

# First Draft Watford Local Plan 2020-2036



WE ARE  
**WATFORD**



[watfordlocalplan.co.uk](http://watfordlocalplan.co.uk)



**WATFORD**  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL



## Contents

1 Glossary

### 5 **Chapter 1: Introduction**

- 5 1. 1. What is the Local Plan?
- 5 1. 2. Why is a Local Plan required?
- 5 1. 3. How does the Local Plan fit in with national policy?
- 5 1. 4. What work has been undertaken to date?
- 6 1. 5. Figure 1: Timetable
- 6 1. 6. Why are we undertaking this consultation?
- 6 1. 7. What happens next?
- 7 1. 8. How to use this document
- 7 1. 9. Strategic and local Policies
- 8 1. 10. Collaborative working
- 8 1. 11. Watford Corporate Plan
- 8 1. 12. About Watford
- 12 1. 13. Economy
- 14 1. 14. Environment
- 16 1. 15. Society
- 17 1. 16. Spatial strategy and vision
- 17 1. 17. Vision
- 18 1. 18. Strategic objectives

### 20 **Chapter 2: Spatial Strategy for Achieving Sustainable Development**

- 20 2. 1. Introduction
- 20 2. 2. Scale of growth and delivering new development
- 22 **Policy SD2.1 Planning for Growth**
- 23 2. 3. Achieving sustainable development
- 24 **Policy SD2.2 Achieving Sustainable Development**
- 25 2. 4. Making Effective Use of Land
- 26 **Policy SD2.3 Making Effective Use of Land**
- 26 2. 5. Safeguarding Strategic Infrastructure
- 27 **Policy SD2.4 Safeguarding and Connecting to Strategic Transport Infrastructure**
- 27 2. 6. Protecting Green Belt Land
- 28 **Policy SD2.5 Protecting Green Belt Land**
- 28 2. 7. Delivering the strategy: development contributions
- 29 **Policy SD2.6 Development Contributions**
- 29 2. 8. Strategic Development Areas
- 29 2. 9. Watford Junction Strategic Development Area
- 30 **Policy SD2.7 Watford Junction Strategic Development Area**

31	2. 10. Bushey Station Strategic Development Area
31	<b>Policy SD2.8 Bushey Station Strategic Development Area</b>
32	2. 11. Town Centre Strategic Development Area
33	<b>Policy SD2.9 Town Centre Strategic Development Area</b>
33	2. 12. Lower High Street Strategic Development Area
34	<b>Policy SD2.10 Lower High Street Strategic Development Area</b>
35	2. 13. Dome Roundabout Strategic Development Area
35	<b>Policy SD2.11 Dome Roundabout Strategic Development Area</b>
37	<b><i>Chapter 3: Supporting Sustainable Transport</i></b>
37	3. 1. Introduction
37	3. 2. Cycle Parking and Storage
38	<b>Policy ST3.1 Cycle Parking Storage</b>
39	3. 3. Figure 4: Cycle Parking Standards
41	3. 4. Car Parking, Car Cubs, and Electric Vehicles
42	<b>Policy ST3.2 Car Parking, Car Clubs and Electric Vehicles</b>
42	3. 5. Figure 5: Car Parking Standards
43	3. 6. Travel Plans and Transport Assessments
44	<b>Policy ST3.3 Access, Travel Plans and Transport Assessments</b>
45	<b><i>Chapter 4: Housing</i></b>
45	4. 1. Introduction
45	4. 2. Allocated Sites for Housing Delivery
46	<b>Policy H4.1 Allocated Housing Sites for Delivery</b>
46	4. 3. Figure 6: Site Specific Development Parameters and Consideration
60	4. 4. Housing Mix
61	4. 5. Figure 7: Housing Mix Needs (based on current occupancy trends) for Watford
61	4. 6. Figure 8: Affordable Housing
62	4. 7. Figure 9: Housing Mix Needs (Redistribution Mix) for Watford Local Plan 2020 - 2036
62	<b>Policy H4.2 Housing Mix</b>
62	4. 8. Affordable Housing
63	<b>Policy H4.3 Affordable Housing</b>
63	4. 9. Redevelopment of Garage Sites
64	<b>Policy H4.4 Garage Site Development</b>

64	4. 10. The ageing population
64	4. 11. Adaptable dwellings
65	4. 12. People with dementia
65	4. 13. Figure 10: Key principles of good design
66	<b>Policy H4.5 Accessible and Adaptable Homes</b>
66	4. 14. Specialist and supported living accommodation
67	<b>Policy H4.6 Specialist housing</b>
67	4. 15. Self-build and custom housebuilding
67	<b>Policy H4.7 Self-build and custom housebuilding</b>
67	4. 16. Residential Conversions
68	<b>Policy H4.8 Residential conversions</b>
<b>70</b>	<b><i>Chapter 5: Building a Strong, Competitive Economy</i></b>
70	5. 1. Introduction
70	5. 2. Designated Employment Sites
71	<b>Policy E5.1 Designated Employment Sites</b>
71	5. 3. Economic Development Outside of Designated Employment Locations
72	<b>Policy E5.2 Economic Development Outside of Designated Employment Locations</b>
72	5. 4. Mixed Use Development
73	<b>Policy E5.3 Mixed Use Development</b>
<b>74</b>	<b><i>Chapter 6: Tackling Climate Change, Adaptation and Resilience</i></b>
74	6. 1. Introduction
74	6. 2. Sustainable Construction and Design
75	<b>Policy CC6.1 Sustainable Construction and Design</b>
76	6. 3. Flooding and Drainage
77	<b>Policy CC6.2 Flooding and Resilience</b>
<b>78</b>	<b><i>Chapter 7: Quality Design and Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment</i></b>
78	7. 1. High Quality Design
79	<b>Policy DC7.1 Strategic Principles for High Quality Design</b>
79	7. 2. Quality of place
79	<b>Policy DC7.2 Quality of Place</b>
80	7. 3. Building Design
81	<b>Policy DC7.3 Building Design</b>
82	7. 4. Taller Buildings
82	<b>Policy DC7.4 Taller Buildings</b>

83	7. 5. The Historic Environment
83	7. 6. Heritage Assets
83	<b>Policy DC7.5 Heritage Assets and the Historic Environment</b>
84	7. 7. Nationally Listed Buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens
84	<b>Policy DC7.6 Nationally Listed Buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens</b>
84	7. 8. Conservation Areas
85	<b>Policy DC7.7 Conservation Areas</b>
86	7. 9. Locally Listed Buildings
86	<b>Policy DC7.8 Locally Listed Buildings</b>
86	7. 10. Archaeology
87	<b>Policy DC7.9 Archaeology</b>

## **88 Chapter 8: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment**

88	8. 1. Introduction
88	8. 2. The Green and Blue Infrastructure Network
88	<b>Policy NE8.1 Green and Blue Infrastructure Networks</b>
89	8. 3. Protecting Open Space
89	<b>Policy NE8.2 Protecting Open Space</b>
89	8. 4. Providing New Open Space
90	<b>Policy NE8.3 Providing New Open Space</b>
91	8. 5. Biodiversity Net Gain
91	<b>Policy NE8.4 Biodiversity Net Gain</b>
92	8. 6. Managing Air Quality
92	<b>Policy NE8.5 Managing Air Quality</b>
93	8. 7. Managing the Impacts of Development
93	<b>Policy NE8.6 Managing the Impacts of Development</b>

## **94 Chapter 9: Ensuring the Vitality of Town and Local Centres and Providing Communities with Facilities and Services**

94	9. 1. Introduction
94	9. 2. Town and Local Centres
94	9. 3. Figure 11: Retail Hierarchy
95	9. 4. Vitality of the Town and Local Centres
96	<b>Policy V9.1 Vitality of the Town and Local Centres</b>
96	9. 5. Approach to Retail in the Town Centre
97	9. 6. Primary and Secondary Retail Frontages
97	<b>Policy V9.2 Retail Frontages</b>

98	9. 7. Non-Retail Uses in the Intu Shopping Centre
98	<b>Policy V9.3 Non-Retail uses in the intu shopping centre</b>
98	9. 8. District and Local Centres
99	<b>Policy V9.4 District and Local Centres</b>
99	9. 9. Infrastructure Provision
100	<b>Policy V9.5 Infrastructure Provision</b>
100	9. 10. Quality Communications
101	<b>Policy V9.6 Utilities and Digital Infrastructure</b>
101	9. 11. Cultural and Community Facilities
101	<b>Policy V9.7 Community Facilities</b>
102	<b><i>Appendix A: Monitoring Framework</i></b>
104	<b><i>Appendix B: Planning Use Classes</i></b>
106	<b><i>Appendix C: Car Parking Standards Worked Example</i></b>

## Glossary

### **Active travel**

Non-motorised forms of transport, such as walking and cycling.

### **Affordable Housing**

Housing for sale or for rent for those whose needs are not being met by the market. This includes social rented housing, affordable rented housing and intermediate housing.

### **Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)**

A report submitted to the Government by local planning authorities which assesses the Local Development Framework production process and the effectiveness of policies.

### **BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method)**

First published by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) in 1990, BREEAM is the world's longest established method of assessing, rating and certifying the sustainability of buildings.

### **Brownfield Land**

Land that has previously been developed for industrial, commercial or residential purposes.

### **Building Regulations**

Standards set for design and construction which apply to most new buildings and alterations to existing buildings in England and Wales.

### **Carbon Neutral**

This is where the amount of carbon emitted by an organisation or entity is offset by carbon emission savings made by, or associated with, the organisation.

### **Car-lite development**

Development where residents rely less on private vehicles and more on sustainable modes of travel, such as walking, cycling and taking public transport.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

A standard fee that is applied to all new major development to support infrastructure delivery. Introduced by the Planning Act (2008).

### **Conservation Area**

An area designated under the Planning Act 1990 (Listed Buildings and Conservation) as being of special historic or architectural interest to be preserved and enhanced.

### **Controlled Parking Zones**

An area where all on street parking is controlled and restricted.

### **Development Contributions**

Money that those developing sites will pay to support the delivery of infrastructure required by the development. This could be through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or a Section 106 Agreement.

### **East of England Forecast Model**

Prepared by Cambridge Econometrics, this is a tool used to set out job projections using a variety of baseline forecasts for the East of England and sub-region.

### **Exception Test (Flooding)**

A test applied to sites with flood risk, where there are not enough suitable sites with lower risk of flooding available for allocation. The test is required to show that the sites with flood risk will be safe to develop and that any sustainability benefits of developing the site will outweigh the flood risk.

### **Flexible workspace**

Shared working space, often used by those who work remotely.

### **Green Belt**

A strategic land use designation that exists to restrict urban sprawl, protect the countryside from encroachment, stop the merging of towns and encourage the recycling of brownfield land.

### **Green Infrastructure**

Networks of multi-functional green spaces which deliver environmental and social benefits for communities. This can include parks and gardens, green corridors, natural green spaces, amenity green space and allotments, amongst other green spaces.

## **Hectare (ha)**

A unit of measurement commonly used to measure land. 1 hectare = 10,000 sqm = 2.5 acres.

## **Housing mix and tenure**

The range of unit sizes (1 bed, 2 bed, 3 bed units) and tenure types (market and affordable housing) in a development.

## **Locally Listed Building**

Buildings or monuments of local interest that contribute to the heritage, identity and streetscape of Watford. Locally listed buildings do not merit statutory listing under the Planning Act (1990), but are considered to be of architectural or historic value.

## **Major Development**

In terms of residential development, greater than 10 dwellings or 0.5 hectares. In terms of other development, a floor space greater than 1000 sqm would be considered to be major development.

## **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)**

The Government department responsible for planning and local government.

## **Minor Development**

In terms of residential development, less than 10 dwellings or 0.5 hectares. In terms of other development, a floor space lower than 1000 sqm would be considered to be minor development.

## **Mixed Use Development**

A development that is comprised of different land uses, such as employment and residential uses.

## **Nationally Listed Building**

A building or monument that has been judged to be of national historical or architectural interest under the Planning Act (1990). This subjects it to additional protection.

## **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

A national policy document which provides the framework to guide local planning authorities, particularly when preparing a Local Plan. It sets out how planners at the local level can steer development towards sustainable solutions, by providing an overarching national policy approach to follow.

## **Objectively Assessed Need (OAN)**

A method of calculating of the number of homes required in a local authority area, without considering the impact of policy constraints on delivery. This figure will change annually as national projections are revised. For Watford, this figure is currently 793 dwellings per annum. The capacity of a borough to meet its objectively assessed need is assessed as part of site capacity work, including the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

## **Overheating**

Discomfort to occupants of a building caused by highly insulated and airtight buildings with inadequate natural or mechanical ventilation systems.

## **Plot Ratio**

The ratio of the floor area of a building to the land on which it sits. It is often used to measure how intensively land is being used.

## **Policies Map**

Local Plan policies and proposals identified on an Ordnance Survey Map.

## **Primary shopping frontages**

An area that is dominated by retail uses, which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods.

## **Public Realm**

Parts of the town that are free and accessible for everyone to use, including streets, public squares and open spaces.

## **Retail hierarchy**

The retail hierarchy classifies and ranks retail areas based upon their capacity to provide certain types of retail units and the distance that a customer would be prepared to travel to reach them.

## **Secondary shopping frontages**

A retailing area that includes a greater diversity of uses than primary shopping frontages. This may include restaurants, cinemas and employment uses, including offices.

## **Section 106**

A reference to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) which allows a local planning authority to enter a legal agreement with a developer to directly finance the necessary infrastructure to support a new development.

## **Self-Build and Custom Build Housing**

When an individual, or a group of individuals, organises the design and construction of their own home.

## **Single and Dual Aspect**

A dwelling that is single aspect only has windows on one side of the dwelling. A dwelling that is dual aspect has windows on more than one side.

## **Sequential Test (Flooding)**

A test that aims to steer new development to the areas with the lowest probability of flooding.

## **Sequential Test (Retail)**

A test that aims to steer main town centre uses towards town centre locations first. If no town centre locations are available, the test steers the uses towards edge of centre locations next, then out of centre locations (with preference for sites that are well-connected to the town centre).

## **Surface Water Flooding**

Flooding caused by rainwater that cannot be absorbed into the ground.

## **Sustainable Development**

Defined by the United Nations General Assembly as '*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*'. In terms of planning, the National Planning Policy Framework states that sustainable development should be viewed in a social, economic and environmental context.

## **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)**

An approach to drainage which seeks to decrease the amount of surface runoff, decrease the velocity of surface runoff, or divert it for other purposes. This reduces the risk of sewer discharge and flooding.

## **Town Centre Uses**

Defined by the National Planning Policy Framework as retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

## **Transport Assessment**

A comprehensive review that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. The assessment also identifies measures to improve accessibility and safety for different travel modes, including walking and cycling.

## **Travel Plan**

A long term management strategy for a site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives.

## **Urban Grain**

The pattern of plots and buildings in an area or neighbourhood that define the urban landscape.

## **Use Classes**

The Town and Country Planning Order (1987) places different land uses into categories. In practice, changes between use classes are likely to require planning permission. A list of the planning use classes can be found in Appendix B.

## **Viability**

Ensuring that developer costs and policy obligations do not compromise the deliverability of a development.

## **Windfall Development**

Development sites that are not specifically identified in the Local Plan.



## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1. 1. What is the Local Plan?

1. 1. 1. The Watford Local Plan sets out the growth strategy for the borough, identifies how much development will take place and where it should be delivered. It sets out sites suitable for development and planning policies that will be used to determine planning applications. The Local Plan will cover the period from 2020 to 2036.

### 1. 2. Why is a Local Plan required?

1. 2. 1. A Local Plan is required to guide new development so that it comes forward in a coordinated manner, making the best and most appropriate use of land to meet the needs of the community.

1. 2. 2. Watford's existing Local Plan, consisting of the Part 1 Core Strategy 2006-31 (2013) and saved policies from the Watford District Plan (2003), are more than five years old. It is therefore out of date and existing planning policies have less weight when making planning decisions. A new Local Plan is required to better manage the planning process and deliver the development needed in the area.

1. 2. 3. Since the adoption of the Core Strategy there have been changes to planning legislation and national planning guidance. This includes delivering new housing to meet a housing target based on the Government's standardised Objectively Assessed Need calculations. The housing requirement for Watford has increased from 260 dwellings per year in 2013 to 793 dwellings per year in 2019. New information is also available for employment and retail provision that can more accurately reflect changes anticipated with future population growth.

### 1. 3. How does the Local Plan fit in with national policy?

1. 3. 1. Local Plans should be consistent with national policy and guidance set out by the Government. This is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019)<sup>1</sup> and the Planning Practice Guidance<sup>2</sup>. This establishes a framework from which local planning authorities can produce Local Plans.

1. 3. 2. Local Plan policies should not replicate national guidance. Instead, Local Plans should interpret national guidance to cover local issues.

1. 3. 3. Producing a Local Plan is a requirement of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012<sup>3</sup>.

### 1. 4. What work has been undertaken to date?

1. 4. 1. In September-October 2018 the council undertook the Issues and Options (Regulation 18) consultation seeking comments on the key issues facing the borough to 2036. The council has considered the comments received and these have been used to inform the preparation of this first Draft of the new Local Plan. These comments are publically available alongside this consultation document. The timetable for the Local Plan is set out in Figure 1. Further information about the preparation of the Local Plan and key stages set out below are available in the council's Local Development Scheme (2019).

---

1 [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2)

2 [www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance)

3 [www.legislation.gov.uk/uk/si/2012/767/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uk/si/2012/767/contents/made)

## 1. 5. Figure 1: Timetable

Issues and Options Consultation	September – October 2018
First Draft Local Plan Consultation (Preferred Options)	September – November 2019
Publication of the Final Draft Local Plan	May 2020
Submission of the Draft Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate	September 2020
Independent Examination of the Local Plan	October 2020- February 2021
Adoption of the Local Plan	May 2021



## 1. 6. Why are we undertaking this consultation?

1. 6. 1. The council is now asking for your views on the First Draft Local Plan. This version of the Plan has been prepared under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This consultation stage is also informally referred to as ‘Preferred Options’ and is used to develop and consolidate views on draft planning policies as a follow up to the previous Issues and Options consultation.

1. 6. 2. This is a draft version of the Plan which means that elements of it can still change before it is published and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination. Alterations can be made based on the feedback received from this consultation or the findings of any emerging evidence.

## 1. 7. What happens next?

1. 7. 1. This First Draft Local Plan sets out the council’s preferred approach to new development up to 2036. This can be amended to reflect local and strategic issues and ensure that it is consistent with national planning guidance.

1. 7. 2. The responses received for this consultation will be used to inform the Final Draft Local Plan. These comments, and the council’s response to these, will be made available to the public when the Final Draft Local Plan is published for consultation. This is planned for May 2020.

1. 7. 3. The council has been updating its evidence base to better understand the needs of the borough. This information will be used to help determine how we can best meet them in a way that is well considered and managed during the next plan period. This work will continue to ensure the new Local Plan is based on the best information available.

1. 7. 4. The Sustainability Appraisal is an iterative process that is used to identify the most suitable and sustainable approaches to development in a local plan. The Appraisal sets out the alternative policy approaches considered to date and the potential impact they could have on the three elements of sustainability; economy, environment and society. This work will be further refined for the publication version of the draft Local Plan.

1. 7. 5. A viability assessment of the Local Plan will be undertaken prior to the document being

submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination. Viability is the process of assessing whether a site is financially deliverable by considering if the value generated by a development is more than the cost of developing it. This assessment will consider the viability of each site and policy and how these cumulatively contribute towards the Plan. Therefore, the preferred approaches set out in this Plan are subject to change. For example, the draft policy on affordable housing requires 50% provision and the provision for accessible and adaptable homes is 20%. The viability assessment will test if these requirements are deliverable or if there is scope to raise the requirements currently set out on a site by site basis.

## **1. 8. How to use this document**

1. 8. 1. The Local Plan is a document that covers a wide range of complex and inter-related issues and sites considered suitable for development. The document has nine chapters with three primary topic areas including:

- Planning policies to guide new development and determine planning applications;
- Development areas where significant change may take place (referred to as Strategic Development Areas);  
and
- Defined sites where specific uses can come forward.

1. 8. 2. The information used to support the draft policies and sites is set out in the council's evidence base.

## **1. 9. Strategic and local Policies**

### **Strategic Planning Policies**

1. 9. 1. These policies set out the planning requirements that are essential to guide Watford's future growth. They provide the foundations of a planning framework to inform planning decisions. Strategic planning policies are material considerations when determining planning applications. These are set out in Chapter 2.

### **Local planning policies**

1. 9. 2. Local planning policies are intended to address local issues. In Watford, they ensure that the development is of high quality that will help Watford prosper as development takes place. As a suite of planning policies, together they are used to guide new development that delivers the vision and objectives set out in the Local Plan. They are a material consideration alongside national guidance when determining planning applications. These are set out in chapters 3 to 9.

### **Strategic Development Areas**

1. 9. 3. These are strategic areas in the borough where new development will be supported in principle if it is consistent with the Local Plan. These policies set out key principles to steer development, but do not set out specific details. These will be determined on a case by case basis. These can also be supported through other planning documents such as planning briefs, masterplans and supplementary planning documents. The Strategic Development Areas are set out in chapter 2.

### **Site allocations**

1. 9. 4. Site allocations define land that has been identified for new development. These sites are where development would be acceptable in principle for a specified use such as housing, employment and community facilities or a mix of uses. The development potential is identified where appropriate and constraints that need to be considered when proposals are prepared. These are set out in chapter 4.

## **1. 10. Collaborative working**

1. 10. 1. The Localism Act (2011) and National Planning Policy Framework requires local authorities who share cross boundary issues to work collaboratively and constructively with stakeholders when preparing a Local Plan. This is referred to as the 'Duty to Cooperate'. The intention is that strategic issues facing the wider area are considered early in the planning process and potential solutions identified that can be delivered in a more strategic way.

1. 10. 2. In Watford, some of the key strategic issues include the provision of new housing to support a growing population, providing space for employment uses necessary to help support a thriving economy, and the delivery of infrastructure (e.g. schools) to improve existing provision and support new development. Key stakeholders working with Watford Borough Council include the South West Hertfordshire authorities of Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans City and District and Three Rivers alongside Hertfordshire County Council as well as Government agencies and organisations. The five local authority areas that make up the South West Hertfordshire form their own Housing Market and Functional Economic Market Areas. This means that housing and employment needed within the wider area should be met within these administrative boundaries.

1. 10. 3. Assessments have been carried out to objectively identify the housing and employment capacity of Watford. This has identified that Watford will be unable to meet its housing target within its own boundaries. Economically, Watford's strength is to provide floor space to support office based employment while other forms of employment support businesses within designated employment areas. The council's evidence base has indicated that Watford will be able to support office based employment but will have a shortfall of land available to meet other forms of employment related to general industry. The council engaged with neighbouring authorities through the preparation of joint evidence bases and other discussions about how to most appropriately meet its development needs both locally and strategically.

1. 10. 4. The council has been working with infrastructure providers to identify the requirements needed to support the growth anticipated in the area and how these can be implemented. This engagement is on-going and will continue as the Local Plan is implemented. Key infrastructure providers include Hertfordshire County Council, the health service, emergency services and utility companies.

1. 10. 5. In addition, the council has been meeting with government agencies including the Environment Agency, Homes England, Highways England and Historic England. The council has also been engaging with Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and wider area neighbouring authorities including the Greater London Authority.

## **1. 11. Watford Corporate Plan**

1. 11. 1. The Watford Corporate Plan sets out the overarching strategy for the borough. It aims to see Watford as a place where communities thrive, the area prospers economically and people have good access to quality services and facilities. To achieve the goals set out in the Corporate Plan the Council has identified the importance of planning issues such as managing Watford's housing needs, encouraging smart growth and economic prosperity, providing for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and delivering a digital Watford to empower the community.

## **1. 12. About Watford**

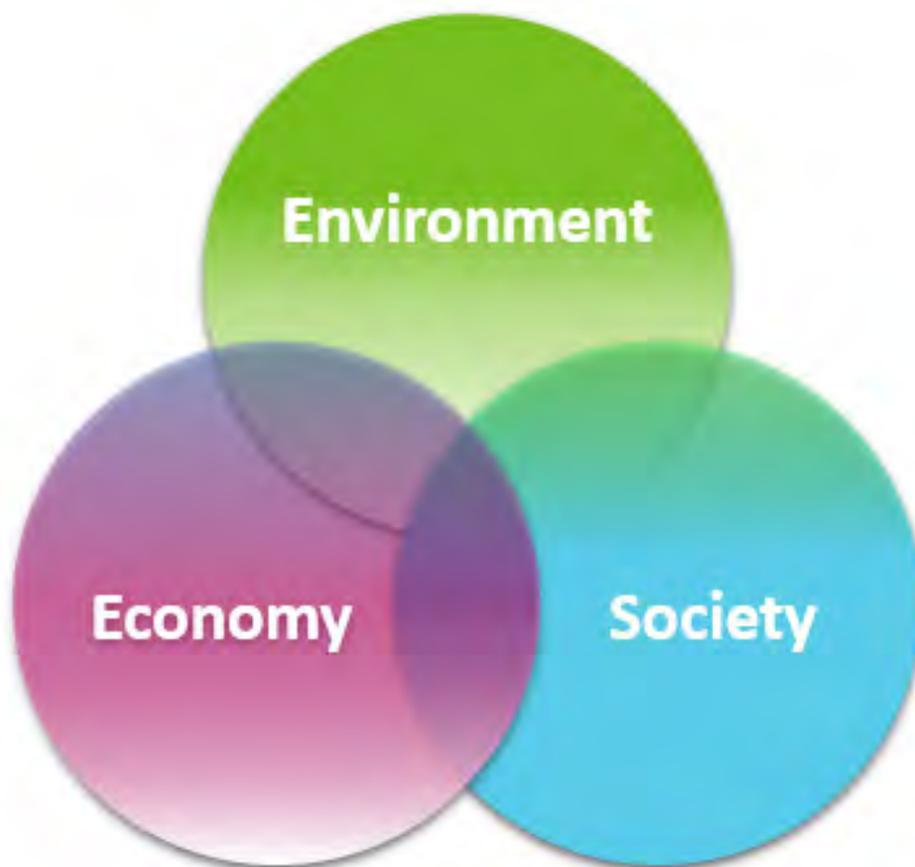
1. 12. 1. Watford is located in Hertfordshire, 17 miles north west of central London and is adjacent to the Greater London Area. The borough has an area of 2,142 hectares (8.3 square miles) and is the only non-metropolitan borough wholly within the M25. The borough is the largest urban area in South West

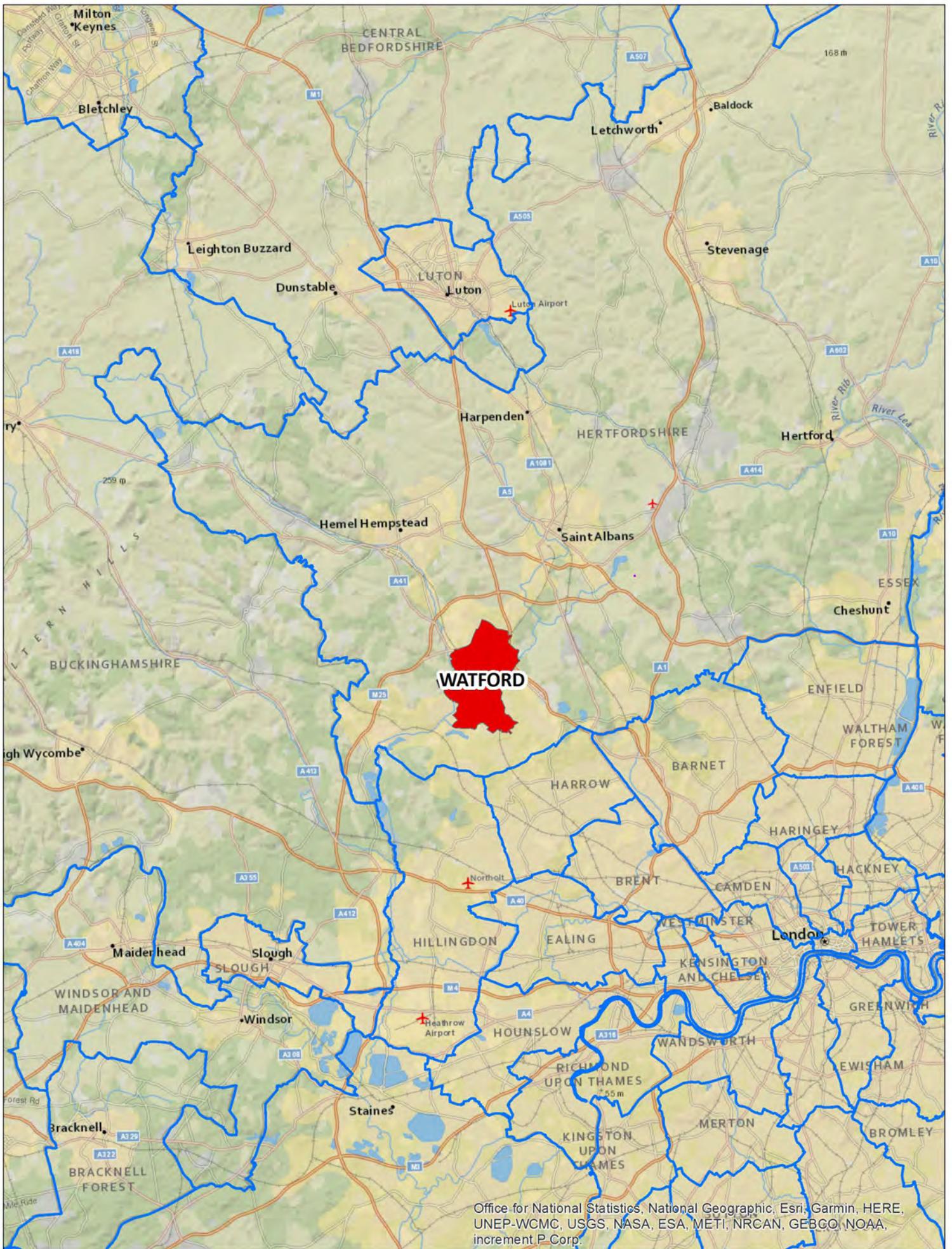
Hertfordshire and supports has the highest population density. It also has a strong concentration of services and facilities with considerable employment, retail and leisure opportunities. Formerly a market town, the settlement has grown significantly over time with its core being Watford town centre.

1. 12. 2. The built areas of the borough are characterised by traditional forms of residential and employment development away from the town centre. While there are exceptions, the built up area at present is characterised by relatively low level development in outlying residential areas with higher buildings found closer to the town centre and key transport nodes such as Watford Junction. More recently, planning applications have been granted to support higher density development in areas such as West Watford and Clarendon Road to deliver new homes and employment floor space needed in the borough.

1. 12. 3. Watford is strongly influenced by London, which provides good access to services and facilities and opportunities for employment. However, coinciding with these benefits are increased growth pressures on the borough that have not been encountered to such an extent in the past. These pressures are the fundamental challenges facing the borough in the years ahead. The Local Plan, in conjunction with other corporate strategies will seek to guide this new development to meet the needs of the community and achieve sustainable development.

1. 12. 4. Around Watford's periphery, the Green Belt surrounds much of the urban fringe. This has acted to constrain the continued expansion of urban growth into the countryside. Land designated as Green Belt covers 19% of the land area within Watford's boundary and will continue to perform a strategic role in Watford's development and growth in areas beyond its boundary. Much of the Green Belt in the borough provides a secondary function as public open space and semi-natural areas to benefit the community, wildlife and acts to mitigate potential environmental issues such as flood risk.





**Figure 2: Location Map**

Town Hall, Watford,  
Hertfordshire WD17 3EX



Scale 1:300,000



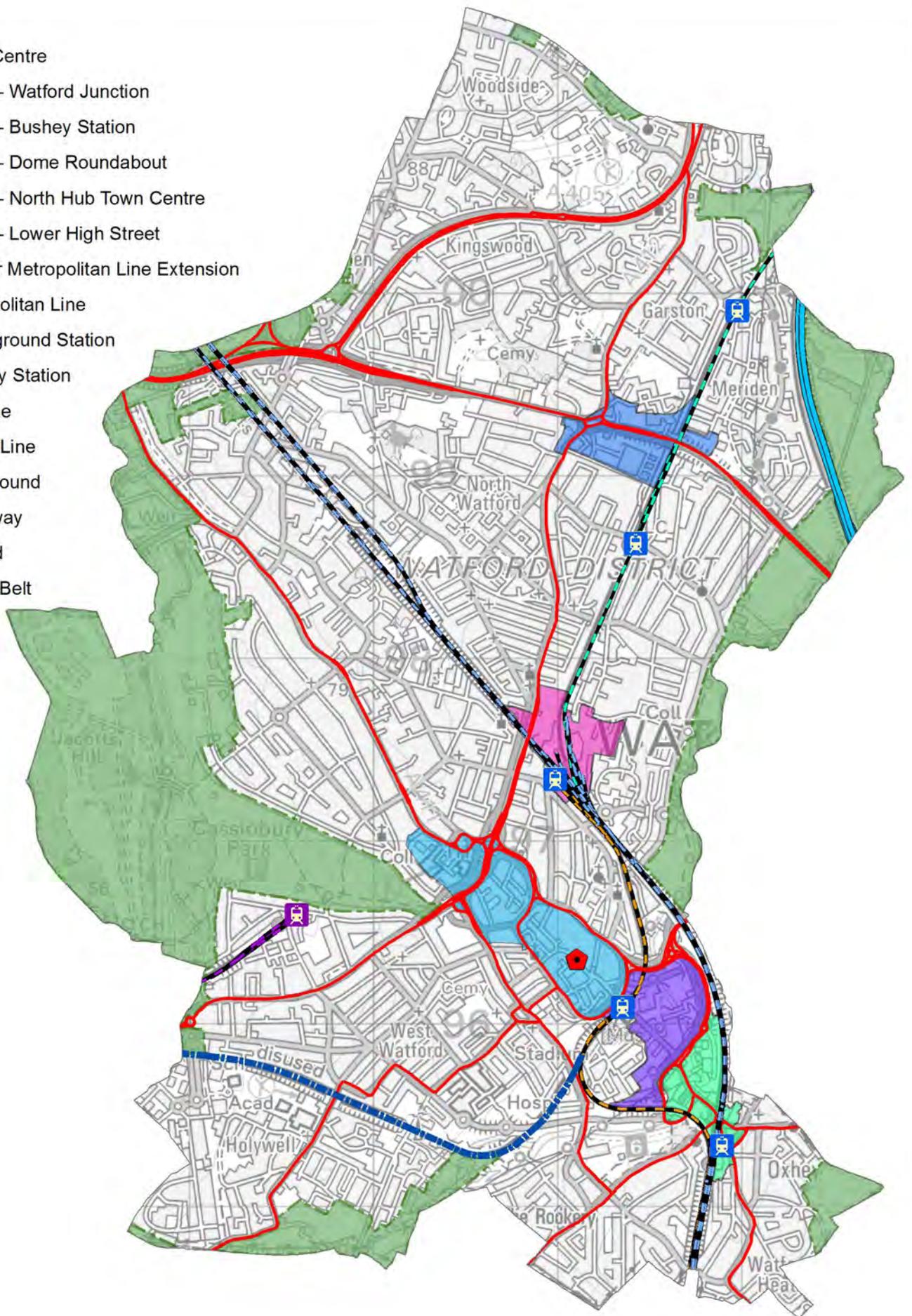
© Crown copyright and database rights  
2019 Ordnance Survey 100018689

Aerial 2010 © Geoperspectives

GI & Aerial 2013 © Watford BC

# Legend

-  Town Centre
-  SPA 1 - Watford Junction
-  SPA 2 - Bushey Station
-  SPA 3 - Dome Roundabout
-  SPA 4 - North Hub Town Centre
-  SPA 5 - Lower High Street
-  Former Metropolitan Line Extension
-  Metropolitan Line
-  Underground Station
-  Railway Station
-  Mainline
-  Abbey Line
-  Overground
-  Motorway
-  A Road
-  Green Belt

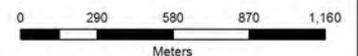


Town Hall, Watford,  
Hertfordshire WD17 3EX

Figure 3: Key Diagram



Scale 1:29,000



© Crown copyright and database rights  
2018 Ordnance Survey 100018689  
Aerial 2010 © Geoperspectives  
GI & Aerial 2013 © Watford BC



### 1. 13. Economy

1. 13. 1. Originally a market town known for traditional industries including printing and brewing, Watford has evolved to become an important regional centre for retail, leisure and business. The town centre provides a diverse array of services and facilities that serve the wider South West Hertfordshire and supports a significant amount of employment. The wider town centre area contains a mix of chain retailers and private operators, creating a varied mix of retail and restaurant provision to meet local demand. This is complemented with a healthy number of new businesses across the borough that are able to benefit from incubation periods that help them to prosper in the long term and contribute towards the local economy.

1. 13. 2. The five South West Hertfordshire authorities of Watford, Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three Rivers and St Albans form the functional economic market area and share strong economic relationships in terms of employment provision and commuting. Watford has a particularly strong relationship with the Three Rivers area while connections with Dacorum and Hertsmere are moderate. There is also a strong in-out commuting relationship with London. One of Watford's key market strengths is that it has a relatively young workforce. This is reinforced by migration trends which indicate the number of people moving from London to Watford,

particularly among people in their 30s, is increasing.

1. 13. 3. Employment has continued to grow at 0.4% per annum in South West Hertfordshire, however, productivity has fallen to below the national average. Business start-up rates are well above the national and regional average, indicating there is a demand for flexible and affordable workspace to foster new businesses.

1. 13. 4. The area of Clarendon Road is a hub of office based employment of regional importance with high job densities close to the town centre and Watford Junction, a major transport hub. The area supports an intensive knowledge and information technology economy, however, there is a shortage of floor space available in Watford for new office development which has constrained growth of the sector.

1. 13. 5. Other employment areas in the borough are more tailored for industrial uses and lower job densities. Watford Business Park provides a mix of employment uses in the west of the borough. To the east are the Balmoral Road/Imperial Way and Greycaine employment areas which are more focused on general industrial uses. Businesses requiring higher land take, such as storage and distribution, are commonly located outside of the borough where there is better access to the transport network and land is less constrained. In Watford and across South West Hertfordshire, there is a shortfall of land available for industrial uses, particularly small premises, which account for 44% of leased floor space in the area. This restricts economic growth in these sectors. In Watford, this is supplemented by low vacancy rates indicating that while there is strong demand for floor space, the lack of availability/supply could be resulting in the displacement of jobs and businesses. Intensification of existing employment land provides an opportunity to make better use of employment areas in Watford, while mixed use development in the area has become more common in recent years.

1. 13. 6. The resident workforce in Watford is generally highly skilled overall, however, this is not met with the same level of growth in high skill jobs in the borough. An effect of this is that many residents are commuting out of Watford for these types of jobs. Opposite to this, while more people commute into Watford than commute outwards overall there is an increasingly higher proportion of jobs requiring relatively lower skills.

1. 13. 7. One of the key drivers supporting Watford's attractiveness as a destination for employment and as a base to access employment further afield is the good access to strategic transport routes. Watford is served by two main line train stations (Watford Junction and Bushey) making central London accessible in less than 20 minutes. The Metropolitan Line serves two stations in central Watford (Watford and Watford High Street) while the Abbey Line connects the town to St Albans.

1. 13. 8. The road network is well connected to strategic road corridors including the A41, M1 and M25. Traffic congestion is an issue in the borough, particularly around key junction points such as Bushey Arches and the network of busy roads encompassing the town centre. Alternative travel options within the borough such as bus routes are coming under increasing pressure and face constraints similar to other road users while infrastructure to encourage cycling is fragmented and poor at connecting destinations across the town.

1. 13. 9. To the north of Watford are nationally important growth areas. The growth corridor in the Luton and Central Bedfordshire area should support the Watford and South West Hertfordshire economy, however, the growth corridor from Cambridge to Oxford (via Milton Keynes) may eventually compete with Watford for inward investment.



## 1. 14. Environment

1. 14. 1. Watford is characterised as an urban borough with approximately 80% of the area consisting of existing built up areas and urban green space, while the remaining 407 hectares is designated as Green Belt.

1. 14. 2. The rivers Colne and Gade, along with the Grand Union Canal, provide structure to much of the green infrastructure network in the borough. Along these corridors are areas of flood risk which enable green spaces to provide a variety of functions for the environment and the community.

1. 14. 3. Green space is well-distributed across most of the borough, enabling people to have good access to local recreation facilities. These spaces encourage physical activity and social interaction to benefit people in terms of their physical and mental health. These are key elements to encourage healthier lifestyles as part of the growth strategy set out in the Local Plan. However, constraints within the built up area limit the potential to deliver new open space of any significant size. Accordingly, the focus has been on providing quality open space to best serve the community with a significant number of open spaces awarded Green

Flag status and work being undertaken to improve other parks to obtain this status. With future development required to make best use of the limited land available, innovative forms of new open space provision and enhancing the quality and connectivity of open spaces within the green infrastructure network will become increasingly important as the population continues to grow.

1. 14. 4. The built up area is traversed by a number of strategic road corridors including the A41 (Hempstead Road) and A405 (North Orbital Road) while the A412 (Rickmansworth Road and St Albans Road) provides a primary east-west vehicle connection through Watford to neighbouring built up areas. The strategic location of Watford to the transport network, in conjunction with the A411 ring road around the town centre, provides very good accessibility, however, it can facilitate a vehicle dominated environment along with associated environmental issues related to air, noise and light pollution.

1. 14. 5. In July 2019, Watford Borough Council declared a 'climate emergency' reflecting concerns about carbon emissions, the potential impact it will have on the local environment and achieving sustainable development. Many of the carbon and greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere are attributed to lifestyles which in turn are often dependent on past and current forms of development and infrastructure and access to employment, retail and social facilities. While Watford has lower emissions per capita than the national average, new development provides an opportunity to improve the environment to encourage healthier lifestyles, to benefit people and help mitigate and adapt to a changing climate. To address the issue successfully as part of the Local Plan, there is a need for the council, development partners and infrastructure providers to work collaboratively to deliver measures such as more energy and water efficient buildings, quality green infrastructure and alternative travel options to reduce car dependency, all of which are key elements of sustainable development.



## 1. 15. Society

1. 15. 1. Watford has a population of approximately 96,700 people (Office for National Statistics, 2019). This is equivalent to 45 people per hectare making it one of the most densely populated non-metropolitan districts in England. The population of Watford is projected to increase to 110,295 people by 2036, an increase of approximately 14%.

1. 15. 2. Watford has a relatively young population with 21% of the population aged between 0-14 years compared to 18% nationally and 25% aged between 26-40 years compared to 20% nationally. The number of households in the borough is increasing with greatest need for one, two and three bed units. This reflects trends where single person households and households with two adults is increasing while households with dependent children is decreasing.

1. 15. 3. The town experiences some of the highest levels of in-migration in the county, reflecting its attractiveness as a place to live and ensuring it will continue to have a diverse character moving forward. There are approximately 39,900 homes in the borough with an average household size of 2.4 persons per

dwelling.

1. 15. 4. Similar to other areas in South West Hertfordshire, Watford has experienced rising house prices that have not been matched by the rate of rising household incomes. This is increasing pressure on the provision of new homes that people can afford and the types of housing available to meet their needs. These needs vary across the demographic from small sized homes for single people and couples, to family sized homes and more specialised forms of housing that can cater to people as they get older or support those who may have disabilities.

1. 15. 5. Watford's population is culturally diverse and has been changing in recent years. The existing population is predominantly British White and makes up approximately 62% of those living in the town while 38% of people come from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

1. 15. 6. Life expectancy in Watford is marginally below the national average with males expected to live 79 years and women 83 years. However, in the most deprived areas life expectancy is significantly lower for men and women by 6.6 years and 3.4 years respectively.

1. 15. 7. Overall, Watford is ranked the 194th least deprived of the 391 local authority areas in England, with no areas identified as being in the 10% most deprived parts of the country. Deprivation across the borough varies, with the wards of Central Watford and West Watford exhibiting higher levels while Park and Nascot have the least deprivation. Areas of higher deprivation are also associated with lower levels of education and income and are in poorer health more generally.

## 1. 16. Spatial strategy and vision

1. 16. 1. The vision of Watford in 2036 is based on embracing key sustainability principles and priorities set out in the Watford Corporate Plan and other key strategies. These are aimed at delivering important objectives to meet the needs of the community. More widely, the vision for Watford will contribute towards a larger vision for South West Hertfordshire that is to be a successful place for people and businesses offering a high quality of life and economic prosperity and opportunity.

### 1. 17. Vision

1. 17. 1. **In 2036**, Watford will continue to be a welcoming and vibrant place, where people enjoy a high quality of life in a place that is attractive for everyone to visit and partake in recreational activities. Sustainable development will have been delivered through quality development schemes that have considered how different parts of the borough work together to affect the whole area including the economic, environmental and social aspects of everyday life. The town will have been adaptable during a period of change, supporting innovative approaches to development that benefit the town and the South West Hertfordshire area. Residents will be able to live in the types of housing they need and will have access to education and employment opportunities. The environment will have been protected for the benefit of future generations and semi-natural areas of green infrastructure will have been enhanced for the benefit of ecology and wildlife.

1. 17. 2. **Economically**, Watford will have increased its contribution towards the local area and attracted business investment to support jobs growth, particularly in the Clarendon Road and designated employment areas, reaffirming its key role in the regional economy. The employment opportunities in the town will increase with a highly skilled labour force and the provision of quality education facilities. These will support a diverse employment sector ranging from office and general industry to the service sector, including retail and leisure. Employment areas will have been intensified making more effective use of land and higher employment densities with appropriate areas support a mix of complementary uses.

1. 17. 3. Watford town centre will have been improved to be a destination to visit, providing an enjoyable experience for people of all ages while supporting a diverse range of retail shops, leisure facilities and restaurants as part of the daytime and evening economy. The town will have an attractive range of cultural activities available reinforcing Watford's appeal as a destination for leisure and recreation activities.

1. 17. 4. **Environmentally**, Watford will have a high quality, clean and attractive public realm that encourages people to be more active through walking and cycling to enjoy the environment around them. The network of open spaces and parks and the connections between them will have been improved, providing access to better recreational activities that will be accessible to everyone. Important biodiversity habitats will have been protected and connectivity within the green infrastructure network improved increasing their value to local people and wildlife. New development designed to minimise their impact on the environment including the reduction of air pollution will have taken significant steps to mitigate and adapt to the impacts associated with climate change.

1. 17. 5. Assets related to Watford's heritage will have been protected. New development will have taken opportunities to reuse existing buildings of historic importance and improved the settings of important features connected to Watford's past.

1. 17. 6. **Socially**, Watford will be an inclusive place for everyone, especially families. The town will be characterised by mixed and balanced communities and new development will have made a positive contribution towards this. New housing will be located in areas with good access to services and facilities with housing densities reflecting their sustainability. New homes will have been provided that reflect the type, size and tenure needed by local people and those moving to the town.

1. 17. 7. New development, supported with infrastructure such as education, pedestrian/cycle routes and quality open space, will support a socially inclusive community that is welcoming for people at different stages of their lives. With local people enjoying more active lifestyles and the provision high quality non-vehicular routes that are safe, convenient and attractive, the population will be healthier and enjoy a higher quality of life for longer

## 1. 18. Strategic objectives

### Transport and mobility

1. 18. 1. The Local Plan will deliver infrastructure to provide people with a variety of travel choices including walking, cycling and public transport to access services and facilities and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage active and healthier lifestyles. The redevelopment of Watford Junction as a strategic transport node, provision of transport services along the former railway line between Watford High Street and Holywell, greater train frequency along the Abbey Line and improved connectivity with the town centre.

### Housing

1. 18. 2. New housing will be delivered to meet the needs of the population and support creation and retention of balanced and mixed communities. The density of new housing developments will reflect the sustainability of the location and make the most effective use of land. Development will ensure that a mix of homes (size and tenure) are provided on all sites that will contribute towards meeting the needs of the community. New affordable housing will be delivered to provide for those most in need and be of a mix that will support the community in the long term.

### Economic growth

1. 18. 3. Clarendon Road will attract new office based investment to support the knowledge based

economy and reinforce its regional role in the area, making best use of its location and proximity to London. Designated employment areas will be protected from non-complementary uses and intensified to support a diverse economy and mix of uses. Intensification of employment areas, mixed use developments (where appropriate) and the availability of flexible work spaces in the town will support small and innovative businesses, including start-ups, making use of its strategic location and proximity to London.

### **Climate change**

1. 18. 4. To deliver high quality, energy efficient homes and employment premises and an approach to transport where non car based travel is encouraged to establish a more sustainable pattern of development. New development will be designed or infrastructure provided to mitigate flood risk and effects associated with overheating in the built up area.

### **Historic environment**

1. 18. 5. New development will protect heritage assets and listed buildings, be sensitive to conservation areas and be designed to make best use of places with cultural value for future generations.

### **Place making and design**

1. 18. 6. Development will make best use of land, schemes will be respectful to their surroundings and in places of change or constraint they will be innovative and create a place that people can relate to and identify with. High quality new developments will be well designed to create a sense of place that has a relationship with the street and people using the surrounding area.

### **Public realm and outdoor environment**

1. 18. 7. A coordinated approach to improving the public realm that will enhance the green infrastructure network, provide clear wayfinding to local destinations around the borough that encourages active travel. Improvements will have been designed to be user friendly and part of an overall strategy to enable the public to interpret the environment around them.

### **Health and wellbeing**

1. 18. 8. To improve health, wellbeing and education and life-long learning opportunities for local people.

### **Infrastructure**

1. 18. 9. Existing infrastructure will be improved to support the borough. New development will take opportunities to provide infrastructure including education and utilities. New and improved routes connecting people to green infrastructure, with better cycling and walking access to services and facilities, provide health benefits, support biodiversity and help reduce the impact of society on the environment.

### **Monitoring and adaptive management**

1. 18. 10. Monitor and report on progress against policy objectives to learn and adapt to make policy implementation and delivery as effective as possible.

## Chapter 2: Spatial Strategy for Achieving Sustainable Development

### 2. 1. Introduction

2. 1. 1. Strategic policies provide an overarching framework to be considered for all planning proposals across the borough. The overarching objective is to achieve sustainable development in Watford with the view to ensuring this generation can meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

### 2. 2. Scale of growth and delivering new development

#### Housing

2. 2. 1. Watford is continuing to grow with an increasing population and businesses locating in the town. To meet this growth new development needs to take place, including the provision of new homes, employment and retail floor space and community facilities.

2. 2. 2. Land available for housing, employment and community facilities is very limited in the borough, with capacity identified for between 7,000 and 8,000 units. This shortfall of developable land acts to increase competition between different land uses. Therefore, it is important to find a balance of how available land can be most effectively used to meet the needs of our growing population and economy, while safeguarding the natural and historic environment.

2. 2. 3. Watford has a young population compared to other areas in South West Hertfordshire, with a high proportion of families. This creates a demand for family sized homes as well as smaller units for people when they leave home. New development needs to come forward that is able to support mixed and balanced communities. This will enable people to live in areas they are familiar with and where they have social connections, an intrinsic part of the social and economic fabric in the town. It also provides opportunities for others who want to move into the area. If the right amount and type of housing to meet the needs of a growing and changing population is not provided, there is a risk that there could be an oversupply of some types of properties and an undersupply of others. This potentially distorts the market by increasing property prices and reduces the potential for people to access the type of homes they need. There is also an increased risk that new homes and other types of development may come forward in locations that are not appropriate and could adversely affect the town in the long term.

#### Employment

2. 2. 4. New employment floor space is important to support economic growth. Based on past trends the East of England Forecast Model had indicated that the number of jobs in Watford will increase from 59,484 in 2018 to 66,248 in 2036, an increase of 6,764 jobs (11.4%)<sup>1</sup>. This is spread across a variety of sectors but is primarily related to office based employment.

2. 2. 5. Redevelopment and delivery of high quality office floor space will encourage new investment, facilitating opportunities to meet the need for 37,400 sqm of office floor space. If new floor space is not provided there is a risk that investment will be directed outside the borough, potentially having an adverse effect on economic growth in the area.

2. 2. 6. Office development in Watford is, and will continue to be, primarily concentrated in the Clendon Road and Watford Junction area. This area benefits from good connections with London and northwards towards Milton Keynes and Birmingham. Additional office development and other employment uses will be supported in other designated employment areas, such as Watford Business Park. Flexibility is provided within the Local Plan to enable the area to respond to market demands and changes that may be identified through future evidence based studies.

1 The South West Hertfordshire Economic Study Update (2019) has recommended that growth projections used to inform planning policies be based on floor space requirements rather than number of jobs.

2. 2. 7. In South West Hertfordshire there is a need for approximately 48 hectares of industrial floorspace, of which 9.8 hectares is needed in Watford. It is important to provide a variety of land and floorspace to support different sectors and employment skills. There is not enough land available in the borough to allocate new sites for industrial, storage and distribution uses. Therefore, the council is working with neighbouring areas to identify an approach to providing the land required using the strengths and attributes of each area to support a vibrant sub-regional economy.

2. 2. 8. While new employment floor space will generally be of higher quality, it is important that work space offering different qualities is available to support different types of businesses. This helps to ensure that new investment can contribute towards more established businesses while lower quality or value premises can support smaller businesses and start-ups. Together, this contributes towards a more diverse economy and jobs requiring a wide variety of skills.

## **Retail and leisure**

2. 2. 9. Watford town centre is a focal point for retail and leisure activities and supports about 10% of jobs in the borough. Recent investment in the town centre, including the public realm in the High Street, intu shopping centre and future works along Clarendon Road, will further enhance the town centre's role as a regional destination. Protecting retail frontages, while encouraging more people living in the town centre areas, is important to support the High Street and other smaller retail centres as they adapt and change over time.

2. 2. 10. New retail development is anticipated to come forward through the redevelopment of existing sites within the borough. Providing there is no net loss of retail floor space, the Local Plan supports the redevelopment of retail areas that can deliver a mix of uses including residential and employment where these are compatible. This will be particularly important in the Lower High Street where a more efficient use of land is encouraged. When well designed, these can make a positive contribution towards creating a sense of place and achieving sustainable development.

## **Infrastructure**

2. 2. 11. Critical to supporting growth is the provision of new infrastructure and improvement of existing facilities where they will service the new development. Examples of new infrastructure provision can include education facilities, GP surgeries, utilities such as electricity, water and broadband, community facilities and green infrastructure. Public transport improvements including pedestrian and cycle infrastructure are also needed to achieve a shift away from car dominated transport in favour of more healthy and sustainable lifestyles.

2. 2. 12. New development affords opportunities to deliver well integrated infrastructure provision. In this regard, it is important that a proposal demonstrates that it understands and reacts appropriately to its surroundings and will be effectively integrated into them. Where new infrastructure requirements have been identified as part of a site, these are set out as development considerations supporting the respective site allocation.

2. 2. 13. Physical infrastructure can be provided when development comes forward, however, it can also be delivered using developer contributions. This will be done using mechanisms such as the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 (s106) agreements. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies infrastructure required in the borough during the plan period, however, with a high reliance on windfall development, infrastructure requirements may need to be reassessed to consider site specific issues that may not have been accounted for.

## **Collaborative working**

2. 2. 14. Many of the growth issues facing Watford are also being considered by other local authorities in the area who are facing similar challenges. Some issues are locally specific while others are more appropriately considered in a strategic context.

2. 2. 15. Throughout the process, the council has engaged, and will continue to do so, with neighbouring authorities, infrastructure providers and development partners. It is particularly important to work with neighbouring authorities in South West Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire County Council to effectively consider how unmet development needs in Watford can be delivered more strategically. Watford has identified developable land to support 5,736 new homes and made an allowance for an additional 1,670 homes to be delivered through windfall sites not allocated in the Local Plan. Land for other types of uses such as employment, retail and infrastructure such as primary schools, is expected to come forward through the intensification and more effective use of existing sites in the borough that may come forward as windfall.

2. 2. 16. The council's evidence base, including the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, has identified land available for new development during the plan period. The findings have demonstrated that there remains a shortfall of land available to meet Watford's growth needs. Measures have been incorporated in the Local Plan to make the most effective use of land available for development including increasing housing density requirements, revising design guidance and parking standards and setting approaches to support the intensification of existing residential, employment and retail areas when opportunities arise.

2. 2. 17. Working collaboratively, housing, employment and education facilities which are subject to development shortfalls in the borough, will be discussed with other local authorities to understand if there is capacity to support this growth in other areas. This work will likely be addressed through a Memorandum of Understanding or Statement of Common Ground in the future as the Local Plan progresses over the next year. These cross-boundary issues will likely form part of the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan; however, this work is not expected to inform this Local Plan but will support the Plan when it is time for it to be reviewed at a later date.

## **Why is this policy needed?**

2. 2. 18. The policy is required to establish the scale of growth required in Watford over the plan period. There is a need to have an understanding of the development needs over the plan period in order to plan positively for this growth.

## **What is the policy intended to do?**

2. 2. 19. Within the parameters set out, the policy provides context for local planning policies and how they are expected to contribute towards growth objectives in the borough.

### **Policy SD2.1 Planning for Growth**

During the plan period 2020 to 2036, the following approach and scales of development will be pursued:

#### **Housing**

- a. Provision for 5,736 new dwellings is identified;
- b. A framework for how Strategic Development Areas could aid the delivery of new homes is set out;
- c. Intensification of existing residential areas, particularly low density areas, which will contribute towards meeting the needs set out in the South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment (2019) will be supported;

- d. Development of windfall sites that will contribute towards the housing requirement as calculated by the standard objectively assessed need methodology is made. A windfall allowance of 105 dwellings per year that will contribute 1680 towards the housing requirement is incorporated into the Local Plan.

#### **Employment**

- e. Proposals that will deliver new employment floor space that will contribute towards delivery of 37,600 sqm of office (B1a) uses, 27,000 sqm of industrial (B1c/B2) uses and 71,000 sqm of storage and distribution (B8) uses will be supported;
- f. Intensification of existing employment sites that will contribute towards meeting the needs set out in the South West Hertfordshire Economic Study Update (2019) will be supported;
- g. Employment land will be protected and proposals that will provide new employment floor space and residential dwellings through mixed use development that will not result in any net loss of employment floor space will be supported.

#### **Retail**

- h. The redevelopment, intensification and reprovision of retail facilities that contribute towards the additional capacity of at least 5,200 sqm of convenience goods floor space and 7,100 of comparison goods floor space identified in the South West Hertfordshire Retail and Leisure Study (2018) will be supported.

#### **Infrastructure**

- i. New education facilities will be required on sites larger than 350 residential units;
- j. The route of the former Metropolitan Line Extension will be protected.

Where these needs cannot be met within the borough, the council will work collaboratively with other local authorities and development partners to deliver the housing, employment and other types of development along with supporting infrastructure required in the area.

## **2. 3. Achieving sustainable development**

### **Why is this policy needed?**

2. 3. 1. Sustainable development is inseparable from good planning. The key elements of sustainable development are equally important and relate to the economy, environment and society. To achieve sustainable development, proposals should seek to find a balance of these issues that will benefit the area without compromising the potential for growth and use of resources in the future.

2. 3. 2. Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Appendix 1). Reflecting the Resolution, at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

2. 3. 3. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out planning guidance to inform the preparation of plan making documents and planning decisions emphasising the importance of achieving sustainable development. It specifically states that planning policies should take an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions.

2. 3. 4. The scale of growth facing Watford and the South East is challenging and the planning policies set out in the Local Plan are considered to be an approach that will achieve sustainable development by steering growth in a direction that ensures society and the environment are fully considered as part of the planning process.

2. 3. 5. To make effective use of land a more sustainable development pattern is needed to provide good access to services and facilities and encourage more walking, cycling and public transport use while reducing pressure on greenfield expansion. However, this needs to be balanced against protecting the historic built environment by achieving high quality design.

2. 3. 6. Issues related to society are an integral part of sustainable development. The provision of an appropriate mix of housing types will achieve more inclusive, equitable and balanced communities, while infrastructure contributions are important to ensure that communities are not left behind in terms of services.

2. 3. 7. Collaborative working is also an integral part of preparing development schemes that will contribute towards delivering growth that will help achieve sustainable development. Early engagement with the Local Planning Authority to discuss planning proposals is encouraged to ensure that schemes will comply with the development management policies which seek to achieve environmental and social objectives.

### **What is the policy intended to do?**

2. 3. 8. With the development needs and parameters set out, the policy provides context for development management policies and how they are expected to contribute towards growth objectives in the borough by ensuring sustainable solutions are at the core of all development proposals. It seeks to aid the delivery of the vision for Watford by ensuring that planning policy achieves sustainable development.

#### **Policy SD2.2 Achieving Sustainable Development**

To achieve sustainable development, proposals for schemes larger than householder developments will be required to demonstrate how they will positively contribute towards the vision and objectives set out in the Watford Local Plan.

Planning applications will be supported where they are in accordance with planning policies set out in the Watford Local Plan and provide sustainable solutions to development needs.

Development proposals which fail to demonstrate how the following have been used to achieve sustainable development will not be supported including:

- The enhancement and integration of an area through good design;
- Making efficient use of land;
- The provision of a mix of new homes that will support balanced and mixed communities;
- Protecting employment opportunities;
- Reducing car dominated areas;
- It will not have a significant adverse effect the environment.

## 2. 4. Making Effective Use of Land

### Why is this policy needed?

2. 4. 1. For planning to achieve sustainable development it needs to steer that development in the direction of the common good. One aspect of this involves the establishment of a sustainable pattern of development based on efficient building densities. Effective use of land enables more trips to be made by foot and bicycle and improves access to services and facilities. It works to ensure that land is not underused which in turn allows more homes to be built and jobs provided while also allowing the clustering of economic activity and the better provision of services and infrastructure.

2. 4. 2. Not all of the borough is evenly serviced by access to amenities, access to jobs and schools, and access to public transport. While it is important to see uplift in densities throughout the borough area, some areas are capable of higher densities than others. However, all areas require an uplift in densities, including lower density areas away from the town centre. This is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (p.36, 2019) which states *“where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities...standards should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate”*.

2. 4. 3. The size of the uplift will depend on the sustainability and accessibility of that area and a policy is required to cater for this.

2. 4. 4. In addition, there is a general link between the design of development and the final density on site. The amount of car parking, amenity space and the housing unit mix strongly influences the final density of a site. These three components are in turn influenced by the accessibility and sustainability of the site. Accordingly, a density range which establishes a clearer expectation for the amount of car parking, unit size mix, and amenity spaces is needed.

2. 4. 5. An effective use of land policy which sets out broad ranges for the density based sustainability and accessibility credentials will optimise the use of land leading to a more sustainable pattern of growth and will enable the provision of more homes while encouraging greater use of public transport.

### What is the policy intended to do?

2. 4. 6. The policy seeks to ensure that all development should optimise the use of land. For residential development, the policy seeks to ensure that minimum and maximum density standards are provided to deliver proportionate uplifts in density throughout the borough. Minimum standards are established in order to avoid ineffective and wasteful land use, while maximums are established to ensure that areas without necessary services and infrastructure are not overburdened with sudden and dramatic uplifts in density.

2. 4. 7. The density ranges seek to establish a starting point for scheme design. These will inform the housing mix, car parking and the general quantum of development expected on a site. Site specifics will also inform the overall density and design of the site. Policy recognises that some schemes may require a departure from the standards to account for particular site constraints, however, any departure should not be significant. The provision of infrastructure on site which would increase the sustainability e.g. schools on a particular site may justify a departure from a range.

2. 4. 8. Employment land densities are often determined by the nature of the use. However, office use in particular is capable of being provided at high densities based on plot ratios (floor space to site area) to site (jobs per square metre). Office (B1a), industry (B2) and storage and distribution (B8) uses should maximise and proportion of a site used for a building (plot ratio) to provide more space for jobs rather than significant amounts of unproductive ancillary land, although a level of landscaping and high quality

public realm should be provided as part of the design of any employment development. Minimum plot ratio densities for employment land uses are set out in the policy.

### **Policy SD2.3 Making Effective Use of Land**

All proposals are required to make efficient use of land. This will be based on the Sustainability Zone the site is located in, as identified on the Policies map. Schemes which comply with the following standards will be supported.

#### **Residential density**

Proposals for new residential development will be supported where the following housing densities in the respective Sustainability Zones are achieved and they are in compliance with other policies in the Local Plan:

- Between 45 – 70 dwellings per hectare in the Low Sustainability Zone
- Between 55 – 95 dwellings per hectare in the Medium Sustainability Zone
- A minimum 95+ dwellings per hectare in the High Sustainability Zone<sup>2</sup>

Only where it is clearly demonstrated that there are site specific or exceptional circumstances will proposals which deviate from the set out housing densities, be supported<sup>3</sup>.

#### **Employment density**

Proposals for new employment uses will be supported where they achieve the following plot ratios:

- B1a (office) use should achieve a plot ratio minimum of 2.0
- B1b (research) use should achieve a plot ratio minimum of 1.0
- B1c/B2 (industrial) use should achieve a plot ratio minimum of 0.6.

## **2. 5. Safeguarding Strategic Infrastructure**

### **Why is this policy needed?**

2. 5. 1. Watford is an established transport hub for the South West Hertfordshire area. It benefits from a number of key transport nodes and routes providing people with good connections to the North West and central London.

2. 5. 2. Existing key transport infrastructure should be retained and enhanced where necessary to meet the needs of those who live, work and visit in the area. Future development and growth patterns and how these are managed will be important to ensure better connectivity, accessibility and enhancement of the transport network in the long term. There is an expectation that uplift in housing and employment densities will aid the provision and maintenance of transport on a borough wide basis.

2. 5. 3. One of the key benefits of higher densities is that it makes the provision of public transport services easier. Increasing densities will raise demand for public transport encourage more people to walk

<sup>2</sup> Sites above 350 dwelling per hectare should only be allowed in Strategic Development Areas and have access to a Mass Transit System

<sup>3</sup> In special circumstances site specific constraints will necessitate a departure from the range. These include schemes in Conservation Areas, those which involve a listed building, sites which seek to provide more family homes and 3 bed units, or in cases where it can be demonstrated that new infrastructure e.g. a school would increase the sustainability credentials for that site.

and cycle. This will be reinforced by higher density schemes having less car parking provision reflecting the sustainability of their location. The key issue is to ensure that infrastructure providers and development partners facilitate a shift towards more people using public transport by providing the travel choices that are effective and convenient. Safeguarding potential routes for future transport projects is therefore essential.

2. 5. 4. The successful use of strategic transport infrastructure depends on new developments establishing clear connections to transport routes/hubs and other key destinations. It is important to ensure new proposals recognise key infrastructure in the vicinity of the development site and these are properly integrated into the design process from the outset.

### **What is the policy intended to do?**

2. 5. 5. The policy seeks to safeguard existing and proposed transport infrastructure from inappropriate development that could compromise future schemes and proposals. The main rail lines, cycle ways and pedestrian routes need to be protected when future schemes come forward. Phased schemes or sites in close proximity should complement each other, with design considerations not being undertaken in isolation from the wider area. Schemes are expected to be designed in a manner which establishes clear and permeable connections from the site to the wider pedestrian and cycle networks.

2. 5. 6. Specific transport improvements have been identified in the borough including the creation of a mass transit system along the disused railway line to the Lower High Street station. In addition, the Abbey Line is considered an important route between Watford and St. Albans. Service frequency improvements are an important transport objective and the route needs to be safeguarded from inappropriate development for the benefit of future generations. Road widening may be possible for bus route improvements to reduce journey times between destinations. While there is limited capacity to achieve this in the borough, Hempstead Road does have an amenity strip that needs to be protected from development.

### **Policy SD2.4 Safeguarding and Connecting to Strategic Transport Infrastructure**

Strategic transport infrastructure, as identified on the Policies Map, should be safeguarded. This includes the disused railway line, the Abbey Line, Hempstead Road amenity verge and key cycle routes. Any proposals that could compromise strategic transport infrastructure will not be supported.

Proposals should enhance connectivity to public transport and encourage walking and cycling. Proposals which demonstrate suitable site connections, within and outside of the site, to the wider pedestrian and cycle networks and public transport points will be supported.

## **2. 6. Protecting Green Belt Land**

### **Why is this policy needed?**

2. 6. 1. The Green Belt is a strategic land use designation that aims to limit urban sprawl and prevent the coalescence of settlements. The protection afforded to the Green Belt in national policy promotes a 'brownfield first' approach by encouraging local planning authorities to thoroughly assess their urban capacity before considering the release of any Green Belt land for development.

2. 6. 2. The evidence gathered during the preparation of this First Draft Local Plan has shown there to be insufficient brownfield sites to meet Watford's housing target. As a result, the council will now need to undertake a review of the Green Belt within its administrative area to assess its performance against the wider objectives set out in national policy. This review and other evidence will inform which sites should be removed from the designation, and which sites should continue to receive protection as Green Belt land. This study should be completed to inform the Final Draft Local Plan. The de-designation of sites which no longer perform a Green Belt function will not automatically imply that a site is suitable for redevelopment. The

majority of Watford's Green Belt is designated public open space and is subject to other Local Plan policies, such as *Policy NE8.2 Protecting Open Space*.

### **What is the policy intended to do?**

2. 6. 3. The policy seeks to protect Green Belt land by resisting inappropriate development that could compromise the long term separation between built up areas.

#### **Policy SD2.5 Protecting Green Belt Land**

Planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as set out in national policy.

The Green Belt boundary is identified on the Policies Map. Removal of a site from the Green Belt does not imply that development is appropriate.

## **2. 7. Delivering the strategy: development contributions**

### **Why is this policy needed?**

2. 7. 1. To deliver the strategy and objectives set out in the Local Plan, the provision of infrastructure will need to be funded and delivered in a timely manner to support development. Infrastructure includes a wide range of facilities and services including schools, health care, community facilities, open space, roads, railways and cycle paths.

2. 7. 2. Cumulatively, almost all development puts additional pressure on infrastructure and should contribute to addressing that impact. It is important that infrastructure is provided to cope with the increased demand resulting from the proposed growth to deliver the spatial strategy, objectives and vision for Watford in 2036.

2. 7. 3. Where development creates a need for new or improved infrastructure, and to ensure that the burden of providing additional infrastructure does not fall on existing communities, contributions will be sought to make it acceptable in planning terms.

2. 7. 4. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a tariff in the form of a standard charge on new development to help fund associated infrastructure. Watford has been charging the levy since 2015. As most development has some impact on infrastructure, it follows that it should contribute to the provision of infrastructure otherwise future developments are increasingly likely to carry a disproportional amount of the burden.

### **What is the policy intended to do?**

2. 7. 5. The starting point for the Plan is that development proposals can meet all of their respective policy and infrastructure requirements in full and in a timely way to ensure needs are met as a scheme comes forward. Given that the Plan is subject to stringent viability testing, it is expected that the number of applications where viability issues are identified should be minimal. However, the council understands the need to remain flexible, a key requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework, and as such financial contributions may be accepted where on site delivery is not practicable. It is acknowledged that in some cases on-site delivery is not appropriate. For example, if measures were needed to mitigate the impact of car parking and the proposals was for a car club, it would not be expected that an applicant would set up a car club but rather provide a financial contribution to one that already exists near the site that could be integrated into the scheme.

2. 7. 6. Contributions from a particular development will be fairly and reasonably related in scale

and kind to the scheme. While some infrastructure can be directly provided by, and directly serve a specific development, or group of developments, in many cases it will be necessary to pool funding from several developments.

2. 7. 7. Proposals should demonstrate the provision of site specific infrastructure such as affordable housing, open space, children’s play space. Off-site infrastructure provision or contributions may be accepted where it is not possible or is inappropriate to provide on-site. This is likely to be the case for sustainable transport initiatives such as public cycle car parks and car clubs.

### **Policy SD2.6 Development Contributions**

Where development is dependent on, or creates a specific need for, new or improved infrastructure the council will seek this on site. Where it is demonstrated that this is not practicable financial contributions will be sought.

Section 106 developer contributions will be sought alongside the Community Infrastructure Levy where needs arise in line with the policy requirements of this Plan. Contributions will be used to mitigate the adverse impacts of development. Pooled contributions will be used, where appropriate, to facilitate the necessary infrastructure in line with development.

## **2. 8. Strategic Development Areas**

2. 8. 1. Watford is facing considerable development pressures. How growth is managed to achieve a sustainable pattern of development is a key objective of planning policy and the Local Plan. The Strategic Development Areas are key locations in the borough that can contribute towards achieving sustainable development. By making effective use of land, taking advantage of strategic transport infrastructure and contributing to the wider objective, they will help deliver the vision for the town to 2036.

2. 8. 2. These areas primarily focus on their regeneration potential and cover larger land areas relative to other site allocations in the Plan. The areas bound by these designations encompass a variety of land ownerships and land uses. With the complexities of these areas, it is recognised that bringing development forward in a phased manner during the plan period will be particularly difficult. The policies accompanying each Strategic Development Area set out key principles of development to guide proposals when they are being conceived and designed. The requirements set out reflect the character of each specific Strategic Development Area in the borough, of which there are five:

- Watford Junction
- Bushey Station
- Watford Town Centre
- Lower High Street
- Dome Roundabout

2. 8. 3. The Strategic Development Areas may be subject to the Community Infrastructure Levy charge. This will be determined following the completion of a viability assessment that is to be undertaken to support the new Local Plan.

## **2. 9. Watford Junction Strategic Development Area**

### **Why is this policy needed?**

2. 9. 1. The Watford Junction Strategic Development Area covers an area of 19 hectares. At the heart of the Strategic Development Area is Watford Junction railway station and ancillary infrastructure connecting the town to London, St Albans and Birmingham. A bus station is also located adjacent the railway station.

The area supports a variety of land uses including employment (primarily office floor space to the west and industry to the south), residential and a mix dispersed retail, restaurants, cafes and public houses. The site is connected to the town centre via Clarendon Road, which supports a regionally important area of employment. North of the site is the St Albans Road district retail centre. To the east are the Balmoral and Imperial Way employment areas which are poorly connected, with the railways lines acting as a physical barrier.

2. 9. 2. The land surrounding Watford Junction Station is significant but in places underutilised. This is particularly evident given its location close to the town centre and employment areas. With over eight million passengers annually passing through the station, it is an important transport hub in the region. There is a need to see a more effective land use in this location to make better use of the excellent accessibility to public transport and access to services and facilities in the town centre.

### **What is the Policy intended to do?**

2. 9. 3. The policy is intended to set out a broad framework for the redevelopment of Watford Junction Station and the immediate surrounding area. It establishes broad development parameters and clear design and land use expectations. Key considerations and constraints are identified.

#### **Policy SD2.7 Watford Junction Strategic Development Area**

Proposals in this Strategic Development Area, as defined on the Policies Map, which contribute to achieving successful implementation of the development aims will be supported.

Proposals for new development are expected to incorporate the following development considerations:

1. Transform the Watford Junction Station into a 21st century multi-modal public transport hub and enhance the visitor experience;
2. Create a new vibrant mixed use quarter to provide new homes and jobs in close proximity to Watford Junction station;
3. Reduce severance created by the railway lines and improve connectivity between different parts of the site and the wider area including the town centre;
4. Protect or reprovide existing bus related facilities on site;
5. Improve the public realm and create a safe and attractive network of streets and open spaces, incorporating the green infrastructure;
6. Ensure individual developments are planned in a comprehensive manner and contribute to the regeneration of the site as a whole;
7. Encourage high density development with school provision required to make it a fully sustainable location;
8. Support greater land use efficiency based on a mix of uses to benefit from the accessibility of the area;
9. Where necessary, Compulsory Purchase Orders may be applied.

## 2. 10. Bushey Station Strategic Development Area

### Why is this policy needed?

2. 10. 1. The Bushey Station Strategic Development Area covers an area of 18 hectares. The central focus of the area is the railway station, which provides access to mainline services to London and Birmingham and the London Overground connecting to London and Watford Junction.

2. 10. 2. The land around Bushey railway station offers a significant opportunity for achieving a more sustainable pattern of growth. Proximity to mainline and Transport for London rail services make the area accessible and the Strategic Development Area lies within the High Sustainability Zone. It is relatively close to Watford town centre, while Oxhey Park is located to the west. There are important heritage assets in the area including Bushey Arches to the east and the Oxhey Village Conservation Area to the south-east.

2. 10. 3. The area west of the rail tracks has a large number bulky retail units while east of the tracks there is vacant land close to the station. Generally, there is a poor urban form, exacerbated by the road network which is heavily congested with poor air quality in places. Opportunities exist for significant redevelopment in favour of more sustainable land uses with the railway station at its core as the key transport hub.

2. 10. 4. Without significant redevelopment and a transition to a more sustainable layout and revision of the road, pedestrian and cycle network, the area may continue to be car dominated, with destination bulky good stores proliferating and continuing to be defined by a weakly defined urban character.

### What is the policy intended to do?

2. 10. 5. The policy is intended to set out a broad framework for managing transformation and change in the area. It establishes broad development aims and clear design and land use expectations.

2. 10. 6. The policy will seek to ensure that the land around Bushey station establishes a more efficient mixed use development pattern using the station as the key transport hub. Medium to high density development based on a mix of uses, with a gradual move to more efficient use of land away from single storey retail outlets, is needed. The retail element can be retained, however, redesigned to be more efficient and combined with a range of other uses which encourages more walking and cycling.

2. 10. 7. The policy expects radical improvement to the urban realm, prioritising for pedestrian and cyclist movements with the view to improving air quality and easing traffic congestion in the area. The vibrancy of existing local shops will be enhanced while opportunities to enhance existing heritage assets so that the area retains its positive character elements should be pursued.

### Policy SD2.8 Bushey Station Strategic Development Area

Proposals in this Strategic Development Area, as defined on the Policies Map, which contribute to achieving successful implementation of the development aims will be supported.

Proposals for new development are expected to incorporate the following development considerations:

1. Encourage medium to high density mixed use development in the vicinity of the train station and the surrounding area;
2. Support greater land use efficiency based on a mix of uses which will benefit from the accessibility of the area;
3. Establish a more defined and attractive urban grain with robust pedestrian and cyclist connectivity to key destinations such as parks, transport nodes and local shops;

4. Reduce the dominance of the road network at Bushey Arches, improving air quality and reducing traffic;
5. Ensure that heritage assets are key features of the Strategic Development Area, their setting and character should be enhanced by proposals;
6. Development should bring more vitality to the existing local neighbourhood centre with no additional retail land use being provided.

## 2. 11. Town Centre Strategic Development Area

### Why is this policy needed?

2. 11. 1. The Town Centre Strategic Development Area covers an area of 90 hectares and extends from Watford High Street station in the south to West Hertfordshire College on Hempstead Road and is bound by the major road corridors on the east and west sides. The town centre is a regional destination for retail and leisure related activities and supports a significant number of jobs in the area. To consolidate Watford's role in the South West Hertfordshire area, it is essential the area is able to adapt to changing trends and make better use of existing land. The policy sets out a framework to support growth and change and encourages a mix of uses that complement each other and support the local economy.

2. 11. 2. The Strategic Development Area is at the heart of Watford and is located in a zone of high sustainability with strong connections to the other Strategic Development Areas identified in the Local Plan. The town centre is well served by public transport, however, it is constrained by the road network which also acts to sever many of the pedestrian and cycle connections. With new development coming forward during the plan period, the policy framework should facilitate opportunities to improve connectivity between local destinations and make for better place-making that will benefit residents, visitors and the business community.

2. 11. 3. The High Street supports a variety of national retailers while the Parade provides a focal point for the evening and night time economy. At the north end of the Strategic Development Area is the Town Hall, Watford Library and West Hertfordshire College. This area has been identified as an area for improvement, focused on being a cultural hub with a mix of community orientated uses in conjunction with types of development that contribute towards a larger mixed use development.

2. 11. 4. Adjacent to the High Street are the distinctive local retail centres of Market Street and Queens Road. Improvements to the town centre will benefit these areas through improved public realm, connectivity and intensification, including a mix of uses such as new homes that can encourage greater footfall. The improvement scheme to be undertaken along Clarendon Road will enhance pedestrian connections between Watford Junction and the town centre, reinforcing the relationship between a key transport hub, employment and retail centres. Together, this will further enhance Watford's standing as a regionally important destination for a multitude of uses and experiences and increase its attractiveness as a place to grow and invest.

### What is the policy intended to do?

2. 11. 5. The objective of the Strategic Development Area is to enhance the town centre for residents, workers and visitors and support redevelopment. It is important to ensure that when development proposals are being designed, they consider how they are integrated with other projects in the town centre and nearby. In this context, proposals will be expected to clearly demonstrate how they will contribute towards the vision for the Watford to 2036 and reinforce its importance as a destination and service centre.

## Policy SD2.9 Town Centre Strategic Development Area

Proposals in the Town Centre Strategic Development Area, as defined on the Policies Map, which contribute to achieving successful implementation of the objectives will be supported.

Proposals for new development are expected to incorporate the following development considerations:

1. Encourage medium to high density mixed use development by making more effective use of land for infill and underutilised sites;
2. Support greater land use efficiency based on a mix of uses and bringing residential uses back into the town centre where these are not located along primary retail frontages;
3. Development along the High Street, Market Street, Queens Road and The Parade should retain and enhance active frontages on the ground floor;
4. Encourage provision of flexible work spaces as part of new developments;
5. Retain and improve positive perceptions of place by improving the public realm, establishing more green infrastructure and enhancing the visitor experience;
6. Ensure movement corridors are attractive, easy to follow and are well integrated into the transport network for pedestrians and cyclists and to connect key destinations;
7. Ensure that heritage assets are key features of the Strategic Development Area and their setting and character should be enhanced by proposals;
8. Redevelopment of the Parade and north of Rickmansworth Road are consistent with the key principles and guidance set out in the Watford High Street (North) and Cultural Hub Draft Masterplan, and subsequent amendments;
9. Any large scale residential schemes will be required to consider infrastructure requirements such as the provision of education facilities and open space with ancillary recreation facilities.

## 2. 12. Lower High Street Strategic Development Area

### Why is this policy needed?

2. 12. 1. The area between Watford High Street Station to Bushey Station is referred to as the Lower High Street. The Strategic Development Area, which has an area of 42 hectares is one of the most sustainable areas of the borough, however, the land is considered to be ineffectively used. The area is characterised by single use large retail outlets, which are predominantly car based destinations. The retail uses provide competition for the town centre rather than complementing it.

2. 12. 2. To make better use of the area that would contribute towards achieving sustainable development by encouraging improved access to services and facilities, and providing better transport choices to local destinations. As such, a transformative approach to development in this area is supported. To deliver this, it is essential that when proposals are being prepared proper consideration is given to how the site relates to its surroundings and how it could function more effectively as part of the in the wider area.

2. 12. 3. A large part of the site is adjacent to existing residential areas, however much of this is severed by major roads, disconnecting people from the wider area and encouraging reliance on private vehicles for

short distance journeys. The nature of the road network in the area has created poor pedestrian and cycle networks and low quality public realm. The area is located in close proximity to the town centre, transport hubs and community facilities such as quality green spaces and cultural activities, however, the character of the area reduces the value of these. New residential and mixed use development in the area would benefit from focusing on healthy streets, where the pedestrian environment is attractive and connects to local destinations that would reflect its sustainable location and complement quality high density development within the Strategic Development Area.

2. 12. 4. Proposals will need to consider how they contribute towards creating a sense of place ensuring there are connections for pedestrians and cyclists that are convenient and intuitive to use. With a focus on mixed use development, it is important to support the delivery of housing and business needed by the community.

### **What is the policy intended to do?**

2. 12. 5. The policy covers the area between the Watford High Street Station and stretches to the large retail outlets to the west of Dalton way, punctuating at the railway line. The policy seeks to provide a framework for the gradual transformation of this area to provide a more pleasant urban environment and efficient use of land in the High Sustainability Zone.

2. 12. 6. The policy seeks to transform the area into a people focused area with a wider range of uses. It seeks to support higher density mixed-use development, including new homes. Heritage assets in the area, including Watford Museum in the north of the area and Frogmore House in the south, should be enhanced by any redevelopment of the area. The policy also sets out the need for proposals to consider environmental constraints such as flood risk, which may have to be mitigated through the design as part of the design of any scheme.

#### **Policy SD2.10 Lower High Street Strategic Development Area**

Proposals in this Strategic Development Area, as defined on the Policies Map, which contribute to achieving successful implementation of development aims will be supported.

Proposals for new development are expected to incorporate the following development considerations:

1. Proposals which intensify the existing land use through mixed-use redevelopment and intensification of large retail and car sales sites will be supported;
2. Proposals should create a clearer and more legible public realm, led by a more defined building line along the core streets;
3. High quality design, including an attractive public realm and landscaping scheme that will support the green river corridor, will be essential;
4. Design proposals should enhance the existing heritage assets to protect and enhance their setting and the quality of the street scene;
5. Pedestrian and cycling routes should be enhanced as part of any redevelopment proposals, providing clear and attractive connections that are easy to follow and consider desire lines to local destinations including the High Street and smaller retail outlets, Bushey Station, open spaces and cultural centres;
6. The design parameters of schemes need to ensure that in areas at risk of flooding, mitigation measures are identified. Ideally this should be provision that can support

multiple uses and designing buildings that have less sensitive uses on ground floors.

## 2. 13. Dome Roundabout Strategic Development Area

### Why is this policy needed?

2. 13. 1. The Dome Roundabout area is located in the north of the borough and has a site area of 19 hectares. The area is dominated by retail supermarkets, petrol stations and fast food establishments, along with a congested road network. Residential properties in the vicinity are predominantly family sized homes and the site is situated within the Medium Sustainability Zone, despite being somewhat removed from the town centre. The Strategic Development Area has good access to employment, schools, local shops and the Abbey Line is nearby, which provides a public transport connection between Watford town centre and St Albans. Additionally, the area is served by strategically important bus routes.

2. 13. 2. To ensure a greater optimisation of land, the area is in need of significant transformation. This should deliver improvements to the built up area which include the quality of buildings and the public realm. Any redevelopment should provide a more efficient use of land by mixing residential uses with employment and retail uses where these are compatible.

### What is the policy intended to do?

2. 13. 3. The uses in the area are destinations and there is an opportunity to establish a mix of uses, including residential. The policy seeks to see an incremental change to a more efficient pattern of development, combined with tangible urban realm improvements. A framework for improving the pedestrian and cyclist environment, including the establishment of greater connections to North Watford station, is provided.

2. 13. 4. Significant redevelopment opportunity, based on more effective land uses, public realm improvements, establishing a vibrant mixed use area and supporting pedestrian and cyclist connections to key destinations, is sought. There will be more homes based on a well-established community in North Watford. Synergies will develop with existing land uses including the existing employment area, health and community facilities and the local shopping parade.

### Policy SD2.11 Dome Roundabout Strategic Development Area

Proposals in this Strategic Development Area, as defined on the Policies Map, which contribute to achieving the successful implementation of the development aims will be supported.

Proposals for new development are expected to incorporate the following development considerations:

1. Maximise opportunities for combining large retail stores with residential development to ensure more effective land use;
2. Provide no additional retail floor space in this location;
3. Any development should improve the vibrancy of the existing local shops and neighbourhood centres;
4. Mixed use development to include health and community uses is sought for proposals near North Watford Library;
5. Establish a higher quality, integrated and user friendly pedestrian and cyclist environment that creates clear connections to the wider area including North Watford station;

6. Pursue a design that establishes a distinctive building line and quality urban grain based on legible and healthy streets;
7. Improve the landscaping and green infrastructure in the area, making road side areas more attractive and enhancing the public realm.

## Chapter 3: Supporting Sustainable Transport

### 3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. At the core of the National Planning Policy Framework is the aim to achieve and promote sustainable development. Supporting sustainable transport is essential to this. Transport policies can facilitate a shift not only to greater sustainability but also work towards a better quality of life and improved health and wellbeing.

3.1.2. Hertfordshire County Council is the local highways authority in the Watford area. In accordance with the Transport Act 2000, as amended 2008, and working with the Hertfordshire districts and boroughs, the county developed and approved the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan (2018). This provides the strategic context for future transport investment by focusing on people, place and prosperity. The document seeks an integrated approach to transport and land-use planning by moving away from car dependency to more sustainable transport options including walking and cycling, and improving connectivity between neighbouring towns. To support the Local Transport Plan 4 strategy, a set of lower documents is being produced including the South West Herts Growth and Transport Plan Prospectus (2019) which identifies a number of sustainable transport interventions and packages in and around Watford.

3.1.3. In land-use planning terms, providing infrastructure that will support sustainable transport such as public transport, walking and cycling is integral to meeting both the wider national and local objectives. From a Local Plan perspective, this includes:

1. Providing secure cycle parking and storage which is accessible; this is pivotal to creating confidence for people wishing to have a secure place to store their bicycles;
2. Identifying a proportionate approach to on-site car parking which is essential to avoid building at low densities; to help alleviate pressure on the road network; and encourage greater use of public transport; and
3. Ensuring proposals for new development are supported with Transport Assessments and Travel Plans as appropriate which encourage sustainable public transport use and help mitigate the highways impacts of development proposals.

### 3.2. Cycle Parking and Storage

#### Why is this policy needed?

3.2.1. There are generally two key barriers to cycle use. Firstly, there is safety (actual and perceived) during the journey, and secondly, secure cycle storage or parking at both the point of origin and destination. The National Planning Policy Framework prioritises pedestrians and cyclists as part of the need to make a transition to healthier lifestyles and non-car based forms of travel. There is considerable potential to achieve this with greater cycling in urban areas like Watford. Every opportunity should be taken to promote cycling, and how new development can prioritise cycling is critical to achieving this.

3.2.2. Secure cycle parking is required for all new development. For residential uses, long term overnight secure cycle storage is essential while cycle storage for non-residential uses needs to be secure for the duration of stay at that destination. It is particularly important in sustainable locations where 'car-lite' developments are provided. All proposals for new development throughout the borough will be required to set out how they have provided adequate and secure cycle storage space that is easily accessible.

3.2.3. Without adequate and well-designed cycle parking for residential and non-residential development, those considering cycling as an alternative travel option to a private vehicle for commuting, shopping or leisure trips will be placed at a significant disadvantage.

## What is the policy intended to do?

3. 2. 4. The aim of this policy is to ensure that cycling is considered early in the design process when new proposals are conceived. This is to mitigate the impact of traffic associated with new development on the road network and environment and improve public health. It emphasises the need to provide the necessary infrastructure to ensure that more people feel comfortable to use cycling as a means of commuting, leisure and convenience trips, and to provide greater confidence that bicycles are securely stored when left alone.

3. 2. 5. The policy sets minimum standards for cycle parking based on the sustainability zones identified on the Policies Map. It seeks to provide further prescriptive direction for designing cycle storage into new schemes. Key issues to consider when schemes are being designed include how many cycle parking spaces are required, how easily accessible they are and how secure the facility is. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Cycle Parking Supplementary Planning Document<sup>1</sup>, and subsequent updates.

3. 2. 6. The manner in which cycle parking is provided on a site will depend on characteristics of the development. In large apartment complexes, a single large communal storage may not be sufficient security. Multiple cycle storage areas or individual large site storage areas (storage compartments located outside the apartment within the blueprint of the building which are capable of taking bikes, prams and other large items) can be a substitute in these cases. Where large item storage areas are provided, this may enable the removal of internal storage requirements for individual dwellings and can be counted as two cycle spaces.

3. 2. 7. The conversion of existing buildings into apartments often results in poor or non-existent cycle storage. Therefore, suitable and secure storage needs to be provided at the front of the building. In cases where this is not possible, contributions will be sought to deliver off site storage solutions (e.g. bicycle hangers). Terraced properties or town houses without back access to the garden need storage on the front elevations (potentially part of internal storage to the front of the house) or have an access point to the rear provided.

3. 2. 8. Non-residential uses need secure cycle storage depending on the duration of the stay. These include destinations such as places of work, education, leisure, transport hubs and retail. To support commuting to employment and education destinations, security is particularly important. These tend to be longer stays, while retail and leisure uses often require shorter visits. Longer stay employment uses should have employee only access storage areas that are covered, along with showering and changing facilities within the building. For primary schools and nurseries, where cycle storage facilities are provided these should be located and designed to accommodate at least two parental bicycles that have a child carrier attached.

3. 2. 9. Public cycle parking places and stands are located in the town centre and in neighbourhood centres. For new proposals in these locations, a financial contribution will be sought to enhance existing public cycle parking rather than providing new facilities.

### Policy ST3.1 Cycle Parking Storage

All development proposals will be required to provide on-site cycle parking facilities in line with the cycle parking standards detailed in Figure 4.

Cycle parking facilities should be designed in accordance with the Cycle Parking Supplementary Planning Document, and subsequent amendments.

#### Residential uses

A. Development of 20 units or more should provide cycle storage within the footprint of

1 [www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/download/555/cycle\\_parking\\_supplementary\\_planning\\_document](http://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/download/555/cycle_parking_supplementary_planning_document)

the building;

- B. External cycle stores need to be secure with resident only access, be sensitively designed, well-lit and easily accessible;
- C. Short term cycle parking facilities for visitors should be conveniently located in relation to the public realm with natural surveillance and be safe to use;
- D. For developments over 50 units, multiple storage areas or large item storage will be required. Single large communal cycle storage areas will not be considered acceptable;
- E. For homes with gardens, access to rear sheds or garages should be designed into the scheme, or suitable storage sensitively designed to the front elevation of the house.

**Non-residential uses**

- F. Employment and education uses should have employee access only covered storage. Appropriate changing and showering facilities should be provided on site;
- G. For proposals which benefit from existing cycle parking a financial contribution will be sought for enhancing existing facilities;
- H. For developments where no cycle parking standard is set out, including new transport hub infrastructure, the number of cycle parking spaces should be determined on a case-by-case basis.

All of these requirements should be annotated on the relevant plans and detailed in the Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement.

**3. 3. Figure 4: Cycle Parking Standards**

Use Class <sup>2</sup>	High Sustainability Zone		Medium Sustainability Zone		Low Sustainability Zone	
	Minimum		Minimum		Minimum	
<b>Residential</b>						
C1 Hotels	1 space per 50 bedrooms		1 space per 50 bedrooms		1 space per 50 bedrooms	
C2 Residential Institutions <sup>3</sup>	1 space per 3 staff		1 space per 5 staff		1 space per 5 staff	
C3 Dwelling House 1 Bed	1.25 spaces per unit		1.25 spaces per unit		1.25 spaces per unit	
C3 Dwelling House 2 Bed	2.00 spaces per unit		1.75 spaces per unit		1.75 spaces per unit	
C3 Dwelling House 3+ Bed	2.50 space per unit		2.25 spaces per unit		2.25 space per unit	
C4 Houses and Multiple Occupation	1 space per 2 bedrooms		1 space per 2 bedrooms		1 space per 2 bedrooms	
<b>Non Residential</b>	Staff	Visitors	Staff	Visitors	Staff	Visitors
A1 Shops	1 space per 100 sqm	n/a	1 space per 150 sqm	n/a	1 space per 200 sqm	n/a

2 Use classes are defined in the Town and Country (Use Classes) Order 1987, as amended

3 Visitor parking for C3 uses requires 1 space per 40 units

A2 Financial Professional Services		1 space per 100 sqm	n/a	1 space per 150 sqm	n/a	1 space per 200 sqm	n/a
A3 Restaurants and Cafes		1 space per 100 sqm	n/a	1 space per 150 sqm	n/a	1 space per 200 sqm	n/a
A4 Drinking Establishments		1 space per 100 sqm	n/a	1 space per 150 sqm	n/a	1 space per 200 sqm	n/a
A5 Hot Food Takeaways		1 space per 100 sqm	n/a	1 space per 150 sqm	n/a	1 space per 200 sqm	n/a
B1a Business		1 space per 100 sqm	n/a	1 space per 125 sqm	n/a	1 space per 150 sqm	n/a
B1b Business		1 space per 150 sqm	n/a	1 space per 200 sqm	n/a	1 space per 250 sqm	n/a
B1c Business		1 space per 150 sqm	n/a	1 space per 200 sqm	n/a	1 space per 250 sqm	n/a
B2 General Industrial		1 space per 150 sqm	n/a	1 space per 200 sqm	n/a	1 space per 250 sqm	n/a
B8 Storage and Distribution		1 space per 250 sqm	n/a	1 space per 300 sqm	n/a	1 space per 350 sqm	n/a
<b>D1 Non-Residential Institutions</b>	Schools and nurseries <sup>4</sup>	1 space per 5 staff	1 space per 10 students	1 space per 5 staff	1 space per 15 students	1 space per 10 staff	1 space per 15 students
	Universities and colleges	1 space per 5 staff	1 space per 8 students	1 space per 5 staff	1 space per 15 students	1 space per 10 staff	1 space per 15 students
	Health centres and dental clinics	1 space per 5 staff	n/a	1 space per 10 staff	n/a	1 space per 10 staff	n/a
	Other uses (including community facilities, libraries, religious institutions etc.)	1 space per 5 staff	n/a	1 space per 10 staff	n/a	1 space per 10 staff	n/a
<b>D2 Assembly and Leisure</b>	Cinemas, theatres etc.	1 space per 8 staff	n/a	1 space per 10 staff	n/a	1 space per 10 staff	n/a
	Sports facilities, gymnasiums etc.	1 space per 8 staff	n/a	1 space per 10 staff	n/a	1 space per 10 staff	n/a

<sup>4</sup> Secondary Schools will require double the amount of spaces identified

### 3. 4. Car Parking, Car Clubs, and Electric Vehicles

#### Why is this policy needed?

3. 4. 1. Watford is strongly influenced by London and the economy of the south east. Development and growth bring challenges and as a result there is considerable traffic congestion in the area. Traffic modelling has identified points of stress on the road network. Providing more car parking on site throughout the borough will not aid the reduction of car use and is likely to add further pressure to the road network, exacerbating congestion, air quality and carbon emission issues.

3. 4. 2. Car related infrastructure such as roads and car parking is one of the dominating factors of the Watford built environment. This often results in a significant amount of land used. There is limited space available to support new development and new schemes will be expected to make the most efficient use of the land available for redevelopment. Continuing to provide car related infrastructure including overgenerous parking will exacerbate existing issues associated with the transport network and the environment.

3. 4. 3. Vehicle emissions contribute towards climate change and air pollution is a significant issue in the borough, primarily around areas where there are high volumes of traffic. Currently there are four air quality management areas in the borough; all of these are associated with vehicle emissions. A move towards electric vehicles will contribute towards lower air pollution. To meet emission reduction and air quality targets, the use of electric vehicles is increasing. There is a need to ensure that the developments that are built are future proofed to achieve this. Sufficient electrical capacity in new developments for current and future demand for charging points is needed.

3. 4. 4. Electric vehicles still require space and continued generous provision for car infrastructure can directly impact on the effectiveness of public transport and how many people will use it, thereby not providing greater incentive for people to change their travel habits. There is a need to move away from a car reliant society. In line with the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan, demand management in relation to parking restrictions is the most effective way of addressing this.

3. 4. 5. To reduce car use and the need for car spaces, car clubs are important. Coinciding with changing population demographics, there is a recognition that the desire to own a car is reducing and access to a vehicle for occasional use is beginning to be seen as increasingly favourable. To support this change, people need to have a choice of transport options on a daily basis to best meet their circumstances and enable them to easily and conveniently travel to their intended destinations.

#### What is the policy intended to do?

3. 4. 6. Managing on-site parking is the key intention of this policy. It seeks to ensure that new development in all areas of the borough provide car parking that is reflective of its sustainability and encourages greater proportion of people using alternative transport modes to the private vehicle in the long term. This policy is intended to establish proportionate on-site parking provision across the borough.

3. 4. 7. For all new developments, the standards set out a requirement for a proportion of parking spaces to be unallocated. This will ensure that parking areas are effectively used and reduce to risk of spaces being left vacant for any period of time.

3. 4. 8. The standards are based on the Sustainability Zones as defined on the Policies Map. With the exception of the High Sustainability Area, where car-lite schemes are supported, a minimum and maximum range for car parking is provided.

3. 4. 9. There is a recognition that for low on site car parking to work most effectively, it needs to be combined with on street parking restrictions. This is particularly important for the High and Medium

Sustainability Areas in Watford. Controlled Parking Zones will be kept under review as part of the council’s approach to traffic management.

3. 4. 10. Within this requirement there is an allocation for electric vehicles and car club spaces. For the purposes of this policy, an electric vehicle is considered any road vehicle with a battery that is intended to be charged from mains electricity. ‘Active provision’ requires fully wired and connected ‘ready to use’ charging points at parking spaces. “Passive provision” requires the necessary underlying infrastructure (e.g. capacity in the connection to the local electricity distribution network and electricity distribution board, and cabling to parking spaces) to enable simple installation and activation of a charge point at a future date.

**Policy ST3.2 Car Parking, Car Clubs and Electric Vehicles**

Development proposals will be required to provide car parking which complies with the car parking standards set out in Figure 5 and the following requirements. Where these standards are met, the parking element of the proposal will be supported.

- A. For schemes of 10 units or more, 20% of all car spaces should be unallocated;
- B. 10% of spaces should be dedicated for car club use only. Applicants will need to demonstrate commitment to providing car club spaces with a provider;
- C. 20% of car spaces should have active provision for electric vehicles. All spaces should have passive provision;
- D. For schemes of 10 units or more, ensure that at least one designated disabled persons parking bay is provided for every 10 dwellings;
- E. If no standard is provided for a particular use, the level of parking should be determined on a case-by-case basis taking account of this policy, and the sustainability and accessibility of the site.

Only where exceptional circumstances are clearly demonstrated will deviations from the standards be considered acceptable. All of these requirements should be annotated on the relevant plans and detailed in the Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement.

**3. 5. Figure 5: Car Parking Standards**

Use Class	High Sustainability Zone		Medium Sustainability Zone		Low Sustainability Zone	
	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
<b>Residential</b>						
C1 Hotels	n/a	Car free	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
C2 Residential Institutions	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
C3 Dwelling House (Space per Unit) <sup>5</sup>	n/a	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.7	1.4

<sup>5</sup> The standards provided are universal across all unit sizes.

C4 Houses and Multiple Occupation	n/a	0.5	0.4	1	0.6	1.4
<b>Non Residential<sup>6</sup></b>						
A1 Shops (space per 100sqm)	n/a	Car free	n/a	1	n/a	n/a
A2 Financial Professional Services (space per 100sqm)	n/a	Car free	n/a	0.5	n/a	n/a
A3 Restaurants and Cafes	n/a	Car free	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
A4 Drinking Establishments	n/a	Car free	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
A5 Hot Food Takeaways	n/a	Car free	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
B1a Business (spaces per 100 sqm)	n/a	0.5	n/a	1	n/a	n/a
B1b/c (spaces per 150sqm)	n/a	0.5	n/a	1	n/a	1
B2 General Industrial (spaces per 1500sqm)	n/a	0.5	n/a	1	n/a	1
B8 Storage and Distribution (spaces per 1500sqm)	n/a	0.5	n/a	1	n/a	1
D1 Non-Residential Institutions	n/a	Car free	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
D2 Assembly and Leisure	n/a	Car free	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

### 3. 6. Travel Plans and Transport Assessments

#### Why is this policy needed?

3. 6. 1. How people commute to and from destinations is dependent on a number of factors including travel choices. Some uses generate more traffic than others (trip generating uses). It is important to understand potential impacts on the road network from each of these uses. There is a need to ensure that proposals are designed with access to sustainable transport and increasing walking and cycling in mind.

3. 6. 2. Travel Plans and Transport Assessments seek to assess the impact of a development. They identify mitigation and specific interventions to reduce traffic generation. This can be achieved by encouraging walking, cycling, greater use of public transport and journey sharing and car-pooling through the provision of specific facilities and incentives for employees such as reduced-cost rail or bus passes and cycle allowances. Cumulatively, these can help reduce the need for car travel and parking.

#### What is the Policy intended to do?

3. 6. 3. The policy sets out the requirements for Transport Assessments. All developments that will

<sup>6</sup> The starting point for parking demand for non-residential uses in the medium and high sustainability zones should be public car parks.

generate significant amounts of movement are required to provide a Travel Plan, and the application should be supported by a Transport Assessment.

3. 6. 4. All Transport Assessments, Statements and Travel Plans should follow the Transport User Hierarchy as outlined in Hertfordshire' Local Transport Plan, including any updates. The design of any scheme should provide for:

- Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel
- Vulnerable road user needs (such as pedestrians and cyclists)
- Passenger transport user needs
- Powered two wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs
- Other motor vehicle user needs

### **Policy ST3.3 Access, Travel Plans and Transport Assessments**

Transport Statements, Transport Assessments, Travel Plans are required to support planning applications for all developments that are likely to generate significant amounts of movement or travel in accordance with national guidance<sup>7</sup>. They should set out:

- How the development has been designed in line with the Transport User Hierarchy;
- How the development has been designed to facilitate greater use of public transport;
- The overall impact of the development on the road network.

All proposals including redevelopment proposals should ensure that access/egress and arrangements for emergency and servicing vehicles are designed fully into the scheme's layout. Proposals include the design needs of all public and private highway improvement schemes.

---

7 [www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-plans-transport-assessments-and-statements](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-plans-transport-assessments-and-statements)

## Chapter 4: Housing

### 4. 1. Introduction

4. 1. 1. Housing is a fundamental human right and the Local Plan seeks as far as possible to provide homes for all types of household needs. Watford has a Draft Housing Strategy (tbc, 2019) which seeks to ensure that: “Watford is a town where people can access a choice of affordable and good quality homes in neighbourhoods that are thriving, attractive and inclusive places to live and enable residents to build sustainable, safe and healthy communities.”

4. 1. 2. Specific priorities in the Draft Housing Strategy will relate to the delivery of homes, making the best use of existing homes, preventing homelessness, building sustainable neighbourhoods and communities, while ensuring quality, choice and affordability.

4. 1. 3. Specific needs are also an important priority and the Local Plan will seek to support the key priorities in the Housing Strategy by establishing specific policies including for housing delivery, affordable housing (which is an acute issue in the region), housing mix and specialist housing.

4. 1. 4. The housing policies have been informed by the Draft Local Housing Needs Assessment (tbc, 2019) which identified objectively assessed needs. The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment has identified the borough’s capacity (sites identified as deliverable or developable) for meeting housing need (between 7,000 and 8,000<sup>1</sup> units over the period of the plan) with unmet need to be dealt with through the Duty to Cooperate.

4. 1. 5. The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment envisages that the majority of units will be delivered in the High Sustainability Zone of the town where the highest densities will be appropriate. This means that to ensure a good mix of homes, including affordable homes, a proportionate and balanced mix is required on all sites, including high density areas. This will help achieve mixed and equitable communities.

### 4. 2. Allocated Sites for Housing Delivery

#### Why is this policy needed?

4. 2. 1. Demographic pressures, decreasing household sizes, and unbalanced regional development on a national level creates significant demand for housing in Watford and the region generally. The borough’s proximity to London (with high housing costs in the city pushing people out into the surrounding areas) has resulted in challenging housing targets over the plan period.

4. 2. 2. There is need to plan for these homes. The Watford Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, which adopted a brownfield first approach, has carried out an exhaustive search of the borough. The administrative area of Watford has a capacity for providing between 7,000 and 8,000 units over the plan period, with current estimates indicating a 410 units per annum requirement<sup>2</sup>.

4. 2. 3. This policy is required to allocate sites for residential development which were identified through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. All sites identified are considered to be suitable, achievable and available.

---

1 This figure will be subject to change while the draft Local Plan is progressed.

2 The Inspectors Report for the Peterborough Adopted Local Plan noted that “consideration also needs to be given to previous delivery levels and that previous delivery levels that are similar to those proposed in the Plan do not point to a need to increase the local housing need figure”. Watford has a current average of 379 unit completions per annum (Authority Monitoring Report, 2018), and although the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment has identified more units per annum, the delivery levels generally indicate that the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment has been thorough and accurate and the final local housing need figure is a reasonable expectation, although potentially more optimistic.

## What is the policy intended to do?

4. 2. 4. The policy allocates sites for housing development within the borough, it also identifies mixed use sites which have a residential component. These sites are identified on the Policies Map. The policy is applicable to those sites identified in Figure 6 which includes the following information:

- Site Name and Map
- Site Size
- Sustainability Zone the site is within (this will determine the density and car parking expectation on site <sup>3</sup>)
- Timescales
- Key development considerations and designations

4. 2. 5. Indicative yields are not provided for these sites. The starting point for all proposals will be the Sustainability Zone the site is located within. Once the broad density parameters and expected car parking on site are identified, the site should then be designed with regard to the specific site constraints. This will determine the final yield of the site.

4. 2. 6. The development considerations detailed are not exhaustive but seek to aid scheme design by identifying key constraints and considerations bespoke to specific sites. All allocated housing sites have a presumption in favour of residential development on principle. However, all proposals need to comply with the full suite of policies in the Local Plan.

### Policy H4.1 Allocated Housing Sites for Delivery

The sites listed in Table 4.1, as shown on the Policies Map, are allocated for housing (Use Class C3) or mixed-use development including housing and other specified uses. Planning permission will be granted for proposals that:

1. Accord with the policies in the Local Plan;
2. Address the key development considerations for each site;
3. Comply with the Sustainability Zones as the basis for density and parking in line with parking requirements.

## 4. 3. Figure 6: Site Specific Development Parameters and Consideration

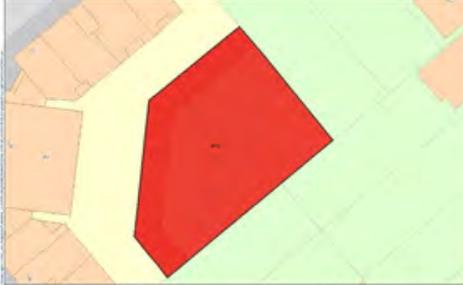
Sustainability Zone	Density Range (dph)	Parking Standards (space per unit)
High Sustainability	95+ <sup>4</sup>	0.0 – 0.3
Medium Sustainability	55-95	0-3 - 0.6
Low Sustainability	45-70	0-6 - 1.5

<sup>3</sup> See Policies SD2.7 and ST3.2

<sup>4</sup> Only in Strategic Development Areas with a mainline mass transit connection will sites with a density above 350dph be considered.

Site	Size	Sustainability Zone	Timescale	Key Development Considerations/ Designations
<b>H1 Land and Garages at Lych Gate</b>				
	0.1 ha	Low	0-5 years	<p>Access to remaining garages needs to be retained</p> <p>Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land</p>
<b>H2 Land and Buildings at 275 Sheepcot Lane</b>				
	0.35 ha	Low	0-5 years	<p>Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land</p>
<b>H3 Land and Garages Adjacent to 1 Lavinia Avenue</b>				
	0.083 ha	Low	6-15 years	<p>Garston Bus Garage and Garston Park Parade opposite the site are locally listed buildings</p> <p>Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land</p>
<b>H4 Land and Buildings at 5 Sheepcot Drive</b>				
	0.17 ha	Low	0-5 years	<p>No specific designations nearby</p>

H5 Land at The Badger Public House				
	0.15 ha	Low	0-5 years	Low risk of surface water flooding on site
H6 Land and Garages adjacent to 1-7 Heronslea				
	0.1	Medium	6-15 years	Proposals will need to contribute to the wider objectives of Dome Roundabout Strategic Development Area  Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land
H7 Land at the Former Meriden School				
	1.7	Medium	0-5 Years	Proposals will need to comply with the wider objectives of Dome Roundabout Strategic Development Area  Former Odhams Press Hall opposite the site is a locally listed building  Low risk of surface water flooding on site
H8 Land at the Former Bill Everett Community Centre				
	1.07	Low	0-5 Years	Harebreaks Wood Local Nature Reserve is located immediately south of the site.  Clear connections and desire lines need to be established with the existing residential area to the north  Low risk of surface water flooding on site
H9 Land adjacent to Callowland Allotments				
	0.3	Low	0-5 Years	Callowland Allotments are located immediately north of the site  Medium risk of surface water flooding on site

H10 Land at the Longspring Car Park				
	0.27	Medium	0-5 Years	<p>A level of car parking for the local shopping parade needs to be retained</p> <p>91-111 Longspring to the north of the site are Locally Listed Buildings</p> <p>Medium risk of surface water flooding on site</p> <p>Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land</p>
H11 Land at 420 and 420a St Albans Road				
	0.11	Medium	6-15 Years	<p>91-111 Longspring to the north of the site are Locally Listed Buildings</p> <p>Medium to high risk of surface water flooding on site</p> <p>Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land</p>
H12 Land to the rear of 53 Langley Way				
	0.09	Medium	6-15 Years	<p>Bespoke design solution required in terms of how any new development relates to the rear of the shopping parade</p> <p>Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land</p>
H13 16-18 St Albans Road				
	0.24	High	0-5 years	<p>'Car lite' development supported in this location</p> <p>Nascot Conservation Area is located opposite the site</p> <p>High risk of surface water flooding on site</p> <p>Clear connection to cycle and pedestrian routes required.</p>

H14 Land and Garages between 139-149 Queens Road				
	0.05	High	0-5 years	<p>Site is located in the Estcourt Conversation Area</p> <p>Located adjacent to a main train line therefore noise assessment may be required</p> <p>High risk of surface water flooding on site</p> <p>Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land</p>
H15 Land to the Rear of 125-127 the Parade				
	0.26	High	0-5 Years	<p>Any proposals need to comply with the objectives of Town Centre Strategic Development Area</p> <p>Elm Court adjacent to the site is a Locally Listed Building</p> <p>Civic Core Conservation Area is located immediately adjacent to the site</p> <p>There are a number of nationally and locally listed buildings to the south and west of the site.</p>
H16 Land at the Corner of Park Avenue and Rickmansworth Road				
	0.096	High	0-5 years	<p>Cassiobury Registered Park is located opposite the site</p> <p>A number of locally listed buildings are located on Cassiobury Park Avenue</p>
H17 Land at 80 Cassio Road				
	0.077	High	6-15 years	<p>Noise associated with the road network needs to be assessed</p> <p>Amenity pollution designation nearby includes Vicarage Road air quality management area.</p>

H18 Land and Buildings at 87 Cassio Road				
	0.1	High	0-5 years	Noise associated with the road network needs to be assessed
				Amenity pollution designation nearby includes Vicarage Road air quality management area
H19 Land and Buildings at 120-122 Exchange Road				
	0.05	High	6-15 years	Noise associated with the road network needs to be assessed
H20 Land at Lower Derby Road				
	0.27	High	0-5 years	Landscaping and ground floor treatment will be important in this location  Located adjacent to a main train line therefore noise assessment may be required
H21 Land and Buildings at 176-186 Rickmansworth Road				
	0.15	Medium	6-15 years	195-199 Rickmansworth Road to the south of the site is a Locally Listed Building  Low risk of surface water flooding on site  Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land
H22 Car Park at Junction of Vicarage Road and Exchange Road				
	0.05	High	6-15 years	The Former Watford County Court to the south of the site is a Nationally Listed Building  Pedestrian movement to and from the site including safe access needs to be established.  Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land

H23 Crown Passage Car Park				
	0.095	High	0-5 years	<p>The site is located in the High Street and Kings Street Conservation Area</p> <p>There are a number of nationally and locally listed buildings adjacent to the site.</p>
H24 Land at Waterfields Retail Park				
	1.88	High	6-15 years	<p>Proposals will need to comply with the wider objectives for Lower Street Strategic Development Area</p> <p>The eastern boundary verges on a Flood Zone 2 and if a climate change allowance is included, this changes to Flood Zone 3</p> <p>Low risk of surface water flooding on site</p> <p>There are a number of Tree Preservation Orders along the eastern boundary of the site</p> <p>The cycle and walking path needs to be retained with a clear connection to the path required.</p>
H25 Land at 18 Watford Field Road				
	0.11	High	0-5 years	<p>202 and 202a Lower High Street, and the Former Brewery Building located north of the site are Nationally Listed Buildings</p> <p>Low risk of surface water flooding on site</p>
H26 Land between 41-61 Brightwell Road				
	0.05	High	0-5 years	<p>Low risk of surface water flooding on site</p> <p>Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land</p>

H27 Land and Garages to the Rear of 5-17 Liverpool Road				
	0.18	High	0-5 years	Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land
H28 Land and Garages to the rear of 2-24 Elfrida Road				
	0.08	High	0-5 years	Located adjacent to a main train line therefore noise assessment may be required Low to medium risk of surface water flooding Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land
H29 Land and Buildings at 247 Lower High Street				
	0.14	High	0-5 years	Entire Site is located in Flood Zone 3 therefore an Exception Test is required. Brookland, located east of the site, is a Locally Listed Building Low risk of surface water flooding Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land
H30 Land at Croxley View				
	3.2	Medium	0-5 years	Retention of cycle and walking route required as part of design Low to medium risk of surface water flooding on site

H31 Land at Wiggshall Road Depot				
	1.5	High	6-15 years	<p>Wiggshall Depot buildings are Locally Listed Buildings and are located on site.</p> <p>A section to the north of the site is located in Flood Zone 2 and if a climate change allowances in enabled this section is in Flood Zone 3 therefore an Exception Test is required</p> <p>Medium risk of surface water flooding</p> <p>Preliminary Risk Assessment/ Site Investigation required</p>
H32 41 Aldenham Road				
	0.047	High	0-5 years	<p>Bushey Baptist Church at the south of the site is a Locally Listed Building</p> <p>Amenity pollution designation nearby includes Pinner Road air quality management area</p>
H33 Land at the Car Park, Chalk Hill				
	0.04	High	0-5 years	<p>Bushey Arches Railway Viaduct, located opposite the site, is a Nationally Listed Building</p> <p>Pill Box, located opposite the site, is a Locally Listed Building</p> <p>Located adjacent to a main train line – therefore noise assessment and mitigation required</p> <p>Medium risk of surface water flooding on site</p> <p>Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land</p> <p>Amenity pollution designation nearby includes Pinner Road air quality management area</p>

H34 Land at Car Park adjacent to 1 Chalk Hill				
	0.098	High	0-5 years	<p>Will need to retain a level of car parking for the local shopping parade</p> <p>Bushey Arches Railway Viaduct located to the north west of the site is a Nationally Listed Building</p> <p>Pill Box Viaduct located to the north west of the site is a Locally Listed Building</p> <p>Located adjacent to a main train line – therefore noise assessment may be required</p> <p>High risk of surface water flooding on site</p> <p>Amenity pollution designation nearby includes Pinner Road air quality management area</p>
H35 Land at Bushey Station				
		High	0-5 Years	<p>‘Car lite’ development supported</p> <p>Amenity pollution designation nearby includes Pinner Road air quality management area</p> <p>Heritage assets adjacent including Bushey Station Locally Listed Building and Oxhey Conservation Area</p> <p>A noise assessment and mitigation required which includes noise from rail network</p> <p>Medium risk of surface water flooding on site</p>
H36 Land at Kingsfield Court Garages				
	0.06	High	0-5 years	<p>Located adjacent to a main train line therefore noise assessment and mitigation are required</p> <p>Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land</p>

H37 Land and Garages at Riverside Road Garages				
	0.1	Medium	0-5 years	<p>The site is located in Flood Zone 2 and if a climate change allowance is enabled, the entire site is covered in Flood Zone 3 therefore an Exception Test is required</p> <p>Medium risk of surface water flooding on the site boundary</p> <p>Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land</p>
MXD01 Land at Woodside Community Centre				
	0.2	Low	6-15 years	<p>Retention or reprovision of community centre required</p> <p>Significant level change to the south of the site</p>
MXD02 Land 453 St. Albans Road				
	0.3	Medium	0-5 years	<p>Proposals will need to comply with the wider objectives the Dome Roundabout Strategic Development Area</p> <p>The North Watford Library opposite the site is a locally Listed Building</p> <p>High risk of surface water flooding on site</p>
MXD03 Land at the Lemaire Centre				
	0.096	Medium	0-5 years	<p>Proposals will need to comply with the wider objectives for the Dome Roundabout Strategic Development Area</p> <p>The North Watford Library adjacent to the site is a Locally Listed Building</p> <p>Low risk of surface water flooding on site</p>
MXD04 Land at 501 St. Albans Road				
	0.21	Medium	0-5 years	<p>Proposals will need to comply with the wider objectives for the Dome Roundabout Strategic Development Area</p> <p>Medium risk of surface water flooding on site</p> <p>The North Watford Library opposite the site is a locally Listed Building</p>

MXD05 Land at 94-114 St. Albans Road				
 <p>Aerial map showing a red-shaded rectangular plot of land at 94-114 St. Albans Road. The map includes surrounding residential areas, roads, and a railway line to the east. A scale bar and north arrow are visible at the bottom of the map.</p>	2.47	Medium (High Density is justified for this site conditional on school provision)	0-5 years	<p>Proposals will need to comply with the wider objectives for Watford Junction Strategic Development Area</p> <p>School provision required for this site.</p> <p>Nascot Conservation Area is located opposite</p> <p>Locally listed buildings located to the north and west of the site</p> <p>Located adjacent to a main train line therefore noise assessment and mitigation are required</p> <p>High risk of surface water flooding on site</p>
MXD06 Land at Watford Junction				
 <p>Aerial map showing a red-shaded irregular plot of land at Watford Junction. The map includes surrounding residential areas, roads, and a railway line. A scale bar and north arrow are visible at the bottom of the map.</p>	8.6	High	0-15 years	<p>Proposals will need to comply with the wider objectives for Watford Junction Strategic Development Area</p> <p>Development is confined to areas not required for railway operations, although station redevelopment is an objective</p> <p>Nascot Conservation Area is located opposite</p> <p>Estcourt Road Conservation area is located directly south of the site</p> <p>Located adjacent to a main train line therefore a noise assessment may be required</p> <p>Concrete Batching Plant is a source of noise nuisance and therefore a noise assessment is required</p> <p>High risk of surface water flooding on site</p> <p>Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land</p>

MXD07 Land Colonial Way/Clive Way				
	1.98	Medium (High Density is justified for this site conditional on school provision)	0-15 years	The site will be a predominantly employment led, mixed used development  Medium risk of surface water flooding on site  Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land
MXD08 Land at Centre Point Community Centre				
	0.13	High	0-5 years	Retention or reprovion of community centre required
MXD09 Land at the Telephone Exchange Car Park				
	0.23	High	0-5 years	Considered a residential led scheme, although an appropriate non-residential use is possible on the ground floor  58 High Street is a Nationally Listed Building located to the north east of the site  62-70 High Street, 48 High Street and 46 High Street are Locally Listed Buildings located north of the site  Proposals will need to comply with the wider objectives for Town Centre Strategic Development Area  Initial preliminary site investigation required to identify any contaminated land

MXD10 Land at Tesco Lower High Street				
	7.61	High	0-15 years	<p>Proposals will need to comply with the wider objectives for Lower High Street Strategic Development Area</p> <p>Considered a residential led scheme, although some reprovision of retail may be necessary and a primary school will need to be delivered on site</p> <p>A section to the north of the site is located in Flood Zone 3b, and other sections of the site in Flood Zones 2 and 3. If a climate change allowance is enabled, then the majority of the site is in Flood Zone 3.</p> <p>High risk of surface water flooding on site</p> <p>Locally Listed Coal Duty Marker located on site</p> <p>There are a number of Tree Protection Orders located at the north of the site</p>
MXD11 44-56 Vicarage Road				
	0.13	High	6-15 years	<p>Reprovision of commercial uses on the ground floor</p> <p>The Square Conservation Area is located opposite</p> <p>Amenity pollution designation nearby includes Vicarage Road air quality management area</p> <p>Watford Printers is a Locally Listed Building located near to the site</p>
MXD12 Land at Riverwell				
	5.36	High	0-5 years	<p>Considered a residential led scheme, although a school and other appropriate non-residential uses are possible on site</p> <p>The south of the site is located in Flood Zones 2 and 3 and if a climate change allowance is enabled, the south of the site is in Flood Zone 3</p> <p>High risk of surface water flooding on part of site</p>

MXD13 23-37 The Parade				
	0.41	High	0-5 Years	The locally listed shopfront needs to be retained as part of any proposals  Active commercial uses required on the ground floor as part Primary Shopping Frontage.

#### 4. 4. Housing Mix

##### Why is this policy needed?

4. 4. 1. Housing need does not only relate to numbers. To meet housing need fully and appropriately the correct type, size and mix of housing is required. Achieving a good mix of housing on all sites is essential to create balanced communities and mixed, equitable neighbourhoods. The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 states that *“the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes”*).

4. 4. 2. Over the past decade, there has been a significant oversupply of 1 and 2 bed units in Watford relative to the requirements identified in previous housing market assessments. This has resulted in an under provision of 3 bed units, which are most suitable for family homes. If these are not delivered it can negatively impact on the delivery of a proportionate mix of homes for both market and affordable housing. There is a need to ensure the overall mix on site is sufficient to meet the needs of different groups in the community.

4. 4. 3. A good housing mix is required to ensure indirect demand is not created for further urban sprawl. Should an under provision of 3 bed family units in urban areas continue, including in high density schemes, an undue demand for urban expansion will be created. This often results in low density housing profiles not conducive to sustainable development. In South West Hertfordshire, this low density type of development places increasing pressure on land designated as Green Belt. This is not an efficient or effective use of land. This policy is required to ensure that a more sustainable solution is pursued which includes the provision of a proportionate mix of homes on all sites. Although it is recognised that to achieve efficient densities, some areas of the borough will have a higher proportion of 1 and 2 bed units than others.

4. 4. 4. This policy is needed to provide clear guidance on the requirements for the housing mix expected across the different Sustainability Zones (as defined in the Policies Map) in the borough. This is to ensure the delivery of housing needs for different groups in the community.

##### What is the policy intended to do?

4. 4. 5. The policy sets out the housing mix required for all sites on a borough-wide basis. All sites will need to have a proportionate mix of housing. The starting point for housing mix is based on the Draft Local Housing Needs Assessment (tbc, 2019). It is clear that a good housing mix which reflects local need is required throughout Watford and the South West Hertfordshire area. Currently the Draft Local Housing Needs Assessment has identified the requirements set out in Figure 7.

#### 4. 5. Figure 7: Housing Mix Needs (based on current occupancy trends) for Watford

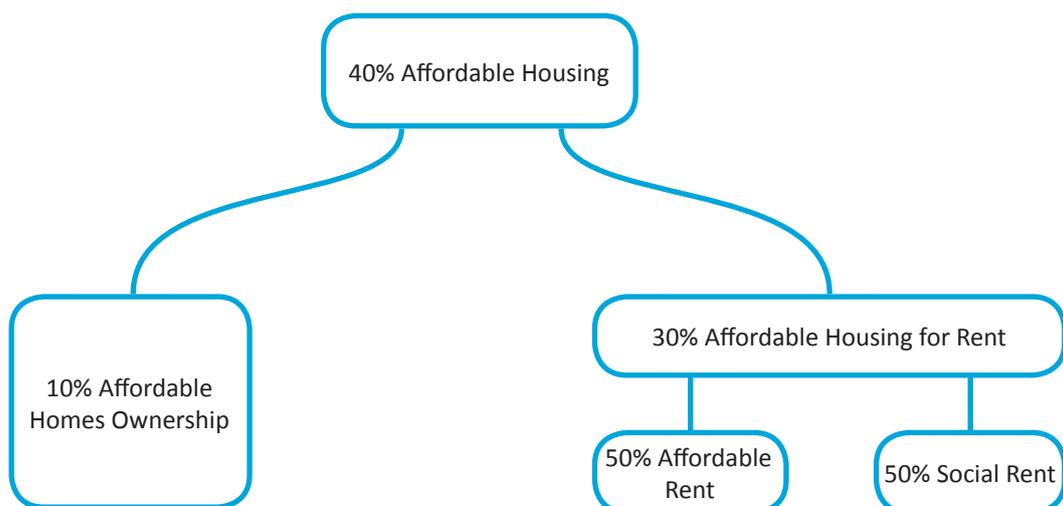
	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4+ bedrooms
Market Housing	7%	22-24%	47-49%	21-22%
Affordable Housing Ownership	35%	36-38%	21-22%	6-7%
Affordable Rent/ Social Rent	35-37%	26-27%	34%	4%

4. 5. 1. The Draft Local Housing Needs Assessment notes that current occupancy trends may change going into the future and that it is possible that provision of certain types of accommodation will influence the mix needed. It also states that *“it is difficult to say to what extent the mix might move away from the modelled data but in making policy the Councils could make adjustments to the recommended mix to reflect any local issue and/or political aspirations as they see fit”*.

4. 5. 2. It should be noted that current occupancy patterns may not necessarily be the most effective measure to identify need into the future. This is particularly true if any current pattern or trend is an unsustainable trend. An example of this is noted in the Draft Local Housing Needs Assessment which states that *“By using current occupancy patterns, account can be taken of the relationship between different groups and the housing they occupy (for example, older households who live in accommodation larger than they technically need)”*.

4. 5. 3. Moreover, the Draft Local Housing Needs Assessment notes that the majority of household growth for Watford is for homes with 1 and 2 dependent children. Accordingly, the housing mix requirement has been considered with this in mind (particularly the need for 2 and 3 bed homes rather than 4 beds). A proportionate mix requirement has been identified for the borough area which removes the need for 4 bed units and redistributes it across the other unit sizes.

#### 4. 6. Figure 8: Affordable Housing



#### 4. 7. Figure 9: Housing Mix Needs (Redistribution Mix) for Watford Local Plan 2020 - 2036

Sustainability Zone	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3+ bedrooms
Market Housing	14%	29-31%	54-56%
Affordable Housing Ownership	37%	38-40%	23-25%
Affordable Rent/ Social Rent	36-38%	27-28%	35%

4. 7. 1. Housing mix is strongly related to the density of the site, therefore the housing mix requirements need to have regard to the density expectations across the borough which is an important locally specific issue. There is a recognition that, depending on the density requirements of an area, certain unit sizes may predominate in locations. In the Low Sustainability Zone of the borough, 3 bed units will predominate, while in the High Sustainability Zones, 1 and 2 bed units may predominate. However, predominate does not mean that a disproportional number of smaller units will be acceptable. No sites should have an excessive amount of particular unit size(s), as this creates unbalanced neighbourhoods.

#### Policy H4.2 Housing Mix

All proposals are required to provide a proportionate mix of home types and sizes. Proposals that achieve a well-balanced and proportionate mix of housing in line with the following mix requirements (total housing market and affordable housing) will be supported where they also comply with other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

In the High Sustainability Zone, 3 bed units should take the form of ground floor duplexes or maisonettes with each having its own ground floor access.

#### 4. 8. Affordable Housing

##### Why is this policy needed?

4. 8. 1. This policy is required to achieve proportionate and deliverable affordable housing on all qualifying sites. There is an acute housing affordability issue in Watford and the South West Hertfordshire region. Currently, affordability ratios indicate approximately 12:5 ratio (income relative to buying/renting a property) based on the average income in Watford.

4. 8. 2. The policy is required to identify the specific types of affordable housing required. This includes affordable housing for sale (Low Cost Home Ownership) and affordable housing for rent (including social rent for those whose needs are not met by the market). This policy is also needed to help achieve the priorities of the Draft Housing Strategy (tbc, 2019) by ensuring that Watford is a town where people can access a choice of affordable and good quality homes.

##### What is the policy intended to do?

4. 8. 3. The policy establishes a 40% affordable housing requirement (in terms of habitable rooms) on all qualifying sites. The provision of affordable housing applies to all development of 10 residential units or more).

4. 8. 4. On all qualifying sites, 10% of the homes are expected to be for affordable home ownership as part of the overall affordable provision on site. The remaining affordable housing provision (30% of the total number of units) on site should be affordable housing for rent (social rent or affordable rent). The following figure illustrates the affordable housing requirement breakdown. All figures are based on a percentage of the total number of habitable rooms in a development.

4. 8. 5. Affordable housing provision is expected to be provided on site to ensure to the establishment of mixed and equitable communities.

### **Policy H4.3 Affordable Housing**

All residential developments of 10 units or more will be required to deliver 40% affordable housing. Applications will be required to set out how they comply with the council's Housing Strategy. Proposals which achieve a well-balanced and proportionate mix of housing will be supported.

This number of affordable units will be based on number of habitable rooms in the scheme. How this will be provided in terms of unit sizes and tenures, including the prioritisation of family sized units where appropriate, will be determined based on the needs set out in the council's Housing Strategy, and subsequent amendments.

Proposals will be required to provide a mix of housing tenures in accordance with the following:

1. 10% Affordable Home Ownership Products;
2. 30% Affordable Housing for Rent consisting of;
  - a. 50% Affordable Rent;
  - b. 50% Social Rent.

Affordable housing should be provided on site. Only in cases where it can be clearly demonstrated that this is not possible through site constraints and that provision off-site would better achieve inclusive and mixed communities will a commuted sum be accepted in lieu of on-site provision.

A housing schedule is required for all qualifying sites which clearly details how the affordable housing requirement has been complied with in terms of habitable rooms (floor space and the number of rooms), units and tenures.

Where consideration of the financial viability of a development is relevant, the council will require the applicant to submit an 'open book' financial viability assessment. This assessment will be made publically available along with all other documents supporting the planning application.

## **4. 9. Redevelopment of Garage Sites**

### **Why is this policy needed?**

4. 9. 1. Small sites play a large role in housing delivery in Watford. When considering constraints related to land supply, small sites can help to maximise the urban capacity by maintaining a 'brownfield first' approach.

4. 9. 2. Garage sites, those intended to be used for parking or private storage, are often underutilised areas of land which may be better suited for alternate uses. The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment identified numerous garage sites that were considered suitable for redevelopment although many were classed as windfall (less than five dwellings) or ruled out on availability constraints. The site allocations set out in the draft Local Plan therefore do not represent an exhaustive list of the garage sites that would be considered suitable for residential or economic development.

## What is the policy intended to do?

4. 9. 3. The policy intends to implement a 'brownfield first' approach by encouraging the redevelopment of underutilised garage sites. This should support increased housing provision in the urban area and facilitate the development of windfall sites.

4. 9. 4. Redevelopment of garage sites should meet the relevant standards and guidelines proposed in the Revised Residential Design Guide (tbc, 2019), as amended. This should ensure that effective uses of land can be optimised using creative design where necessary.

### Policy H4.4 Garage Site Development

There will be a presumption in favour of the redevelopment of garages sites, provided they comply with the relevant Development Management policies set out in the Local Plan.

## 4. 10. The ageing population

### Why is this policy needed?

4. 10. 1. Reflecting national trends and those found in the South West Hertfordshire area, the proportion of the population in Watford aged 65+ years is anticipated to increase during the plan period from 13% in 2020 to 17% in 2036<sup>5</sup>. As people get older and progress into different stages of their lives, whether it be through changing family dynamics, migration, or the general ageing process, it is important to consider how new development can meet these needs.

4. 10. 2. As people get older, the choices they have, or make, vary across the population and can relate to practical and emotional choices related to things such as long term family connections, desire to downsize or move into supported accommodation, lifestyle aspirations or issues related to personal health. It is important that no matter how people progress through their lives, housing needs to be available to meet their changing needs.

4. 10. 3. Small homes can provide properties for older people to move into releasing properties for larger families. However, for people getting older an important consideration is related to quality of life. This is particularly important with people increasingly likely to experience a long term illness or disability. Nationally, this affects approximately 45% of people aged 65+ years<sup>6</sup> and 22% of the population overall. Therefore, an increasing number of homes need to be designed so they are adaptable and can be fitted to meet the needs of householders as they change over time.

## Accessible and adaptable homes for an ageing population

### 4. 11. Adaptable dwellings

#### Why is this policy needed?

4. 11. 1. For people to live more independently and enjoy a good quality of life as they get older it is important they can live in places they are familiar with and connected to. Most existing homes are not easily adaptable and cannot cater for changing personal needs. This results in people moving into other homes that may not be ideal. If a proportion of new homes can be completed that are adaptable then this will contribute towards better accommodating an aging population and sustainable development.

4. 11. 2. The optional internal space standards are intended to deliver new homes that support a higher quality of living. Additionally, the Government introduced optional Building Regulation requirements

5 [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2)

6 [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/692771/family-resources-survey-2016-17.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/692771/family-resources-survey-2016-17.pdf)

that enables new homes to be designed to support better accessibility and adaptation. New residential developments will be required to provide a proportion of new homes that meet the standards set out in Part M4(2) and M4(3) set out in the Buildings Regulations (2013)<sup>7</sup>, as amended.

4. 11. 3. Nationally, approximately 1.8% of the population requires the use of a wheelchair as part of their daily lives (NHS England, 2019). It is important that new homes are designed to support people requiring wheelchair access, however, with an ageing population and no policy requirements in place to deliver new dwellings with wheelchair access in the past, it is important to ensure new residential development meets this need in the wider context of making places in Watford more adaptable and accessible.

## 4. 12. People with dementia

### Why is this policy needed?

4. 12. 1. Across the country dementia affects approximately 1.4% of the population and one in three people aged 65+ years<sup>8</sup>. In 2036, the number of people experiencing dementia is expected to increase to 2.2% of the population. Therefore, housing designed to support people with degenerative health issues such as dementia needs to be available. The policy sets out requirements to help meet this growing need. When calculating the number of dwellings required to comply with the policy where the requirement is less than one dwellings, one dwelling will be required to meet this standard.

4. 12. 2. Organisations such as Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation and the Royal Town Planning Institute have provided guidance setting out important principles that should be designed into new residential developments to support people with dementia. Key principles to consider when designing new developments and individual homes for people with dementia are set out in Figure 10.

## 4. 13. Figure 10: Key principles of good design

Primary consideration	Secondary consideration
Generous internal space standards	Generous internal space standards and potential for three habitable rooms and flexible layouts
Natural light	Placement, size and detail of windows
Open plan layout	Apartments to have balconies or patios with space for tables, chairs and plants Avoid single aspect dwellings Avoid internal corridors
Avoid single aspect dwellings	Maximise natural light and ventilation
Care ready	Able to accommodate new technologies
Building layouts	Encourage people to circulate and interact in the building Encourage natural surveillance of communal spaces Avoid an 'institutional' feeling
Shared spaces	Spaces that can support social interaction
Relationship with the street and outdoor environment	Quality public realm Internal layout of shared and private spaces
Energy efficient homes	Good insulation and ventilated to avoid overheating

7 [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-building-amendment-regulations-2013](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-building-amendment-regulations-2013)

8 [www.dementiastatistics.org/statistics-about-dementia/](http://www.dementiastatistics.org/statistics-about-dementia/)

Internal and external storage space	Location and height of storage spaces Provision for mobility aids
Safe outdoor environment	Prioritising pedestrians over other users in outdoor spaces

Source: Royal Town Planning Institute<sup>9</sup> and Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation<sup>10</sup>

### What is the policy intended to do?

4. 13. 1. Providing homes for people as they get older, have disabilities or experience a long term illness is important to retaining a quality of life and continuing to be an active part of the community. To accommodate changing population demographics, new housing that can meet these needs should be provided as new development comes forward. Taking this proactive approach will help ensure the right properties are available when they are required by those who need them.

#### Policy H4.5 Accessible and Adaptable Homes

To provide homes for elderly people and those with disabilities and dementia, the following will be required for proposals of ten or more dwellings:

1. All affordable homes and 20% of market homes are expected to be compliant with Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations;
2. 4% of all new dwellings are expected to be compliant with Part M4(3) of the Building Regulations. Where this requirement is equivalent to less than a single dwelling, one dwelling will be required to meet this standard;
3. Developers will be required to demonstrate how they have included dementia friendly principles of design as part of the proposal. 4% of new homes should be designed with dementia friendly principles in mind. This is in addition to the requirements in part (1) above.

## 4. 14. Specialist and supported living accommodation

### Why is this policy needed?

4. 14. 1. Many people will require assisted living as they get older and if they have disabilities. This is particularly apparent considering that the number of people aged 80+ years is expected to increase by 50% during the plan period (ONS, 2016 based projections). This is often provided as specialist and supported living accommodation tailored for particular needs and having support carers located on site or nearby.

4. 14. 2. The Local Plan has not allocated any sites for new specialist and supported living accommodation, however, proposals put forward for these types of schemes will be supported where they demonstrate how they will meet the needs of the community. Existing facilities will be protected and any loss will be resisted unless these facilities are re-provided within the borough and there is no net loss of units or floor space.

4. 14. 3. Provision of sheltered and specialist housing units or bed space equivalent units will be considered in lieu of affordable housing.

### What is this policy intended to do?

4. 14. 4. To ensure accommodation is available to meet the needs of elderly people, specialised homes and care facilities are required. This is a national issue facing the country as we move into the future.

<sup>9</sup> [www.rtpi.org.uk/knowledge/practice/dementia-and-town-planning/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/knowledge/practice/dementia-and-town-planning/)

<sup>10</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/homes-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/homes-england)

#### **Policy H4.6 Specialist housing**

Schemes for sheltered and specialist housing will be supported where they are well designed and integrated into the adjacent area. Proposals will be expected to be designed to a density that will reflect density requirements set out for housing.

The redevelopment of existing specialist and supported living facilities will only be supported where there is no net loss of units or floor space.

### **4. 15. Self-build and custom housebuilding**

#### **Why is this policy needed?**

4. 15. 1. Self-build and custom housebuilding is an approach to delivering new homes that are designed and built by people to meet their aspirations and needs. The Government encourages new self and custom build homes as a way of enabling people to get onto the housing ladder in locations where they are not otherwise able rather than to support inappropriately large homes that do not make effective use of land.

4. 15. 2. Land available for new development in Watford is limited through constraints such as the Green Belt, public open space designations, nature reserves and flood risk. This is demonstrated through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, which identified available land to support a scale of development less than the housing requirement calculated using the Government's standard Objectively Assessed Housing Need methodology. Therefore, it is not considered appropriate to allocate specific sites for self-build homes and custom housebuilding. However, self-build and custom build housing will be supported on windfall sites where appropriate provided the proposal complies with policies set out in the Local Plan. The council maintains a register of people interested in building a new self or custom house build.

#### **What is this policy intended to do?**

4. 15. 3. Local authorities are required to allocate land for self-build and custom house building. Watford does not have the capacity to do this. Therefore, it is important this type of residential development is facilitated through other mechanisms such supporting development in principle on windfall sites that may become available for redevelopment.

#### **Policy H4.7 Self-build and custom housebuilding**

Schemes for self-build and custom housebuilding will be supported on windfall sites. Any proposal will be required to make effective use of land and comply with the density requirements set out in the Local Plan.

Should any unallocated sites of 20 or more dwellings come forward on greenfield land, 5% of the plots should be serviced and marketed for self-build and custom housebuilding. This will need to be agreed with the local planning authority.

Where plots set aside for greenfield self-build or custom build have not been subject to a planning application, or are unlikely to be subject to a self-build or custom build proposal within 12 months of completion of the overall scheme, the plots will be subject to development by the applicant responsible for the site.

### **4. 16. Residential Conversions**

#### **Why is this policy needed?**

4. 16. 1. Residential conversions can contribute towards new homes required in an area. This can make effective use of existing dwellings that are located in areas of high sustainability. However, conversions can also reduce the number of family sized homes. A mix of dwelling sizes (number of bedrooms) in an area is

important to maintain balanced communities and enable people to move and live in areas where they share social connections and they can afford.

4. 16. 2. Areas of high sustainability are to experience the most significant amount of growth during the plan period. In these areas it will be important to deliver a good mix of dwelling sizes, however, it is likely that a greater proportion of smaller units will be provided through new developments. Therefore, it is important that family units are protected to retain a mix of homes for current and future generations.

4. 16. 3. Affordability within the Watford area varies across the borough with lower value housing more available in the higher sustainability zones compared to the medium and lower sustainability areas which have larger plots and have more family type housing. Protecting family homes across the borough, while supporting a limited amount of change, will help ensure a mix of homes with different levels of affordability are available across the borough. This will help support local people who wish to stay in the area who may otherwise be forced move outside of the town because the properties they can afford are not available locally.

4. 16. 4. Houses in multiple occupation can create issues where there is a high concentration in a particular area. This can be visible through inappropriate numbers of parked vehicles and declining maintenance affecting the property and immediate area.

4. 16. 5. To support mixed and balanced communities and ensure that a range of household needs continue to be accommodated throughout Watford, proposals for changes of use to a house in multiple occupation will only be acceptable where there is not already a concentration of these properties.

### **What is this policy intended to do?**

4. 16. 6. Protecting the supply of family homes while enabling a limited amount of change will ensure residential properties are available at prices to support all parts of the community. Residential areas in Watford have evolved over time and will continue to do so, however, change needs to be managed to avoid having a significant adverse impact on places where people live.

### **Policy H4.8 Residential conversions**

Proposals to sub-divide existing dwellings will be supported when the amount of existing residential frontage in a street block consisting of a mix of conversions, houses in multiple occupation or guest houses does not exceed:

1. 10% in any of the Sustainability Zones; or
2. It does not affect the residential frontage in a street block and unacceptably alter the character of the street;
3. Car parking associated with the scheme is provided on-site or nearby in off-street facilities;
4. Appropriate amenity space and facilities for refuse and recycling storage is provided; and
5. One cycle storage space is provided for each habitable room.

Proposals to convert properties larger than 150 sqm floor area, a family sized dwelling of three bedrooms will be required as part of the conversion.



## Chapter 5: Building a Strong, Competitive Economy

### 5. 1. Introduction

5. 1. 1.           Watford is a regional economic centre, home to the UK headquarters of many well-known companies as well as valuable local businesses. An 18 minute commute to central London means that Watford is strategically placed for business, although it remains a distinct and competitive economic centre in its own right.

5. 1. 2.           The planning system can support the growth of Watford's economy by ensuring that the right type of land is available in the right places. The South West Herts Economy Study (2019) has identified a shortage of land for B1c (light industrial), B2 (heavy industrial) and B8 (storage, warehousing and distribution) uses. The policies in this chapter have been designed to protect employment land to address this shortage. They seek to encourage economic growth by supporting increased provision and intensification of employment floor space in Watford.

### 5. 2. Designated Employment Sites

#### Why is this policy needed?

5. 2. 1.           As the demand for housing grows, so too will the number of jobs required in Watford. However, ambitious goals for economic growth are combined with a limit in land supply. This means that designated employment sites will play an important role in meeting Watford's economic need through the protection and intensification of B class (employment) floor space. Sites within designated employment areas that could be intensified have been identified as part of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment.

5. 2. 2.           Recent evidence has shown large scale losses of B class (employment) floor space which, if allowed to continue, would threaten to erode Watford's status as a regional economic centre. In designated employment sites, the loss has not necessarily been to residential uses, but also to other non-B uses such as A (retail) and D (leisure and assembly/non-residential institutions) class uses and Sui Generis (other unclassified uses).

5. 2. 3.           Supporting uses can make a valuable contribution to designated employment sites. They can enable single trip journeys and provide a significant number of jobs. For instance, facilities such as nurseries and fitness gyms can complement existing uses by providing facilities that can frequently be used by staff working in the employment areas while also supporting job creation. Residential and retail uses can sometimes be considered supporting uses, when part of mixed use development schemes and where clearly ancillary to the employment use.

5. 2. 4.           Non-employment uses that are destinations in their own right and that do not complement existing uses within a designated employment area can undermine its effectiveness and value to the economy. Therefore, such types of development are inappropriate in designated employment sites. 'Destination uses' can be defined as non-B uses which do not support the current employment provision, offer low job densities and often require the use of a car to access them. They generate specific trips to the sites that cannot be combined with other stops as part of a single journey. For example, a destination use cannot be visited as a stop on the way to work.

5. 2. 5.           In recent years, there has been an increase in these types of non-B 'destination' uses, such as car sales showrooms and places of worship, which are better suited to other locations. To protect land for job-generating industries from these uses, a policy is required to guide the type of development that would be considered suitable in designated employment areas.

## What is the policy intended to do?

5. 2. 6. The policy seeks to strengthen the employment offer that Watford's designated employment sites provide. It is important to protect B class (employment) floor space and support opportunities for intensification. This should help to achieve net increases in floor space to support the delivery of Watford's future economic growth projections.

5. 2. 7. B class uses (employment) are not the only uses capable of generating significant numbers of jobs. A level of flexibility is required to ensure that non-B uses that can demonstrate their potential to generate jobs are also supported. The policy also intends to guide cases in which it would be appropriate to grant permission for non-B uses in designated employment sites.

### Policy E5.1 Designated Employment Sites

Designated employment sites are identified on the Policies Map.

Change of uses within B classes will be permitted in designated employment sites. However, proposals that would incur a net loss of B class floor space will be resisted unless:

- An up to date evidence base demonstrates that the site is no longer required for employment use;
- Redevelopment will not adversely affect the effectiveness and functionality of the designated site for employment activities; and
- The proposed use directly supports the main economic function of the site.

Proposals for supporting uses will only be supported where their job generating potential can clearly be demonstrated. This should be assessed on a case by case basis. Proposals for supporting uses must show that the development proposed would not compromise any industrial or other employment activities in the designated site in terms of their continued efficient function, access, service arrangements and operating times.

Proposals where the majority of the floor space is for non-B destination uses will not be supported.

Redevelopment and intensification of sites within designated employment areas will be supported for proposals that result in no net loss of B class floor space.

## 5. 3. Economic Development Outside of Designated Employment Locations

### Why is this policy needed?

5. 3. 1. The Watford Employment Land Review (2019) has shown that losses of B (employment) class floor space have been most prevalent in non-designated employment locations. This has largely been through changes to residential uses through the liberalisation of permitted development rights and other means. These losses now remain in conflict with the need to increase floor space to support Watford's economic growth. Whilst the majority of employment growth is expected to come through the redevelopment and intensification of designated sites, smaller non-designated sites also have the potential to assist in supporting further economic growth.

5. 3. 2. Employment locations outside of designated sites can provide jobs for local people and important support services and facilities for businesses. They can reduce the need to travel by providing direct employment opportunities for the surrounding neighbourhood. Shorter distances to workplaces can

enhance the attractiveness of active modes of travel, including walking and cycling.

5. 3. 3. These non-designated sites therefore require greater support and protection to ensure that viable employment sites are not lost to other uses. An over-release of employment land across the borough could have a negative impact on Watford's economy.

### **What is the policy intended to do?**

5. 3. 4. This policy seeks to protect and enhance the employment offer outside of designated employment areas to address recent losses of B (employment) class floor space. However, there should be sufficient flexibility to enable sites that are not performing well as employment land to be considered for alternate uses. Changes in the market may mean that some sites are no longer viable for employment use and either lie vacant, or are better suited for another use. In these circumstances, changes of use should be enabled to ensure that the most effective use of land is being pursued.

5. 3. 5. In the case that proposals for new employment sites are submitted, the policy seeks to support employment development, where appropriate.

### **Policy E5.2 Economic Development Outside of Designated Employment Locations**

Proposals for the development of new non-designated employment sites will be supported. Any proposals for new B class floor space will need to be compatible with the existing uses in the surrounding area and there should be no significant adverse impacts on residential amenity or environmental quality.

The net loss of existing B class employment space outside of designated employment areas will only be permitted where:

- An up to date evidence base demonstrates that the site is no longer required for employment use; or
- The property has been vacant for at least 12 months and there is clear marketing evidence to show it cannot be reused or redeveloped for employment use in the medium term; or
- The job generating potential of the alternative proposed use can clearly be demonstrated; or
- The proposal achieves clear sustainability objectives, such as the provision of residential development in close proximity to key public transport nodes.

## **5. 4. Mixed Use Development**

### **Why is this policy needed?**

5. 4. 1. There has been a recent trend towards the co-location of uses and mixed use development as a way to intensify land use and to address critical shortages of land for housing and employment. Mixed use development can support more intensive uses of land, as well as having other environmental and social benefits. Locating residential, employment and other uses together can reduce trips by enhancing the possibility of living and working in the same neighbourhood. Mixed uses can also help to create more vibrant, active ground floor frontages for high density residential led developments.

5. 4. 2. The provision of flexible workspaces can be better facilitated through mixed use schemes. This includes live/work units, incubator units, and shared communal office spaces where homeworkers can have

access to fast broadband, printing and other office facilities. These spaces are becoming more in demand, particularly as flexible working practices are becoming more common.

5. 4. 3. There has been some mixed use development in Watford between residential and commercial uses but the co-location of residential and light industrial uses is also gaining some traction in urban areas, including in London.

5. 4. 4. As this trend continues to evolve, it is important to encourage mixed use schemes while ensuring that incompatible land uses are not located together. For example, heavy industry would be inappropriate to co-locate with more sensitive land uses, such as housing. In some instances, mitigation will be required to minimise the risk of conflict regarding noise, vibration, safety and security and other amenity issues.

### **What is the policy intended to do?**

5. 4. 5. The policy aims to support mixed use development while ensuring that incompatible land uses are not located together as part of mixed use schemes. The aim is to provide high quality design and amenity for inhabitants of the residential elements of a scheme, while ensuring that any employment activities are not undermined as a result of co-location.

#### **Policy E5.3 Mixed Use Development**

Mixed use development will be supported in principle where the development is complementary to employment uses and would not undermine any existing employment function on or adjacent to the site.

Mixed use development proposals which co-locate light industrial, storage or distribution floor space with residential and/or other sensitive uses are required to demonstrate that appropriate design mitigation will be provided in any residential element.

In appropriate locations, proposals for mixed use development within categories A, B1, B8, C1, C3, C4 and D will be supported. Mixed use development proposals where one of the uses falls into the Sui Generis category should be assessed for suitability on a case by case basis.

## Chapter 6: Tackling Climate Change, Adaptation and Resilience

### 6. 1. Introduction

6. 1. 1. Recognising the importance of climate change and how this will affect future generations, the Government, as part of the Climate Change Act (2008) set out a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. The overall objective is for all new development to be 'zero carbon' in the future. This is reflected in the latest recommendations by the UK Committee on Climate Change in the report 'Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming (2019)<sup>1</sup>.

6. 1. 2. The United Nations' Conference on Climate Change, Paris 2015, has provided a starting point for this, along with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals<sup>2</sup>, both of which the UK government has committed to. Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals considers 'Sustainable Cities and Communities'<sup>3</sup>, and is the goal most relevant for local authorities in terms of their land use planning functions. How we manage job growth, housing and transport will play an important part of meeting climate change goals.

6. 1. 3. Planning has an important role to play in meeting the challenges of climate change. There is a need to meet the challenges of climate change in terms reducing greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) and to improve resilience (adaptation). While the framework for reducing these emissions is set out through national guidance, much of the implementation will need to be at the local level.

6. 1. 4. The draft Local Plan is seeking to address the issue of climate change by making the achievement of sustainable development a central theme throughout the document. This is reflected in policies that:

- focussing new development in the most sustainable locations where there is good access to public services, facilities and public transport;
- encouraging higher density development in the most suitable areas of the borough;
- requiring new development to make better use of limited resources by being more energy and water efficient;
- supporting new infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling to reduce reliance on private vehicles for local journeys;
- setting out a more balanced approach to car parking; and
- protecting our green spaces to support biodiversity, encouraging people to have healthier lifestyles and to mitigate the potential impacts of climate change such as urban heating and flood risk.

6. 1. 5. Watford Borough Council declared a Climate Change Emergency in July 2019 in an effort to respond to these challenges. A key objective of this declaration is for the council to be carbon neutral by 2030. To understand the scale of greenhouse gas emissions and the challenges facing the borough, emissions for local authorities are monitored annually. This provides a benchmark against which Watford Borough Council can monitor progress towards becoming carbon neutral in the future.

### 6. 2. Sustainable Construction and Design

---

1 [www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-the-uks-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming/](http://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-the-uks-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming/)

2 [www.gov.uk/government/publications/implementing-the-sustainable-development-goals/implementing-the-sustainable-development-goals](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/implementing-the-sustainable-development-goals/implementing-the-sustainable-development-goals)

3 [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/)

## Why is this policy needed?

6. 2. 1. To tackle climate change the Local Plan will seek to reduce water stress, risks from overheating and work towards ensuring buildings are more energy efficient.

6. 2. 2. Reducing domestic and commercial energy use through the inclusion of energy efficiency and low carbon technologies as part of new developments can aid progress in this matter. This can reduce the cost of operating new homes, which in the process will use less energy to benefit the environment. To achieve this, the following energy hierarchy needs to be considered:

1. Be lean: use less energy
2. Be clean: supply energy efficiently
3. Be green: use renewable energy

6. 2. 3. The first priority is to use less energy. Therefore, the importance of ensuring maximum energy efficiency in domestic and commercial buildings to reduce the amount of energy and natural resources being consumed is the starting point for the policy.

6. 2. 4. Current national policy notes that local plans should take account of the long term implications for water supply in terms mitigating and adapting to climate change. The 2013 Water Stress areas – Final Classification states that the Thames Water Area and the Affinity Water Area are areas under Serious Water Stress (Environment Agency, 2013). Water stress will be a critical issue going forward in Watford and the South West Hertfordshire area, particularly should the trend of rising temperatures continue.

6. 2. 5. If not well designed, buildings can create living spaces that can be uncomfortable and unhealthy. In these circumstances, people can experience overheating. It is important that energy efficient buildings not only include building techniques and materials to reduce energy consumption but are designed to have quality interior living spaces and structures (walls, ceilings, roofs) that provide good air circulation where interior temperatures and humidity can be easily and naturally regulated.

## What is the policy intended to do?

6. 2. 6. This policy seeks to set out the requirements that new proposals have to meet in terms of sustainable construction and design. More specifically, in relation to energy efficiency and low carbon technologies, water supply and overheating to provide high quality homes and work premises and reduce the potential impact on the environment. How proposals will comply with this policy will need to be detailed in a Sustainability Statement.

### Policy CC6.1 Sustainable Construction and Design

Proposals will be supported where they demonstrate they have provided appropriate design and other measures to address climate change, complying with the standards below, through energy efficiency, water efficiency and overheating.

Residential proposals for 5 or more units and/or non-residential proposals for 1000 sqm or more will need to provide a sustainability statement. The statement will detail how the requirements below on energy efficiency, water efficiency and overheating have been met.

#### Low Carbon Energy and Energy Efficiency

The following is required as a minimum unless it can be demonstrated that it would make the scheme unviable:

- All residential development of 5 units or more should achieve an energy performance standard equivalent at least 19% carbon emission reduction improvement against Part L of the Building Regulations (2013);
- Non-residential development of 1000 sqm or more should achieve BREEAM Very Good standard.

The layout, orientation and design of all proposals should maximise energy efficiency and conservation of energy. Proposals for residential and non-residential development which incorporate renewable energy and low carbon technologies to contribute to clean energy supply will be supported.

### **Water Supply**

Development should ensure efficient use of water. Proposals which include water saving measures and equipment will be supported. All residential development should be designed to achieve water consumption rates of 110 litres or less per person per day.

### **Overheating**

New Developments will need to demonstrate how measures have been implemented to avoid overheating. This should include measures such as:

- Energy Efficiency Design including orientation and planting;
- Orientation and a material palette which reduces heat retention;
- Avoiding single aspect south facing units;
- Building design including building height, fenestration, green roofs and wall;
- Passive ventilation and shading solutions.

Air conditioning and mechanical ventilation should not be provided unless all other options have been exhausted.

## **6. 3. Flooding and Drainage**

### **Why is this policy needed?**

6. 3. 1. The National Planning Policy Framework requires the planning system to minimise vulnerability and improve resilience to the impacts of climate change. For plan making this should ensure a proactive approach to adapt to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk.

6. 3. 2. Development should be directed away from areas at the highest risk (existing or future). Watford is a constrained administrative area with limited land potential for development. The site allocations for the local plan have been informed by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 and Level 2.

6. 3. 3. Windfall development (sites not allocated in the Local Plan) that may come forward in Flood Zones 2 and 3, will not have undergone the required Sequential and Exception Test in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

### **What is the policy intended to do?**

6. 3. 4. The policy seeks to establish the flood risk assessment requirement for development proposed on sites with land wholly or partially located in Flood Zones 2 and 3. Allocated sites can be presumed as

having gone through the required Sequential Test. However, the Exception Test may need to be reapplied if relevant aspects of the proposal had not been considered when the test was applied at the plan making stage, or if more recent information about existing or potential flood risk should be taken into account.

6. 3. 5. The policy also sets an expectation for the treatment of surface water flood risk and establishes the requirements for sustainable urban drainage systems.

### **Policy CC6.2 Flooding and Resilience**

A site specific flood risk assessment is required for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3.

Proposals on sites allocated for development in the Local Plan that are located in Flood Zone 2 and 3 are required to demonstrate that the exception test has been complied with. For all other sites both the sequential test and the exception test needs to be satisfied.

In Flood Zone 1, an assessment should accompany all proposals involving:

- Sites of 1 hectare or more; land that has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems;
- Land identified in a strategic flood risk assessment as being at increased flood risk in future; or
- Land that may be subject to other sources of flooding, where its development would introduce a more vulnerable use.

Development should only be allowed in areas of flood risk where the site specific flood risk assessment has demonstrated that:

- a) Within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;
- b) The development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient;
- c) It incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;
- d) Any residual risk can be safely managed; and
- e) Safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.

Sustainable drainage systems should be incorporated into the landscape design of the site.

## Chapter 7: Quality Design and Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

### 7. 1. High Quality Design

#### Why is this policy needed?

7. 1. 1. The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It concludes that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

7. 1. 2. Design is the tool by which development should achieve key sustainability principles. This includes strategic and borough wide principles, neighbourhood design principles and site specific principles. Accordingly, a comprehensive design policy, supported by supplementary design guidance is required.

7. 1. 3. Plans and policies should set out a clear design vision and expectations. Maximum clarity is needed in order to establish a positive framework for creating quality designed places which function well, are sympathetic, establish a distinctive profile whilst optimising the potential for a site to achieving sustainable development.

#### What is the policy intended to do?

7. 1. 4. This policy seeks to provide a clear design expectation for proposals and provides a set of key principles that schemes should, in conjunction with the Revised Residential Design Guide (tbc, 2019) and any subsequent updates, inform all development from the earliest stages of the design process.

7. 1. 5. In the most strategic sense, this policy aims to demonstrate how high quality design is necessary to achieve strategic design objectives, including efficient use of land, the creation of inclusive and mixed communities, designing for pedestrian and cyclist priority and achieving a high quality urban environment.

7. 1. 6. High quality design will need to manage an uplift in density in a way that is sympathetic and appreciates local context. In areas of low density development, a prevailing character should only be conserved if it is a positive character. Quality design is needed to ensure that the necessary efficiencies in land use do not compromise positive features of the historic and built environment.

7. 1. 7. To achieve a good housing mix, particularly in high density schemes, designing in family homes has been challenging. Innovation is required and a recognition that family homes in the form of terraced properties, town houses, ground floor duplexes and maisonettes can be provided as part of high density schemes is needed. This policy seeks to ensure that this is a key principle, particularly for medium to high density schemes. This will help achieve more inclusive communities and neighbourhoods.

7. 1. 8. High quality public realm is critical to achieving a place in which individuals, businesses and communities can thrive. The National Planning Policy Framework advocates attractive, inclusive and safe environments. Secured By Design<sup>1</sup> (Designing out Crime) remains an important tool for planning policies for promoting public safety, however, it is important that new developments are designed to be permeable and easy to navigate. It is important the public realm and the overall urban environment contributes to positive place making, is well maintained to ensure a sense of belonging, encourages regeneration and reduces the perception of crime.

7. 1. 9. A positive urban environment needs to create an environment that is more focussed on people, which requires new development to be less car dominated. All development should be designed for pedestrian and cyclist priority, as well as encouraging public transport use where it can be used.

---

1 [www.securedbydesign.com/](http://www.securedbydesign.com/)

## Policy DC7.1 Strategic Principles for High Quality Design

All development proposals are required to achieve the following strategic design principles and will be supported where they demonstrate:

**Optimising the use of land** – All schemes will achieve the most efficient use of land using high quality and sensitive design to achieve appropriate densities. Development should seek to optimise their development footprint, accommodating access, servicing and parking in the most efficient way possible. Where possible, different land uses should be mixed together and where appropriate, residential uses should be located above businesses and community uses.

**Creating mixed and equitable communities** – A proportionate and good mix of homes is required for the design of all schemes. Where 3 bed units are provided in medium and high density schemes, this should be achieved by terraces, townhouses, ground floor duplexes, or maisonettes. These should be designed to encourage family living and that all ground floor units have direct access to the street through a front door.

**Delivering high quality public realm and an attractive urban environment** – Development proposals should demonstrate how the new scheme will improve the quality of the public realm and enhance the urban environment.

## 7.2. Quality of place

### What the policy is intended to do?

7.2.1. The quality of the living environment for future occupiers and how development relates to neighbouring properties depends on scale, massing and layout. This requires a considered approach to the site itself and its immediate surroundings, 'quality of place'. The policy requires schemes to be laid out to be less car dominated and prioritise the pedestrian and the cyclist. This not only relates to on-site layouts but also how the site connects to the wider pedestrian and cycle network.

7.2.2. The visual and aesthetic impact of new developments relates strongly to how the principles of scale and massing are applied. Monolithic and slab like buildings which do not relate to the local context should be avoided. The National Planning Policy Framework requires new development to take opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

## Policy DC7.2 Quality of Place

All development proposals are required to achieve the following quality of place design objectives:

**Design for pedestrian and cyclist priority** – All schemes should prioritise routes for pedestrians and cyclists ahead vehicles. Internal streets and spaces should be user friendly and connect to the wider strategic pedestrian and cyclist network. This includes walking routes to key public transport nodes.

**Be visually attractive** – Proposals should establish and maintain a sense of place, using street arrangements, building types, open spaces to create distinct and welcoming places accessible to all. When employment schemes are designed, they should take account of their surroundings and include measures to ensure they are integrated with public realm through landscaping.

**Taller buildings** – Proposals should form part of a cohesive group in the skyline or be placed at genuine landmark/node locations and be near mass transit systems. Detailed criteria for the assessment of tall buildings is contained in the Revised Residential Design Guide, and subsequent amendments (tbc, 2019).

**Create or enhance positive local character** – Schemes should have regard to local context where that character brings a positive contribution to the area. In areas undergoing change, proposals should establish a distinctive and positive emerging character. Particular attention should be paid to conserving and enhancing heritage assets within and adjoining redevelopment areas.

**Achieving the right layout** – Proposals should establish a clear and legible block and street layout with people-friendly streets and spaces and not be dominated by significant amounts of surface car parking.

**Getting the scale and massing right** – Proposals are required to establish a sympathetic design of proportionate mass and a scale that responds to context and the topography of the site, while not discouraging positive innovation in areas in need of transformation.

**Public realm and amenity space** – Proposals will need to ensure that public spaces are well connected, have a clear function, enable people to interpret and use the space in creative ways and are designed to have good natural surveillance.

**Designing for quality landscaping** – Proposals should not be dominated by hard landscaping and where necessary this should use high quality materials. Soft landscaping that is functional and visually attractive should be an integral part of all schemes.

**Active frontages** – Proposals should demonstrate how they ensure there are active frontages facing onto the public realm. It is important that all ground floor units have direct access to the street through a front door. Schemes which have a second door from a living room as the frontage access will not meet this requirement.

### 7.3. Building Design

#### Why is this policy needed?

7.3.1. It is important to ensure that externally, new buildings have a strong relationship to the public realm and that the access points to the buildings are clearly identifiable and secure. Internally, care should be given to the location and design of shared areas, refuse, cycle and large item storage.

7.3.2. Proposals should provide dual aspect units with a limited number of units per floor sharing a core. This will improve social interaction and facilitate social cohesion within communities. Within the residential units, residents should have access to a comfortable living environment which meets their needs in terms of private amenity areas, sufficient storage, locally manageable air temperature controls and quiet areas where noise disturbance is minimised.

7.3.3. The National Planning Policy Framework states that a high standard of amenity for existing and future users is required. It asserts that policies should also make use of the nationally described space standards where the need for an internal space standard can be justified. This policy is needed to clearly meet the requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework. Standards in relation to internal spaces and private and public amenity space should be proportionate, conducive to comfortable living and be effective (standards for internal space, amenity and other standards are included in the Revised Residential Design Guide (tbc, 2019)).

#### What is the policy intended to do?

7.3.4. This policy will require that all new housing development achieves a quality building design for future occupiers that is user friendly and avoid negative impacts on neighbouring properties. This policy relates specifically to the building itself in relation materials, building cores and waste management provision.

7. 3. 5. It also seeks to comply with the guidance in the Revised Residential Design Guide (tbc, 2019) and in particular that it complies with the nationally described space standard which is presented in the Design Guide.

### Policy DC7.3 Building Design

All development proposals are required to demonstrate they comply with the council's design guidance (tbc, 2019) and achieve the following building design principles:

- **Shared amenity** – Proposals should provide adequate shared amenity which provides a range of spaces. For employment uses, amenity space for employees should be provided, as appropriate.
- **Avoid negative impacts on neighbours** – New proposals should not create undue negative amenity impacts on existing residents or between future occupiers. Developments will be required to minimise overlooking and reduce loss of privacy for both existing and new residents.
- **Providing a sympathetic palette of materials** – High quality materials and robust architectural detailing are required for all schemes including building materials that are in keeping with local character.
- **Designing for Waste Management** – Proposals should provide sufficient areas within the site for the recycling, storage and collection of waste. It should be safe and not result in any odours that would adversely affect residents.
  - Where possible, bin stores should be small and screened from areas of public realm, are easily accessible and do not result in physical obstruction.
  - Bin stores should be located behind the building line or well designed into the landscape as a covered store and avoid being visually intrusive or compromising the quality and amount of amenity space.
  - Where possible, this should be within the building envelope or well integrated into the landscape as a covered store.

In addition to the above requirements, proposals for residential development will be required to include the following criteria as part of a proposal and demonstrate they comply with the council's design guidance (tbc, 2019):

- **Creating attractive and suitable living spaces** – All schemes are required to establish occupier friendly and comfortable internal spaces within the units and well designed and efficient shared areas. All new housing schemes will be expected to comply with these nationally described standards and subsequent revisions.
- **Internal space standards** – All new residential developments will be required to meet the optional internal space standards as set out in the Government's technical housing standards: nationally described space standard, and subsequent amendments.
- **Multiple cores** – Proposals should have regular cores for residents to access apartments units. These should be clearly visible and at regular intervals along a

frontage area. Alongside this there should be a maximum of six units a floor sharing a core area.

- **Private Amenity** – All new residential units are expected to have access to a private amenity space. Proposals should ensure that the private amenity areas provided are useable and suited to the size and type of unit in which they are located. Private amenity should be designed so that there is an area which is screened from neighbours and the public realm and, as much as possible, provides a quiet and pollution free area for residents to use.
- **Housing tenure** – Residential schemes are to be designed so the affordable housing is indistinguishable from market housing. This includes affordable housing that is integrated with market housing as part of individual buildings and where affordable housing is provided as a stand-alone building.

Householder extensions and alterations – Proposals will be permitted where they comply with guidance set out in the Revised Residential Design Guide (tbc, 2019).

## 7.4. Taller Buildings

### Why is this policy needed?

7.4.1. Taller Buildings create a specific design challenge. They can be visually dominant and if not designed sensitively can potentially have negative impacts on the skyline, townscape and the immediate urban environment. A policy is required to give further expression to the design requirements of taller buildings.

### What is the policy intended to do?

7.4.2. The policy seeks to establish key considerations for the design of taller buildings. In collaboration with the Revised Residential Design Guide (tbc, 2019), it sets specific expectations for the design parameters for buildings significantly higher than the surroundings. This policy should be considered obligatory for all developments that include buildings considerably taller than their surroundings.

## Policy DC7.4 Taller Buildings

All proposals for buildings higher than ten storeys, or buildings at least six storeys or more higher than their immediate surroundings, are required to comply with the following objectives and key design principles in the Revised Residential Design Guide (tbc, 2019).

- Make a positive contribution to the Watford skyline and not impact adversely on identified local or strategic views and recognised heritage assets, as identified the Revised Residential Design Guide (tbc, 2019);
- Should be elegantly designed and avoid the creation of monolith blocks and significant empty facades;
- Where the building meets the ground, active and vibrant frontages should be designed into the development;
- Accommodate a mix of uses on different floors; which can enliven streets and spaces, support a range of typology and a mix of tenures;

- Should consider building heights, and maintain an appropriate height-to-width ratio between buildings, in terms of their proportion and in relation to the size of the space they define and enclose;
- Provide a public realm with a strong sense of spatial definition and robust character, and should strive to provide occupants with high quality amenity space;
- Should minimise through design, or siting, any elements of a proposal which could have a negative climatic impact (microclimate and wind turbulence) in the surrounding area;
- Not harm their surroundings in terms of daylight/sunlight, noise, and overshadowing;
- Incorporate greening of the building (e.g. green living walls and roofs, and other energy efficiency measures).

## 7.5. The Historic Environment

7.5.1. Watford contains a significant number of valuable heritage assets which reflect the historic development of the town. These heritage assets make an important contribution to the character and identity of the town and provide evidence of the social and economic development of the town. As well as providing an important social function through the preservation of linkages with the past, well managed heritage assets provide a valuable resource for delivering economic growth through tourism, heritage led regeneration and the higher land values associated with design excellence.

## 7.6. Heritage Assets

### Why is this policy needed?

7.6.1. The assets in the town range from Grade 1 Listed buildings through to registered parks and Conservation Areas. Each of the assets are unique and valuable to the town. National policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and legislation in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990<sup>2</sup>. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be protected in a manner appropriate to their significance.

### What is the policy intended to do?

7.6.2. The policy seeks to improve the protection afforded to heritage assets in the borough. It sets out how the significance and value of assets and their setting will be considered when determining applications for development proposals that impact on the historic environment.

### Policy DC7.5 Heritage Assets and the Historic Environment

Proposals for development will be supported when they are well designed to protect and enhance the significance, character and setting of any heritage assets potentially affected by a new development. The following will need to be taken into account when determining proposals involving heritage assets:

1. Proposals affecting heritage assets will only be permitted if their significance is preserved or enhanced;
2. Proposals for a change of use should retain the significance of the building and will only be supported if they are necessary to keep the building in active use;

3. Where there is evidence of intentional damage or neglect to an asset, its current condition will not be taken into account in the decision-making process;
4. Where development proposals lead to harm to or loss of significance of an asset due to impact on its setting, this harm or loss should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal;
5. Where the loss (whole or part) of an asset is accepted developers will be required to record and advance the understanding of the assets which are to be lost and to make this information publicly available. The extent of the recording should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and the impact of the proposals.

All proposals for development should have regard to the council's adopted Supplementary Planning Documents relating to the historic environment.

## 7. 7. Nationally Listed Buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens

### Why is this policy needed?

7. 7. 1. Within the borough, there are a number of statutorily listed buildings and one registered park and garden. It is important to ensure the significance of these assets is protected and where possible, that significance can be better understood through any changes which have to be made to the assets. It is important that applications involving listed buildings and registered parks are clearly justified and necessary and have been designed to minimise the impact on the significance of the asset through appropriate enhancement and conservation measures.

### What is the policy intended to do?

7. 7. 2. The policy seeks to ensure that the significance of the assets and the impact of proposals on the significance is fully understood and appropriate measures are taken to minimise harmful impact to that significance.

### Policy DC7.6 Nationally Listed Buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens

#### Nationally listed buildings and scheduled monuments

Applications for alterations, extensions, alternative viable uses or changes to the setting which will not be harmful to the significance of the asset, including its historic or architectural interest and which enhance the character and features of the asset will be supported.

Applications which involve substantial harm to, or loss of, a listed building or its setting will be determined accordance with their significance; Grade I, Grade II and Grade II\* or a Scheduled Ancient Monument. This will only be supported in exceptional circumstances where it is demonstrated that the benefits clearly outweigh any substantial adverse impact.

#### Registered parks and gardens

Planning permission will not be granted for proposals that would cause unacceptable harm to registered parks or gardens, their settings or public views into, out of, or within them.

## 7. 8. Conservation Areas

### Why is this policy needed?

7. 8. 1. The council has designated a number of Conservation Areas within the borough which have their own special character and architectural and historic interest which contributes to their significance. It is important to retain and protect those parts of a Conservation Area that contribute to its significance

and to take opportunities to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through new development proposals. It is important to ensure that factors which contribute to the significance of the Conservation Areas are respected when new development is proposed.

### **What is the policy intended to do?**

7. 8. 2. The policy seeks to provide additional protection to these areas of special character and to ensure that development proposals take the opportunity to enhance or better reveal the significance of the Conservation Areas and their setting.

#### **Policy DC7.7 Conservation Areas**

##### **New development in Conservation Areas**

Within Conservation Areas development will be supported which:

- Is of a design and scale that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the area;
- Uses building materials, finishes, including those for features such as walls, railings, gates and hard surfacing, that are appropriate to the local context;
- Retains historically significant boundaries, important open spaces and other elements of the area established pattern of development of the area, character and historic value, including gardens, roadside banks and verges;
- Retains and restores, where relevant, traditional features such as shop fronts, walls, railings, paved surfaces and street furniture, and improves the condition of structures worthy of retention;
- Does not harm important views into, out of, or within the Conservation Area;
- Protects trees, hedgerows and other significant landscape features and incorporates landscaping appropriate to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- Results, where relevant, in the removal of unsympathetic features and the restoration or reinstatement of missing features.

##### **Demolition in Conservation Areas**

To preserve and enhance the character, appearance and setting of Conservation Areas in the borough, proposals involving demolition will be determined in accordance with the following:

- Demolition of a building which makes positive contribution to the special character or appearance of a Conservation Area will be treated as substantial harm;
- It can be demonstrated that the structure to be demolished is wholly beyond repair or incapable of beneficial use;
- It can be demonstrated that the removal of the structure and its subsequent replacement with a new building and/or open space would enhance the Conservation Area;
- Where demolition is considered to be acceptable, such as where a building or

structure detracts from the significance of the Conservation Area, permission will only be granted subject to conditions linking the demolition to the implementation of an approved redevelopment scheme.

For development outside, but near to a Conservation Area, will only be supported where there is no adverse effect on the setting and character of the Conservation Area.

## 7. 9. Locally Listed Buildings

### Why is this policy needed?

7. 9. 1. The Council has identified a number of buildings and structures which have a local heritage value and have created a local list of buildings to reflect this. These are non-designated assets and make an important contribution to the character and identity of the town. It is important to ensure that the features which make these assets distinctive are considered and respected when development is proposed.

### What is the policy intended to do?

7. 9. 2. The policy seeks to provide additional protection to locally listed buildings and to ensure that development proposals take the opportunity to enhance or better reveal the significance of their setting.

#### Policy DC7.8 Locally Listed Buildings

Substantial weight will be given to preserving and enhancing locally listed buildings. Proposals for development affecting the appearance, character or setting of locally listed buildings should ensure that due regard is paid to safeguarding the relevant features of the building and its setting.

Alterations, extensions, changes of use and changes to the setting of a locally listed building will be supported which:

- Are of a design and scale which preserves or enhances the features which contribute to its significance;
- Uses building materials, features and finishes for features such as gates, walls, railings and hard surfacing which are appropriate to the setting of the asset and the local context.
- Result in the removal of unsympathetic alterations and the restoration or reinstatement of missing features.

Any harm to the significance of the locally listed assets arising from development proposals will be balanced against the public benefits of the scheme.

Where demolition is proposed it should be demonstrated that all reasonable attempts have been made to retain and reuse all or part of the building.

## 7. 10. Archaeology

### Why is this policy needed?

7. 10. 1. There is much we can learn from remains which lie under the ground. It is important to ensure that remains which are either known or as yet unknown are protected when development is proposed. Such remains can provide a great insight into the social and economic lives of people living many years ago.

## What is policy intended to do?

7. 10. 2. The policy seeks to ensure that when development is proposed which may disturb remains appropriate measures are taken to ensure that there is a good understanding of where such remains may lie and that if found appropriate measures are taken to protect those remains for future generations.

### Policy DC7.9 Archaeology

Where an application site includes, is considered to, or is found to have the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, it must be accompanied by an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where desk-based research is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field evaluation.

Development will be supported where:

- The proposals are accompanied by an appropriate assessment of the significance of an archaeological asset;
- Any harm is minimised, clearly justified and necessary to achieve public benefits which are substantial enough to outweigh loss or harm to the significance of an archaeological asset.
- The significance of any archaeological asset or part of an asset to be lost is recorded and made publicly available.

Where the loss of the whole, or a material part of, the significance of a heritage asset of archaeological interest is justified, planning conditions will be included in any permission to ensure that an adequate record is made of the significance of the heritage asset before it is lost. This will be secured through an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation which must include provision for appropriate publication of the evidence. The potential for local public engagement and dissemination should also be considered and included in the Written Scheme of Investigation where this is deemed to be appropriate.

## Chapter 8: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

### 8.1. Introduction

8.1.1. Green and blue infrastructure makes an important contribution to supporting our environmental and ecological systems. Well managed green and blue infrastructure networks help prevent habitat fragmentation and support the long term health of functioning eco-systems. They can play an important social and economic role in our towns and cities by providing spaces for recreation and amenity use. This improves the perception of the places we live in. Green infrastructure and open spaces are key to creating liveable and healthy communities and providing improvements to public and mental health. Green infrastructure also informs strategies to mitigate the effects of climate change, such as flooding and the overheating of the built up area.

8.1.2. Watford has many high quality and high value open spaces, including 12 Green Flag parks, ancient woodland and sites of national significance. Designated green spaces in Watford are shown on the Policies Map.

### 8.2. The Green and Blue Infrastructure Network

#### Why is this policy needed?

8.2.1. Green and blue infrastructure refers to multi-functional networks of open spaces, green corridors and water courses. The Grand Union Canal, River Gade and the River Colne all flow through Watford and contribute to the green and blue infrastructure network. Together they perform a variety of functions for the environment and the people who live here. Protecting and enhancing the network is important to connect open spaces, enabling wildlife species to move through the area and to provide recreational routes, including public rights of way for walking and cycling. Well connected green infrastructure networks help to enhance the public realm, improve wayfinding and foster the sense of identity in the area.

8.2.2. New development can help deliver enhancements to the green infrastructure network and improve connectivity between green spaces by proactively identifying opportunities in the early stages as proposals are being drafted. New proposals adjacent, or in close proximity to green corridors and watercourses should consider the impact of development on these networks. The potential impact of landscaping, access, excessive lighting, overshadowing and noise should be considered and appropriate mitigation provided to protect the intrinsic quality of the network.

#### What is the policy intended to do?

8.2.3. The policy aims to ensure that development does not impact adversely on the green and blue infrastructure network and that where possible, development helps to enhance its quality and strengthen connections within it.

8.2.4. Development will be expected to support the aspirations of the Green Infrastructure Plan<sup>1</sup> (2011), the Green Spaces Strategy<sup>2</sup> (2013) and subsequent updates or replacements.

#### Policy NE8.1 Green and Blue Infrastructure Networks

Applicants must demonstrate how development proposals will conserve, restore or enhance the green and blue infrastructure (as appropriate) and how the site connects with its wider surroundings.

Development should protect the function and amenity of public rights of way. Diversions of public rights of way will only be appropriate where an alternative route of equal or improved character, amenity, safety, directness and convenience is provided.

1 [watford.jdi-consult.net/documents/pdfs5/Green%20Infrastructure%20Plan%20Report%20-%20March%202011.pdf](http://watford.jdi-consult.net/documents/pdfs5/Green%20Infrastructure%20Plan%20Report%20-%20March%202011.pdf)

2 [www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/2062/green\\_spaces\\_strategy](http://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/2062/green_spaces_strategy)

### 8. 3. Protecting Open Space

#### Why is this policy needed?

8. 3. 1. Open space can make an important contribution to the green infrastructure network and offer valuable space for recreational and amenity use. The main types of open space used by the community include parks and gardens, recreation grounds, amenity green space, equipped play space, playing pitches, allotments and church yards. Open spaces should provide for a variety of different uses, functions and activities. The types of open spaces provided and protected through new development should reflect a locally identified need for these uses and activities. This can help to avoid surpluses and deficiencies in different types of open space, to ensure that open spaces are being effectively used.

8. 3. 2. Watford contains many valuable open spaces, however, they are not evenly distributed across the borough. Some communities are deficient in open space and require improved access to these recreational areas, whereas in some neighbourhoods there may be opportunities where alternative open space and ancillary uses could be considered if there is a demonstrated need.

8. 3. 3. The Green Spaces Strategy and Open Space Needs Assessment identified existing open space provision and their catchments, and assessed their overall quality and value. In conjunction with the Green Infrastructure Plan, these documents can be used to identify need and opportunities to improve access to existing open space.

#### What is the policy intended to do?

8. 3. 4. Everyone living in Watford should have access to high quality open space, sports and recreation facilities. The policy seeks to resist the loss of open space and ancillary facilities. There is recognition that in some areas open spaces may no longer be performing their original function, or are better served by another open space nearby. In these circumstances alternative open space uses could be considered, where this satisfies the criteria set out in policy.

#### Policy NE8.2 Protecting Open Space

Open space and ancillary facilities used for leisure and recreation will be protected, unless an up to date assessment demonstrates the space is surplus to need. For an open space or an ancillary facility to be considered surplus to requirements, the following must be demonstrated:

- The area is served by an open space of the same typology; and
- The open space is not needed for alternative open space uses; or
- An equivalent facility is to be provided in a more suitable location that meets the needs of the local community.

The absence of identification of an open space on the Policies Map does not imply that development is appropriate.

### 8. 4. Providing New Open Space

#### Why is this policy needed?

8. 4. 1. When new development takes place, there may be opportunities to provide more high quality open space. Where this is for communal use, it is important that this should be designed to have a clear recreational or amenity function. The open space provided should be able to support a variety of activities, including providing space for children to play.

8. 4. 2. Consideration should be given to how open space can also support other functions such as sustainable urban drainage systems to mitigate flood risk and habitat migration.

8. 4. 3. New development may provide opportunities to improve access to open space where there are deficiencies. This would improve the quality of life for new and existing residents, while ensuring provision reflects local need. However, open space need varies between neighbourhoods and communities, with some having better access to nearby open space than others. Meeting requirements based on local need should help to address shortfalls and avoid unnecessary duplication of open space.

8. 4. 4. Where a new development site does not lie within the catchment area of an open space typology, the development will be expected to provide a set amount of open space per dwelling. This should be actively maintained by the developer.

8. 4. 5. If providing open space on site is unfeasible, is not of a minimum size of 0.1 hectares, or where a site lies within the catchment area of an open space of low quality or value, a developer contribution will be sought to improve the nearby open space to serve the development.

8. 4. 6. Where developments are required to provide open space on site but this is demonstrated to be impractical or unfeasible, some level of communal open space should still be provided for all future occupants of the properties. This can be provided through innovative design approaches such as providing roof gardens to support amenity use and wildlife.

8. 4. 7. Although a level of open space should be provided on site for all schemes, landscaping is considered to be functional open space. Landscaping should be considered in the context of design and satisfy the guidance set out in the Revised Residential Design Guide (tbc, 2019) and any subsequent updates or replacements.

8. 4. 8. Private amenity space should also be provided to meet the standards set out in the Revised Residential Design Guide (tbc, 2019). However, private amenity space will not be considered a contribution towards the open space requirement.

8. 4. 9. Not all forms of open space provision are likely to be appropriate and would be difficult to provide within the borough, given its constraints. Therefore, it is considered that any open space provided should be reflective of the standards set out by Fields in Trust. The design of new play areas and other formal open space should take account of good practice provided in the Fields in Trust guidance 'Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play'<sup>3</sup> and any subsequent updates or replacement. Appropriate catchment distances, quality and value will be defined with an up to date Open Space Needs Assessment.

### **What is the policy intended to do?**

8. 4. 10. The policy aims to make a distinction between areas that have a deficiency of open space and areas that are well served by existing open space. This is to ensure that development provides the type of open space required to meet a locally identified need.

#### **Policy NE8.3 Providing New Open Space**

All proposals for new residential development that are classified as C2, C3 or C4 class uses will be required to provide open space on site. Provision should reflect the type of open space required in the area through accessibility, quality and value, as demonstrated through an up to date open space needs assessment. Where these have been provided, proposals will be supported.

Where it has been demonstrated that traditional open space cannot be provided on site, developments of 10 or more dwellings should use innovative design to support communal amenity use. Over-development of a site that has compromised open space provision and quality design will not be supported. Open space designed as landscaping or that which has no clear function that supports active use by people will not be considered as providing open space on site.

For developments of more 10 or more dwellings where open space is not provided on site, a financial contribution will be required.

## 8. 5. Biodiversity Net Gain

### Why is this policy needed?

8. 5. 1. Despite being a largely urban borough, Watford is rich in biodiversity. Watford contains a number of Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites and is home to European Protected Species such as Great Crested Newts and Pipistrelle bats. Other locally important but non-designated wildlife sites also make a significant contribution towards biodiversity in the area.

8. 5. 2. The sustained loss of green infrastructure and the breaking up of its networks can have a damaging effect on ecosystems in Watford. Inappropriate development could threaten the future of different species through habitat fragmentation and the loss of habitats. Given development pressures, it will important to ensure that Watford's biodiversity is protected and enhanced.

### What is the policy intended to do?

8. 5. 3. The policy is intended to ensure that major development proposals contribute positively to ecosystems in Watford through the delivery of net gains in biodiversity. Gains in biodiversity refer to improvements in biodiversity through habitat creation or enhancement.

8. 5. 4. The policy aims to encourage the delivery of new wildlife habitats, which can be integrated into the layout and design of sites. Traditionally, this would include habitats incorporated as part of open space, such as water courses, vegetation and planting. However, some contemporary schemes have evolved to include green roofs, living walls and roof and rain gardens, which support biodiversity amongst other benefits. The policy should work in tandem with Policy NE8.3, the Revised Residential Design Guide, and any subsequent updates or replacements, to ensure that net gains for biodiversity are appropriately designed into new development and open spaces.

8. 5. 5. The council will take a hierarchical approach to assessing proposals, as set out in national guidance. Compensatory measures will only be considered when no other measures are demonstrated to be feasible.

### Policy NE8.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

Proposals that enhance biodiversity and positively contribute towards the health of the ecological network will be supported. All new proposals should demonstrate how the protection and enhancement of biodiversity has been considered.

Major development should seek to achieve an overall net gain for biodiversity, which can be measured through the use of a recognised biodiversity calculator. The biodiversity calculator should aim to demonstrate an improvement of 10% or more from the existing situation. To avoid potential harm, compensation and mitigation measures must offset any losses to achieve a net gain for biodiversity, following the mitigation hierarchy. Where it is not possible to avoid or mitigate all impacts on site, local compensatory habitat or a development contribution should be achieved as a last resort.

Sites of international, national and local importance will be protected from inappropriate development. Protection will be granted in accordance with their status.

Where there is reason to suspect the presence of a protected species or habitat, applications should be supported by an ecological survey. If present, the proposal must make provision for the needs of the species or habitat affected.

## 8. 6. Managing Air Quality

### Why is this policy needed?

8. 6. 1. A polluted environment can result in a severe cost on public health, the natural environment and economy. Mitigating the impact of development on air quality and minimising exposure to poor air quality across Watford is important. This can help to safeguard residents from the impacts of a polluted environment. There are currently two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Watford, where national objectives for ambient air quality have been exceeded. The predominant pollutants in Watford are those commonly associated with road traffic.

8. 6. 2. The exposure of poor air quality to vulnerable residents, such as children, the elderly, and those with respiratory issues is a particular concern. Sensitive development may include, but is not limited to, schools, residential care homes and health facilities. Air pollution also has potential to have increased impacts on the wider global environment and society with a changing climate.

8. 6. 3. Air quality is often managed through soft measures, such as active modes of travel, urban greening and the use of sustainable construction methods. These measures will be supported as part of the Plan. However, to ensure that national and international objectives for ambient air quality are met, further measures are needed to guide new development.

### What is the policy intended to do?

8. 6. 4. Development should encourage new development to achieve overall improvements to air quality and minimise the potential adverse impacts. The policy intends to manage the potential impacts of new development upon air quality by ensuring it is an issue considered early in the design process and when planning applications are determined. Regard should be given to the location of development where users may be more sensitive to poor air quality.

8. 6. 5. Development will be expected to support the aspirations of the Air Quality Action Plan<sup>4</sup> and any subsequent updates and replacements. Regard should also be had to the Ambient Air Quality Directive<sup>5</sup> (2008) and the European Union Limit Values<sup>6</sup> to determine compliance with national and international air quality standards.

### Policy NE8.5 Managing Air Quality

Development will be supported where it does not contribute towards air pollution and appropriate mitigation measures are in place to address any potential impact on air quality.

An Air Quality Assessment will be required for all major developments and other forms of development which are considered to be at risk of impacts from significant emissions or pollutants. This includes, but is not limited to, development where the occupiers/users may be sensitive to poor air quality and development in close proximity to an air quality management area.

4 [watford.jdi-consult.net/documents/pdfs5/Air%20Quality%20Action%20Plan%202011.pdf](http://watford.jdi-consult.net/documents/pdfs5/Air%20Quality%20Action%20Plan%202011.pdf)

5 [eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:152:0001:0044:EN:PDF](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:152:0001:0044:EN:PDF)

6 [ec.europa.eu/environment/air/quality/standards.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/quality/standards.htm)

Where the Air Quality Assessment indicates that a development would cause harm to air quality, planning permission will not be granted unless appropriate mitigation measures are proposed to reduce the impact to acceptable levels.

## 8. 7. Managing the Impacts of Development

### Why is this policy needed?

8. 7. 1. There are other types of pollution in addition to air quality that can have a negative impact on the environment and residential amenity, including light, noise, contamination, odour and vibration. Pollution can be brought about by new development and can have a severe impact on the amenity and function of existing properties and businesses, and the quality of life in an area.

8. 7. 2. The council places responsibility on the applicant, or the party responsible for the development to provide mitigation for any significant adverse impacts that may be generated by the proposed development. This is set out in national policy as the 'agent of change principle' and ensures that new development does not cause existing uses in the vicinity to curtail their activities. Applicants will need to demonstrate how mitigation has been provided for any potential issues related to noise, light pollution, odour, contamination and other negative impacts.

### What is the policy intended to do?

8. 7. 3. The council will seek to ensure that quality of life, health, wellbeing and the environment are not adversely affected by harmful pollutants and other negative impacts that could be associated with new development.

8. 7. 4. The relevant national policy and guidance should be referred to for information regarding ambient levels for each individual pollutant.

### Policy NE8.6 Managing the Impacts of Development

New development should have regard to the potential impact it may have on the existing land uses affected by the site. This includes the potential impacts related to:

- Light pollution
- Noise pollution
- Contamination
- Odour
- Vibration

Where development is considered to be at risk of giving rise to significant pollutants or other negative impacts, appropriate mitigation or remediation will be required. Where adequate mitigation or remediation is not provided, planning permission should be refused.

## Chapter 9: Ensuring the Vitality of Town and Local Centres and Providing Communities with Facilities and Services

### 9.1. Introduction

9.1.1. The opportunity to participate in activities, whether it be through leisure, recreation, community events or learning, is important for people living in and visiting Watford. The availability of a variety of facilities and shops attracts people to the town and local centres and keeps them dynamic and vibrant.

9.1.2. Continued vitality in the town and local centres can reduce the need to travel by providing goods and services for people of all ages in easily accessible locations and allowing combined trips. Access to services encourages sustainability and creates opportunities for focal points within residential areas, particularly those with the potential to support higher housing densities.

### 9.2. Town and Local Centres

9.2.1. Watford is identified as a major regional retail centre providing a wide range of services and facilities serving an area much wider than the borough. This benefits the residents of Watford and it is important for the economic prosperity of the town that this continues in the future. The town, district and local centres offer the opportunity to access a wide range of 'town centre uses' including retail, leisure, entertainment, office, arts and culture. These functions are vital to the long-term sustainability of Watford.

9.2.2. Watford has a strongly performing town centre and one district centre offering a wide range of services and facilities. There is a network of local centres which provide for much of their communities' day-to-day needs. The vision for the Plan is to build on these strengths and focus growth in these centres.

9.2.3. The face of retail is changing with traditional retailing declining and service sectors such as food and drink, health and fitness, and hotels increasing. The food and beverage sector has seen particularly strong growth, highlighting the importance to retain flexibility in retail policy to encourage footfall with popular uses such as leisure and food and drink.

#### Retail hierarchy

9.2.4. The retail hierarchy supports the management and growth of the town centre and other centres within Watford. It is important that new retail development takes place in the right locations and at an appropriate scale.

9.2.5. Watford's retail hierarchy will be used to direct 'town centre uses' to the most appropriate location with regard to their scale, function and character. The town centre will be the preferred location for these uses.

### 9.3. Figure 11: Retail Hierarchy

Retail Hierarchy	Description
<b>Town Centre</b> Watford Town Centre	Watford town centre performs a role as a regional centre with its catchment extending beyond the borough boundary. The centre offers a full range of town centre uses including retail, leisure, business, community and cultural facilities.

<p><b>District Centre</b></p> <p>North Watford St Albans Road</p>	<p>St Albans Road district centre contains a good range of town centre uses, including a large public library. The district centre has a smaller catchment than the town centre. It has a wider draw and a larger number and range of units than the local centres.</p>
<p><b>Local Centres</b></p> <p>Buckingham Road</p> <p>Bushey Arches</p> <p>Garston Park Parade</p> <p>Goodwood Parade</p> <p>Langley Road</p> <p>Langley Way</p> <p>Leavesden Road</p> <p>Longspring</p> <p>Merton Road</p> <p>North Approach</p> <p>St Johns Road</p> <p>The Brow</p> <p>The Gossamers</p> <p>Tudor Avenue</p> <p>Vicarage Road</p> <p>Villiers Road</p> <p>Whippendell Road East</p> <p>Whippendell Road/Ascot Road</p>	<p>Local centres include a range of small shops, meeting day to day needs of a small catchment area. It is expected that local centres will also contain facilities such as GPs, dentists, dry cleaners and community facilities to support the retail offer. Typically, local centres are categorised as being over 7 units with a range of at least 3 different uses.</p>

## 9. 4. Vitality of the Town and Local Centres

### Why is this policy needed?

9. 4. 1. Watford as a regional centre provides a wide range of services and facilities to residents of the town and beyond, drawing people from throughout South West Hertfordshire. The vibrancy and vitality of the town centre will be maintained and enhanced through the plan period. The town centre offers the opportunity to access a wide range of ‘town centre uses’ (as identified in the National Planning Policy Framework) including retail, leisure, entertainment, office, arts and culture. These functions are vital to long-term sustainability and underpinning Watford as an attractive place to live, work and invest.

9. 4. 2. As set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, a sequential test will be applied to proposals for town centre uses. The town centre is prioritised over edge of centre locations, and edge of centre locations are prioritised over out of centre locations. When considering planning applications for ‘town centre uses’, the council will require details of the application of this sequential test. Applications for

'town centre uses' over 350 sqm that are not located in a centre or are not in accordance with policies set out in the Local Plan will also require an Impact Assessment, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **What is the policy intended to do?**

9. 4. 3. The Watford town centre is an important regional destination for retail while smaller retail centres across the borough support local communities. The policy is intended to strengthen and consolidate Watford's position as a regional centre in the retail hierarchy and to seek a balanced and diverse town centre providing retail, leisure and entertainment for all ages and groups of people. Protecting smaller centres will help ensure built up areas in the borough have good access to services and facilities and contribute towards achieving sustainable development.

#### **Policy V9.1 Vitality of the Town and Local Centres**

Planning permission will be granted for the development of town centre uses (retail, leisure, entertainment, office, arts and culture) within the defined town, district and local centre boundaries, providing the use is appropriate for the scale and function of each centre.

Development within the town centre will contribute towards the enhancement of the public realm.

Proposals that optimise the use of land and floor space within the town centre through mixed use development, including new or re-used space above shops and commercial premises, will be supported providing they have regard to the role and function of the town centre, impact on town centre vitality and viability and the compatibility of proposed and existing surrounding uses.

Where appropriate, a limited amount of retail development will be supported on strategic sites to provide for the new community, subject to the proposals being of an appropriate scale and there being no significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre or local centres in the vicinity.

Proposals for development of town centre uses outside a centre must demonstrate compliance with the Sequential Test. Where these are 350 sqm (gross) or more, they must also be accompanied by an Impact Assessment. Assessments will need to demonstrate there will be no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the existing centres, and that good accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport is provided or available.

### **9. 5. Approach to Retail in the Town Centre**

9. 5. 1. For the long term health of the town centre, it is important to achieve the correct balance of uses to continue Watford's role as a regional centre and provide leisure facilities and restaurants to support the retail provision. Retail is the focus for the town centre, however, it is also a place where a wide range of other uses help to ensure that vitality and viability are maintained.

9. 5. 2. Concentrating destination retail in the town centre and permitting complementary uses in the surrounding primary and secondary frontages within the town centre will help retain its vibrancy. To continue to thrive, Watford town centre will need to evolve and diversify in response to current and future economic trends, technological advances and changing consumer behaviours. This need for adaptation and diversification, together with good public transport accessibility, makes the town centre appropriate for residential led or mixed use high density development. Existing uses must be considered to take precedence over new development, particularly where there may be conflict between existing businesses and proposed residential use. Any potential adverse impacts on new residents caused by existing businesses such as noise, odour, light, vibration must be mitigated through good design to the satisfaction of Environmental Health.

9. 5. 3. To complement this approach and to encourage the restaurants (A3 uses) needed to support the shopping function, two restaurant hub areas are identified in the town centre. These are located at the two main entrances to the intu centre along the Watford High Street. In these areas restaurant and eateries will be encouraged to congregate and complement the retail function of the town centre. To encourage the clustering of restaurants and eateries, these units will not contribute towards to restriction of non-retail uses in the primary shopping frontages.

9. 5. 4. For secondary frontages, the approach is to allow more flexibility to change between A1 (retail shops), A2 (professional services) and A3 uses (food and drink outlets). This will encourage the occupancy of existing units, enable shops and services to adapt to changing retail patterns in the shopping area and ensure a continued footfall for the town centre. The turnover of retail units provides opportunities for new businesses to start and make a contribution towards the town centre. This additional flexibility will enable vacant units to be brought back into use, particularly within designated shopping frontages, to minimise impact on the health of the centre and contribute to a successful place, both economically and socially.

## 9. 6. Primary and Secondary Retail Frontages

### Why is this policy needed?

9. 6. 1. To protect existing retail areas and enable some change in other suitable areas, strengthening and consolidating Watford's position as a regional centre in the retail hierarchy and enhancing the family friendly aspect of the town.

### What is the policy intended to do?

9. 6. 2. Development is expected to enhance the offer for families and achieve a balanced town centre which meets the needs of all residents and visitors during the day and evening. Residential use of ground floor premises within retail areas is not acceptable.

#### Policy V9.2 Retail Frontages

In all cases proposals for town centre uses should promote the diversity and range of uses available and promote an active street frontage in terms of increasing footfall and retaining an active window display.

##### Primary Retail Frontages

Within primary retail frontages, as identified on the Policies Map, planning permission will only be granted for A1, A2 or A3 uses at ground floor level.

A2 and A3 uses will only be permitted where it will not detrimentally undermine the retail character, function or effectiveness of the primary retail frontage. The total number of units in A1 use should remain above 60% of the total number of units on a street within the identified primary frontage.

Within the Restaurant (A3) Hubs, as identified on the Policies Map, proposals for A3 uses will be supported. A3 uses within these areas will not contribute towards the 60% threshold applied to non-retail uses located in the Primary Retail Frontages.

##### Secondary Retail Frontages

Within secondary retail frontages, as identified on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted for appropriate town centre uses where it will not detrimentally undermine the retail character, function or effectiveness of the frontage. The total number of A1 units should remain above 40% of all the units on a street within the identified secondary frontage at ground floor level.

## 9. 7. Non-Retail Uses in the Intu Shopping Centre

### Why is this policy needed?

9. 7. 1. To maintain a dynamic and adaptive town centre it is important that all aspects of retail contribute in a collective way that benefits the town centre overall. The intu shopping centre and High Street provide complementary retail offers and this should continue for the economic health of the area.

### What is the policy intended to do?

9. 7. 2. While intu is an important and identifiable shopping destination, there is a need to ensure the High Street is also a thriving shopping area. The High Street provides a different experience than offered by the shopping centre and it is important that this is protected to provide a positive experience for visitors and retain the diverse retail offer in the town centre.

#### **Policy V9.3 Non-Retail uses in the intu shopping centre**

Within intu Watford shopping centre (including units with direct access to High Street and Queens Road), planning permission will only be granted for A1, A2 and A3 uses.

The number of units in A1 use should remain above 90% of the total number of units within the intu centre.

Within the Restaurant (A3) Hubs, as identified on the Policies Map, proposals for A3 uses will be supported. A3 uses within these areas will not contribute towards the 90% threshold applied to retail uses in the intu centre.

## 9. 8. District and Local Centres

### Why is this policy needed?

9. 8. 1. Retail and service provision outside the town centre is an important element towards achieving sustainable development and healthy communities. The network of local centres across the borough provide an important local resource for Watford residents. It is important to recognise their contribution towards local areas and their identity. Local shops, alongside other services, are a key component of local centres and their protection and consolidation through planning policy will help shape how services are provided in the future.

9. 8. 2. Watford is a compact but congested town and it is important that local centres provide multiple services for residents and are located across the town enabling easy access and reducing journeys.

9. 8. 3. A policy is needed to provide flexibility for local centres to address the challenges of new forms of retailing while realising their potential for higher density mixed-use residential developments and environmental improvements. Redevelopment will be supported where it can make centres more viable and functional but existing floor space will be protected.

### What is the policy intended to do?

9. 8. 4. The policy seeks to consolidate and reinforce the network of local centres within the borough so that they are able to offer a range of services to the population within a reasonable distance of where people live. The focus is on the consolidation of a viable range of functions and uses that make centres a recognisable destination in the local area, particularly convenience retailing, leisure, local employment and workspace.

## Policy V9.4 District and Local Centres

Within district and local shopping centre frontages, as identified on the Policies Map, planning permission at ground floor level will only be granted for the following uses:

- a) Retail (A1) uses;
- b) Financial and professional services (A2), restaurant (A3), pub (A4) and take-away outlets (A5) uses where;
  - i. the proposed development would not result in a concentration of more than 4 adjoining units of a particular use other than A1 uses;
  - ii. the proportion of units at ground floor level in A1 use does not fall below 40% of the total number of units within the defined shopping frontage;
  - iii. the proposal will not detrimentally undermine the retail character, function or effectiveness of the centre in question;
- c) Other town centre uses where the proportion of A1 use does not fall below 40% of the total number of units within the defined shopping frontage and where the proportion of class A use does not fall below 75% of the total number of units defined within the shopping frontage.

Proposals for redevelopment will be supported where there is no net loss of existing A1 floor space on the site.

Smaller neighbourhood centres should focus on a limited but variety of uses and provide convenient and attractive access by walking and cycling to local goods and services needed on a day-to-day basis.

## Providing communities with facilities and services

### 9. 9. Infrastructure Provision

#### Why is this policy needed?

9. 9. 1. The provision of infrastructure is required to support the growth and change set out in the Local Plan. The Watford Infrastructure Delivery Plan considers the infrastructure improvements that are needed to support the planned increase in new homes, businesses and other facilities arising from the population and job growth in the borough.

9. 9. 2. Infrastructure is provided by public and private bodies and includes:

- Social infrastructure: schools, healthcare, community facilities, leisure and cultural centres, places of worship and emergency services.
- Physical infrastructure: roads, footpaths, cycleways, water provision and treatment, sewerage, flood prevention and drainage, waste disposal, electricity, gas and electronic communications networks.
- Green Infrastructure: open spaces, recreation facilities, trees, green corridors, wildlife corridors and landscape features.

9. 9. 3. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan highlights the need for new schools, healthcare, sustainable transport and additional cemetery capacity to support Watford’s population over the plan period. As infrastructure is provided by various agencies, the onus is on developers to ensure capacity to meet requirements arising from proposed development.

### **What is the policy intended to do?**

9. 9. 4. This policy ensures that infrastructure provision is an early consideration for developers. It also provides guidance for the spending of the Community Infrastructure Levy and requiring on-site infrastructure requirements where development opportunities arise.

### **Policy V9.5 Infrastructure Provision**

Planning permission, except for householders, will be granted where it is demonstrated that there is, or will be, sufficient infrastructure capacity to support and meet all the requirements arising from the proposed development. Infrastructure provision will reflect the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and its successor documents.

Priority projects include:

- Education facilities;
- On site green infrastructure and connectivity to the wider network;
- Sustainable transport using the safeguarded Metropolitan Line Extension route and projects set out in the Local Transport Plan and related strategies;
- Future-proofed communications infrastructure, in particular broadband;
- Wayfinding and public arts projects as identified in Watford Borough Council Cultural Strategy.

The council will work with key infrastructure providers and partners to deliver new infrastructure that will meet the needs of Watford and support growth in the South West Hertfordshire area.

## **9. 10. Quality Communications**

### **Why is this policy needed?**

9. 10. 1. Communication technology is an integral part of modern society. It is important to work with developers and providers to ensure that schemes are well designed and have sufficient capacity to meet the anticipated demand of a modernising society that can embrace technological change and continue to be socially connected and economically competitive.

### **What is the policy intended to do?**

9. 10. 2. For a scheme to be successful and be able to adapt to future technological changes, developers are expected to engage with utility providers early in design process. This enables all stakeholders to understand as early as possible if, and where, there may be a need for additional capacity in the network. It provides opportunities for development to be designed in such a way as to support the provision of utilities.

9. 10. 3. Future proofed high quality digital infrastructure is considered vital to support well-functioning employment areas. The National Planning Policy Framework requires planning policies to set out how high quality digital infrastructure is expected to be delivered.

### **Policy V9.6 Utilities and Digital Infrastructure**

Developers must demonstrate they have explored existing capacity, and how this could be future proofed, with appropriate utilities providers to show that they have made provision for utilities and digital infrastructure.

Proposals for employment uses including business (B1) and industrial (B2) uses should demonstrate that provision is made for high quality digital facilities as part of the application.

## **9. 11. Cultural and Community Facilities**

### **Why is this policy needed?**

9. 11. 1. Cultural and community facilities have wide ranging uses which support and serve the residents of the town. In seeking social inclusion and a high quality of life the approach is to make a diverse range of facilities accessible. Community facilities can include education and health facilities, local places of worship, community centres, public halls, leisure and sports centres, or, arts buildings. Other types of buildings might also be classed as, and function as, community facilities where they meet the social, leisure, cultural and religious needs of Watford's diverse communities.

9. 11. 2. This policy is needed to provide protection for existing community facilities which play an important role in delivering a place where people want to live. Where major new development is proposed, or where facilities are lost as part of redevelopment proposals, the council will seek new facilities where there is an identified demand. Where appropriate, community facilities are encouraged in or near to local centres in order to reduce trips.

### **What is the policy intended to do?**

9. 11. 3. It is important to protect existing facilities where these are required to support a healthy and inclusive community. These types of use typically generate high levels of footfall from members of the public. Co-locating multiple facilities on a single site, particularly where this is close to a local centre, can be an efficient way to improve quality and accessibility.

### **Policy V9.7 Community Facilities**

The provision of new cultural and community uses that address a demonstrated demand from the local community will be supported. Such uses should be located within sustainable, accessible locations close to the identified need and as a complementary use within, or close to, an identified local centre. Facilities that are proposed in isolated locations or that conflict with existing uses nearby will not be permitted.

The loss of existing social and cultural venues will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer needed, or that the formal and informal leisure activities can be reprovided in an alternative location or manner that is of a higher quality and is equally accessible to the community.

## Appendix A: Monitoring Framework

Policy Number	Local Plan Policy	Indicator	Target	Source
<b>Policy SD2.7</b>	Effective Use of Land	% compliance with the density expectation for the sustainability zones	Minimum 80% compliance with the density expectation for the sustainability zone	CDP Smart Information Unit
		% of Sites development on Previously Developed Land	Minimum 90% of sites to be developed on Previously Developed Land	CDP Smart Information Unit
<b>Policy ST3.1</b>	Cycle Parking and Storage	Ratio of bike spaces per unit	Minimum 1 space per unit across the borough area	CDP Smart Information Unit
<b>Policy ST3.2</b>	Car Parking, Car Clubs and Electric Vehicles	Ratio of car spaces per unit	Maximum of 0.5 spaces per unit across the borough area	CDP Smart Information Unit
		Number of Car Club Spaces per unit in major development	Minimum 10% of all spaces in major developments to be car club spaces	CDP Smart Information Unit
		Number of active EV car spaces	n/a	CDP Smart Information Unit
<b>Policy H4.1</b>	Housing Delivery	Number of homes granted permission in the FY	n/a	
<b>Policy H4.3</b>	Affordable Housing	Number of affordable housing units by size and tenure	n/a	
		% of affordable housing achieved on affordable sites	35% achievement on all qualifying sites	CDP Smart Information Unit Watford Borough Council
		Number of social rented units		

<b>Policy H4.2</b>	Housing Mix	Housing mix by size of unit	Borough-wide target within 50% range of housing mix target	CDP Smart Information Unit Watford Borough Council
<b>Policy E5.1</b>	Designated Employment Sites	Net gain in employment floor space in financial year	No net loss in employment floor space	CDP Smart Information Unit Watford Borough Council
<b>Policy E5.2</b>	Not-Designated Employment	Net gain in employment floor space in non-designated area	No net loss in employment floor space	CDP Smart Information Unit
<b>Policy CC6.1</b>	Sustainable Design and Construction	Number of homes design to achieve good water efficiency use	Minimum 80% of new homes achieving 110 litre per person per day	CDP Smart Information Unit
<b>Policy CC6.2</b>	Flooding and Resilience	Number of Environment Agency objections to planning applications	n/a	Watford Borough Council
<b>Policy CC7.3</b>	Heritage and Conservation	Number of listed buildings demolished.		Watford Borough Council
<b>Policy NE8.2</b>	Protecting Open Space	Net change in designated open space	No net loss in open space	Watford Borough Council

## Appendix B: Planning Use Classes

Use Class	Type	Description
<b>A1</b>	Shops	Shops, retail warehouses, post offices, hairdressers, funeral directors, showrooms, internet cafes, domestic hire shops, travel and ticket agencies, dry cleaners and sale of cold food for consumption off premises
<b>A2</b>	Financial and professional services	Financial services such as banks and building societies, estate and employment agencies and professional services (other than health and medical services)
<b>A3</b>	Restaurants and cafés	For the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises e.g. restaurants and cafés
<b>A4</b>	Drinking establishments	Public houses, wine bars and other drinking establishments (not night clubs)
<b>A5</b>	Hot food takeaways	For the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises
<b>B1</b>	Business	B1a - Offices B1b - Research and development B1c - Light industry appropriate in a residential area
<b>B2</b>	General industrial	Industrial processes other than those falling into Class B1
<b>B8</b>	Storage and distribution	Storage and distribution centres and warehousing
<b>C1</b>	Hotels	Hotels, boarding and guesthouses
<b>C2</b>	Residential institutions	Residential accommodation and care to people in need of care, such as boarding schools, hospitals and nursing homes
<b>C3</b>	Dwelling houses	Housing occupied by a single person or family
<b>C4</b>	Houses in multiple occupation	Shared housing occupied by between three and six unrelated residents

<b>D1</b>	Non-residential institutions	Clinics, health centres, creches, day nurseries, schools, non-residential education and training centres, museums, public libraries, public halls, exhibition halls, places of worship, law courts
<b>D2</b>	Assembly and leisure	Cinemas, concert halls, bingo halls, dance halls, swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums, other areas for indoor and outdoor sports and recreations (except for motor sports, or where fire arms are used)
<b>Sui Generis</b>	Uses which do not fall within the specified use classes above	Includes theatres, HMOs of larger than 6 people, nightclubs, betting offices, pay day loan shops, casinos, scrap yards, hostels and others

## Appendix C: Car Parking Standards Worked Example

The following provides a work example for how parking provision on site should be calculated:

### Proposal

50 residential units located in the medium sustainability zone

### General Requirements

50 units with a minimum of 0.3 spaces per unit and a maximum of 0.7 spaces per unit

Minimum and maximum provision = 15 to 35 spaces

If 20 spaces are proposed this is acceptable for this proposal

### Specific requirements

20% of total spaces unallocated = 20% of 20 = 4 unallocated spaces

10% of total spaces disabled = 10% of 20 = 2 spaces

10% of total spaces car club = 10% of 20 = 2 spaces

20% of total spaces active electric vehicle charge point = 4 spaces

### Final Provision

Total spaces = 20, of which:

Unallocated spaces = 4

Allocated spaces = 14

Disabled spaces = 2 (can be part of unallocated provision)

Car club spaces = 2 (or off site provision through a contribution)

Active electric vehicle charge point spaces = 4

Passive electric vehicle spaces = 16



