellings; limited infilling in existing villages and limited affordable housing for local community needs; limited infilling or redevelopment of major existing developed sites identified in adopted local plans; mineral extraction and other development which maintain the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the proposals of including land in the Green Belt.

**6.129** It is important that reference is made to PPG2 for detailed advice regarding the appropriateness of the above types of development.

### Green Belt Boundary Definition

#### Policy D.40

Where Green Belt boundaries have still to be defined in Local Plans that definition will be completed. In defining boundaries District Councils should have regard to the purposes of the Green Belt set out in Policy D.38 and the need to safeguard land for longer term development needs.

## Explanatory Memorandum

**6.130** Government policy set out in PPG2 states that where detailed Green Belt boundaries have not yet been defined, it is necessary to establish boundaries that will endure. They

should be carefully drawn so as not to include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open. Otherwise there is a risk that encroachment on the Green Belt may have to be allowed in order to accommodate future development. If boundaries are drawn excessively tightly around existing built-up areas it may not be possible to maintain the degree of permanence that Green Belts should have. This would devalue the concept of the Green Belt and reduce the value of local plans in making proper provision for necessary development in the future.

**6.131** PPG2 also states that when Local Planning Authorities prepare new or revised Structure and Local Plans, any proposals affecting Green Belts should be related to a time-scale which is longer than that normally adopted for other aspects of the Plan. They should satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period. In order to ensure protection of Green Belts within this longer time-scale, this will in some cases mean safeguarding land between the urban area and the Green Belt which may be required to meet longer-term development needs.

**6.132** The detailed boundaries of the Green Belt have still to be defined in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan, which has yet to be adopted. Policy D.40 seeks compliance with the above aspects of PPG2 in respect of the definition of the Green Belt boundaries in Bromsgrove District.

### Areas of Development Restraint

#### Policy D.41

As part of the reviews of District Local Plans, District Planning Authorities will review the Areas of Development Restraint (ADR) identified in adopted Local Plans against the sustainability criteria set out in Policies SD.4 and SD.5. Those ADRs that fail to meet the sustainability criteria should not be considered for development against Policy SD.7 within the Structure Plan period.

**As part of the re-assessment of ADRs, District Councils should consider whether limited adjustments to Green Belt boundaries are necessary in order to identify new ADRs which meet the sustainability criteria in the Structure Plan for possible development needs beyond 2011.**

### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.133** Areas of Development Restraint (ADRs) to meet possible development needs beyond 2001 are identified in adopted District Local Plans for Wyre Forest, Redditch and Wychavon Districts and in the Hagley/Clent Local Plan in Bromsgrove District. Policy D.41 requires the review of these ADRs against Structure Plan policies SD.4 and SD.5 to ensure that only those which satisfy the sustainability criteria in these policies are considered for development in the Structure Plan period to 2011 following the sequential approach to development set out in Policy SD.7.

**6.134** The Green Belt boundary should not be redefined to include those ADRs that fail to meet the sustainability criteria in local plan reviews because their original identification as ADRs indicates that the land does not serve the purposes of including land in the Green Belt as set out in PPG2.

**6.135** Although there is no need for a general review of Green Belt boundaries to meet development requirements in the period up to 2011, Policy D.41 recognises that the Green Belt may be too tightly drawn around some settlements to enable sustainable patterns of development to be pursued. The policy therefore requires District Councils to consider the need to identify new ADRs to meet possible longer term development needs beyond 2011. The sustainability criteria in Policies SD.4 and SD.5 together with Policy D.38 should inform this consideration.

## Reuse of Major Developed Sites in the Countryside Outside the Green Belt

### Policy D.42

**Proposals for the reuse of major developed sites in the countryside outside the Green Belt will be determined against the relevant Sustainable Development policies and Policy D.20 and should be brought forward through the development plan process. Proposals for retail use will not be permitted.**

### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.136** Within the County, outside the Green Belt, there are several major developed sites in the countryside such as military establishments, hospitals and facilities which are no longer required for their original use. These represent a resource, the reuse of which could, in some instances and locations, make a contribution to meeting the housing and employment provisions in the Structure Plan. Their reuse can also result in environmental improvements to 'brownfield' sites whilst at the same time protecting the natural and built environment. However proposals may also conflict with the aim of moving towards a sustainable pattern of development in terms of ensuring accessibility by means other than the private car and minimising the need to travel.

**6.137** In view of the scale of development possible on major developed sites, it is important that proposals for such sites should come forward through the development plan process to ensure that they are compatible with the development plan strategy. Particular attention should be paid to how well the proposals sit with the principles of sustainable development but also the intentions of Policy D.20 which requires a portfolio of employment land for each District.

**6.138** Proposals that are not in accordance with the development plan will not be allowed unless other material considerations justify granting planning permission.

## Crime Prevention and Community Safety

### Policy D.43

**When considering development proposals Local Planning Authorities should give due regard to those factors, in particular in relation to design, which have the ability to impact upon crime or the fear of crime. The prevention of crime should always be seen as a material consideration when determining planning applications.**

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.139** The prevention of crime and the safety of people and their property is an important aspect of the quality of life, and is one of four key elements of the County's vision.

**6.140** Circular 5/94 established crime prevention as a material consideration in the planning process, and therefore should be given due regard in the development plan. The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) places a statutory function on local authorities to consider the implications for crime and disorder when exercising their functions, such as planning.

**6.141** Development can be designed and located so as to maximise natural surveillance and the perception of safety, and to minimise the anonymity of public spaces and the opportunity for crime and disorder. The intention of Policy D.43 is to ensure that crime prevention and community safety are duly considered in the planning process.

## Telecommunications

**6.142** Modern telecommunications are an essential and beneficial element in the life of local communities and in the national economy. New telecommunications technology is now spreading rapidly to meet the growing demand for better communications at home, in business and in public services.

**6.143** Fast, reliable and cost-effective communications can attract business to an area, can enrich life at home, and offer new choices in education, entertainment, shopping and banking. Modern telecommunications can also benefit the environment by reducing the need to travel.

## Telecommunications

### Policy D.44

**Development proposals for telecommunication systems should normally be allowed where they satisfy the requirements of other policies in the Structure Plan.**

**Consideration should be given in the first instance to the opportunity for using existing structures and all applications for new structures will be required to demonstrate why the use of existing structures or buildings, including sharing existing masts, cannot satisfy their requirements. In all cases installations should be removed when no longer required.**

#### Explanatory Memorandum

**6.144** The aim of national telecommunications policy, as set out in PPG8: (Telecommunications) is to ensure that people have a choice as to who provides their telecommunications service, a wider range of services from which to choose and equitable access to the latest technologies as they become available. The Government's general policy is of facilitating the growth of new and existing systems whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. PPG8 states that planning authorities are encouraged to respond positively to telecommunications development proposals, and they should take account of the advice on the protection of urban and rural areas in other PPGs.

**6.145** Where proposals for the development of telecommunication systems are in accordance with other Plan policies, especially

those concerning the protection of the County environment, they should normally be allowed. Consideration should be given to whether existing structures and, where appropriate, existing telecommunication pylons, rather than new structures, can be used to facilitate the development of telecommunication systems. It will be necessary for all applicants for new structures to demonstrate why existing structures and pylons cannot be used. Where existing telecommunication pylons or installations are no longer required for operational use, they should be removed in the interests of amenity.