



Forest Plan

January 1995

Watling Chase Community Forest
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Foreword

Welcome to the Forest Plan for Watling Chase Community Forest.

The Watling Chase Community Forest team and steering group have great pleasure in publishing this Forest Plan. It provides the blueprint for the creation of Watling Chase Community London.

The Watling Chase concept is part of the major new community forest approach to planning and managing our urban fringe. It will create a well-wooded landscape for work, wildlife, education and recreation; a working countryside with farming and forestry as major land uses.

The area already has considerable wildlife, historic and archeological interest and offers people a range of recreation opportunities. We must, therefore, cherish what we have and seek ways to improve it. The tree-planting programme is ambitious and will not happen overnight; the time-scale is a long one. But we have made a start and the challenge lies in turning the vision into reality by involving everyone in the community.

This Forest Plan is the product of a comprehensive public consultation process in mid 1994, following the publication of the Draft Forest Plan. It was essential that local landowners, residents and organisations, the Watling Chase community, should be as closely involved as possible in formulating the plan for the proposed 'forest'. The consultation details of which are given in the Report of Consultation, resulted in overwhelming support for the proposal. This has given the team and the sponsors great encouragement as they take the project forward from its plan preparation stage into implementation. Many of the comments received have been incorporated into this final plan.

This document details the policies and landscape strategies to



*Catherine Cairns, Director
Watling Chase Community Forest*

take the concept forward, and the implementation section suggests how this will be achieved principally through partnerships and grant funding.

I have lived and worked in the Watling Chase area for many years and feel honoured to have the job of helping to turn this vision into reality. Everyone living in and close to Watling Chase could and should become involved too in this tremendously exciting environmental initiative, and I urge you all to do so.

Catherine Cairns
Project Director



The Watling Chase Team: *Left to Right, Back Row: Margaret Westerhuis, Mark Prior, Catherine Cairns, James Hargreave. Front Row: Sue White, Nick Lane, Sue Isaacs*

Introduction

The Watling Chase Community Forest initiative is Supported by the Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, London Borough of Barnet and St. Albans City and District Council. It was established under a Memorandum of Agreement between the partners in September 1991.

A vision for the future

Watling Chase Community Forest is a major undertaking, quite different from anything previously attempted in the area. The scale of the project is large in terms of the land and time frame involved.

Historic forests were a patchwork of trees, glades, heaths, ponds and settlements. The land was held in a multitude of ownerships, and ancient laws protected the rights of local people to use the products of the forest, which provided rich harvests of meat, fruits, firewood and timber. There are still echoes of this in the New Forest in Hampshire and Epping Forest in Essex.

Now, we have the opportunity to establish a new wooded landscape in south Hertfordshire and north London, with a similar feel to the original ancient forests. A pattern of different land uses agricultural, forestry, residential, industrial and recreational will exist within landscapes of varying character, scale and tree cover.

The Success of Watling Chase depends on the active support of many organisations: national statutory agencies, local government, voluntary bodies and the private sector.

The Watling Chase team



Angling at Smallford Pit

A Project Director was appointed in September 1991 to promote the concept of the community forest and coordinate its creation.

Today, the project team includes a project manager, community liaison officer, part-time administrator/finance officer, community forester dedicated by the Forestry Authority, a secondee from the Countryside Management Service, and a Forest Education Initiative project officer.

Administrative and steering arrangements

The project is managed by the Director, with overall guidance from the steering group. This comprises two representatives from each of the sponsoring local authorities and an appointee from each of the Countryside Commission, the Forestry Authority, the National Farmers Union, the Country Landowners Association and the business community.

Role of the partners

The Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission originated the community forest idea. They manage the national programme of community forests. The Countryside Commission funds 50% of the costs of the project team, and the Forestry Commission, through its Forestry Authority arm, provides advice, research and training. It is the principal source of woodland planting and management grants for farmers and landowners.

The four local authority partners Hertfordshire County Council, London Borough of Barnet, Hertsmeire Borough Council and St. Albans City and District Council each contributes to Watling Chase in many ways. Together, they fund 50% of the costs of the Watling Chase project team. As landowners they are responsible for much of the existing woodland and recreational areas. As planning authorities they regulate the environment of Watling Chase. As highway authorities they control a key component of its quality. They deliver a range of programmes and services aimed at improving the environment of those who live and work in the area.

The local authorities' Countryside Management Service will have a key role in implementing projects at local level because it offers practical advice and assistance to local community groups and encourages links between all those with an interest in the Countryside.

In the London Borough of Barnet, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) is an additional partner, helping to implement local projects. This, the leading national charity helping people to do voluntary work in environmental conservation, employs a field officer in outer London.

Several companies have already helped and the Watling Chase team will seek to develop and extend this kind of support.

The National Farmers Union and Country Landowners Association are closely involved in establishing Watling Chase, representing their members' interests and concerns, and local representatives sit on the steering group.

Many other local and national organisations have offered support and have been involved in preparing this plan (see Acknowledgments).

Status of the Plan

This Plan has been drafted by the Watling Chase team on behalf of the partners, specialist groups and the local community, all of whom have been involved in its production. It draws its strength from the people it serves and those who live and work within the Forest area.

As a non-statutory document, the Watling Chase Forest Plan is in line with existing statutory plans and enhances them. None of its policies, strategies or proposals override the statutory development plans of the local authority partners.

Backed by statutory planning policy, the Watling Chase Forest Plan should have a strong and positive influence on the quality of the green belt, on those who have the power to bring about landscape change and on the communities in the area.

Its objectives are to:

- introduce the concept of Watling Chase Community Forest and the benefits it may bring to the locality,
- describe the area now known as Watling Chase,
- identify the policies and strategies needed to achieve a community forest in the area,
- show how the vision will be realised, by identifying sources of funding and those who can assist in a variety of ways to take action,
- encourage all communities to get involved and help to implement the Plan's policies and proposals.

Consultation

The Draft Forest Plan was launched in March 1994, and went through a 3 month public consultation period, ending on 30 June 1994. It received a very positive and encouraging response from a wide variety of organisations and individuals. The Report of Consultation outlines the consultation approach, those consulted and responses received, and analyses these results. The draft plan has been rewritten to incorporate the results of the consultation process and to update information. This final Forest Plan has now been approved by all the sponsors and endorsed by the Department of the Environment as the blue-print for the development of Watling Chase over the next 10 years.

Further information

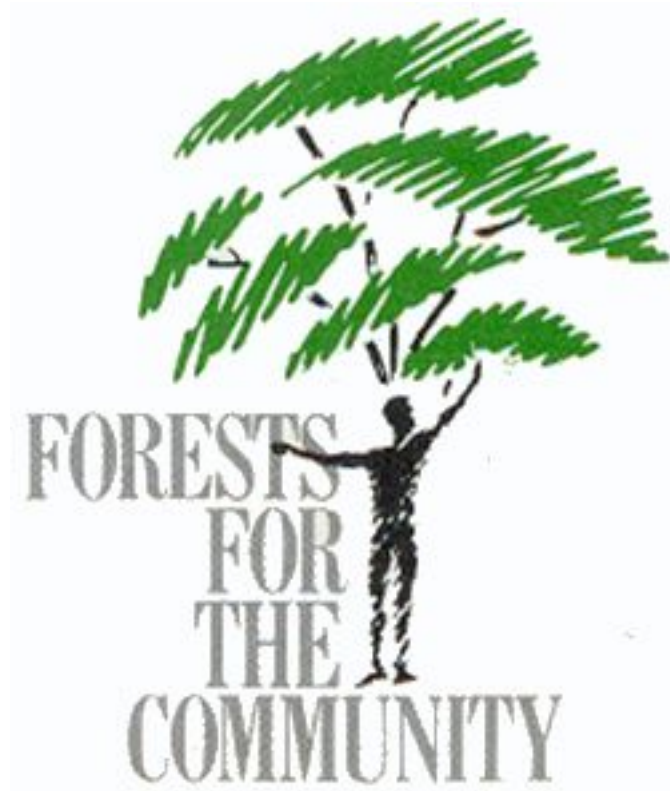
If you would like more information about Watling Chase and how to become involved, please contact the team at:

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National Context

- Background
- Origins of the programme
- Guiding Principles
- Key Questions: whose land, who pays and how long will it take?
- The 'Forests for the Community' programme
- Current policy framework
- Farmers, Landowners and Community Forests: Statement of Understanding



Background

1.1 To many people the word 'forest' conjures up an image of dense, closely grown trees stretching as far as the eye can see. Eight hundred years ago, in mediaeval times, it meant something quite different. Then, the great forests of England were not only trees, but a magnificent mix of woods, heaths, farmland, wetlands, ponds and streams. Here also were settlements - hamlets, villages and small towns where people lived and worked.

1.2 Today, the concept of community forests is breathing new life into this ancient meaning of the word. This echo from our past is now set to become a signpost to a better future.

1.3 Community forests will cover large areas, spreading around the edges of towns and cities. These forests will not be continuous planting of trees. Instead, they will be a rich mosaic of landscapes and land uses including farmland, villages and leisure enterprises, nature areas and public open space. They will create well-wooded landscapes for wildlife, work and education, with new opportunities for a range of recreational facilities, all on the doorstep of hundreds of thousands of people.



Origin of the programme

1.4 The roots of the community forest concept lie in a national need to diversify the use of our rural land, particularly through the encouragement of multipurpose forestry which could:

- produce a national supply of timber,
- offer an alternative to agricultural use of land,
- contribute to rural employment,
- create attractive sites for public enjoyment,
- enhance the natural beauty of the countryside,
- create wildlife habitats.

1.5 There is an increasing acknowledgement of the need for more tree planting, especially close to towns and cities. The particular value that is gained from planting that fulfils more than one role (multipurpose forestry) is also an important element of the community forest concept. Just over 7% of England is covered by woodland. Of the countries in the European Union, only Ireland has a lower percentage of woodland cover.

1.6 In the light of these needs, the Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission undertook a thorough review of the role of forestry in the countryside, building on the Government's 1985 policy for broadleaved trees, which expressed the objective of increasing woodland in areas of scarcity, such as the urban fringe. This review culminated in 1987 with the publication of *Forestry in the Countryside*, a comprehensive policy statement giving the views of the Countryside Commission and proposing multi-purpose forestry close to towns and cities

1.7 Following a feasibility study in 1988, both Commissions were satisfied that multipurpose forestry on the edge of large towns and cities had a key role to play in developing a high quality environment for homes, employment, recreation and education. Thus, the 'Forests for the Community' programme



Location of the 12 community forests in England

was born and, in July 1989, the two Commissions formally launched this joint initiative and unveiled a programme of 12 community forests in England,

Guiding principles

1.8 The guiding principles for the 'Forests for the Community' programme are founded in the need to diversify the countryside for conservation, forestry, environmentally friendly agriculture, sport, recreation and the arts. This has been crystallised into a single aim:

To develop multi-purpose forests which will create better environments for people to use, cherish and enjoy.

1.9 Within community forest areas, new and existing woods, copses, hedges and individual trees will provide the framework for the wide range of economic, social and environmental improvements that will take place. Agriculture will remain as a dominant land use, but environmentally sensitive management will allow landscape, wildlife, recreation and heritage benefits to be gained. These will be achieved through the implementation of a set of clear objectives to which each community forest would accord local priorities.

These objectives aim to:

- improve the landscape, including reclamation of derelict land, to create a visually pleasing and varied countryside,
- increase opportunities for access, sport and recreation and for artistic and cultural events,
- protect the best and most versatile agricultural land from irreversible development, ensure that farming manages to re-create attractive landscape and wildlife areas and that opportunities for farm diversification are increased,
- protect areas of high-quality, landscape, and areas of



Flax (Linseed)

historical or archeological interest,

- regenerate the environment within green belt, or equivalently protected areas, and help to ensure that it is permanently green and open,
- protect sites of nature conservation value and create new opportunities for conservation,
- provide new opportunities for educational use of the area and ensure that community forests can be used for the environmental education needs of the surrounding schools,
- establish supplies of local timber and encourage development of timber-based industries, employment opportunities and woodland products,
- improve the economic well-being of towns and cities through the creation of more appealing locations for industry and commerce,
- improve the environment near housing and local industry, enhancing the value of properties and businesses,
- encourage a high level of local community commitment to the concept and community involvement in the implementation,
- seek private-sector support to implement the community forests and to invest in the area.

Key questions: whose land, who pays, and how long will it take?

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

1.11 Finance for the development of community forests will come from a number of sources. Grants from the Forestry Authority, the Countryside Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), the Department of the Environment and other bodies will help with planting, management, restoration of derelict land and provision of facilities for sport and recreation.

1.12 Further money will come from local government and industry; and private investment will be attracted from companies who see a market potential such as those for wood products or in the leisure sector. Resources from the voluntary sector will have an equally valuable role in the future of the community forests. Sound business partnerships will be a key approach for those developing and managing a community forest.

1.13 Community forests will take perhaps 30 years to develop, but the improvements will begin to be felt as soon as planting gathers pace. We will not reap all the advantages in one lifetime, but significant benefits will flow from the early years. Community forests will be a legacy for the future, to be used, cherished and enjoyed by our children and our children's children.

The 'Forests for the Community' programme

1.14 In July 1989, the first three community forest areas were identified: Thames Chase to the east of London, the Forest of Mercia in south Staffordshire and the Great North Forest in south Tyne and Wear and north-east Durham. The planning of a second tranche of community forest areas was announced by Government Ministers in February 1991. These nine further community forests are Cleveland Community Forest, South Yorkshire Forest, Mersey Forest, Red Rose Forest in Greater Manchester, the Greenwood in north Nottinghamshire, Marston Vale to the south of Bedford, Watling Chase in south Hertfordshire/north London, the Great Western Community Forest around Swindon and the Bristol/ Avon Community Forest. In August 1993, the first three community forests received Government approval to proceed with the implementation of their forest plans.

1.15 The 12 community forests range in size from over 9000 ha to 92,000 ha giving a total area for the whole programme of more than 470,000 ha. This is approximately 3.6% of all land in England, and is equivalent to about half the combined size of all the National Parks. The benefits of community forests will be right on the doorstep for the over 18 million people who live within, or close to, community forests. Existing tree cover within the 12 areas averages 6.9%, and it is proposed to increase this average to about 30% over about 30 years. This implies a significant increase in tree planting, contributing to the Government's national target of increasing woodland cover in the lowlands.

1.16 In each of the 12 community forests, the two Commissions, in partnership with the local authorities, have appointed project teams to prepare forest plans. These are non-statutory documents which describe the proposals for developing each community forest over the next 30 and more years. The 'Forests for the Community' programme is a bold vision. This forest plan shows how the vision will



Oil-seed rape

become reality.

1.17 In all, some 60 Metropolitan, District and County Councils are directly involved throughout England and, with the two Commissions, are key partners. Since the launch of the 'Forests for the Community' programme in 1989, many other national and local organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors have become involved and are now supporting the partnerships. Creation of successful partnerships will be a crucial factor in turning the vision into reality and many firm foundation stones have already been laid. For example, representative bodies of agricultural and landowner interests came together in 1992 to produce a 'Statement of Understanding'.

Current policy framework

1.18 As the community forests within the 'Forests for the Community' programme develop, so too does the policy framework which embraces them. The Countryside Commission has revised and updated its policy, giving greater weight to community forests, as now stated in the publication *England's Trees and Woods* (1993). The Forestry Commission publication *Forestry Policy for Great Britain* (1991) sets out a composite summary of Government forestry policy. This gives support and encouragement to the community forest initiative. The Government is continually reviewing the incentives and mechanisms needed to support and deliver forestry policy.

1.19 Agricultural policy in recent times has focused on increasing food production. A reform process of the Common Agricultural Policy was instigated by the European Union in 1992. This reflects a major shift in policy from the production-orientated farm-support mechanisms of the past to direct support for farmers, and to the linkage of environmental concerns with agricultural policy and their supporting mechanisms. The statement *Our Farming Future* (MAFF 1991) sets out the Government's broad thinking on this reform and this is developed in more detail in the consultation paper *Agriculture and England's Environment* (MAFF 1993). With their multipurpose objectives, community forests are ideally placed to fit with changes in agricultural policy as it develops.

1.20 The growth of public interest in the environment was recognised by Government in the White Paper *This Common Inheritance* (Her Majesty's Government 1990) and specific reference is made in the paper to supporting community forests. In 1993 the House of Commons Environment Committee endorsed the 'Forests for the Community' programme as "a splendid initiative that is going to benefit the quality of life for a huge number of people living in and around major conurbations". The Select Committee urged

Government to lend its firm and long-term support to community forests, with positive response, since Government pledged "to continue to support the implementation of these initiatives in the community forest project areas where it satisfied that proper plans have been made".

1.21 Internationally, during the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the essential nature of forestry for the well-being of the planet was acknowledged and marked by the first ever global agreement on forest principles. The need to make future development sustainable was clearly recognised. In response, the Government has now produced a UK strategy for sustainable development. Within this, sustainable forestry has a definite place; Sustainable Forestry: The UK Programme (Her Majesty's Government 1994) sets out and endorses the valuable role that community forests will play.

1.22 Policies relating to the environment have undergone many changes in recent years. The community forests are now held within an embracing and supportive policy framework and are ideally poised to put policy into action, turning their bold vision into reality.

Farmers, Landowners and Community Forests

Statement of Understanding

The Countryside Commission's and Forestry Commission's programme of 12 community forests in England will create important new opportunities for farmers and landowners to provide and attractive and alternative long-term use of some agricultural land. Vital elements in the community forest concept will be the retention of agricultural landscapes and the creation of productive forests.

To ensure that community forests provide the best possible opportunities for landowners and farmers whilst safeguarding their interests;

- a. Participation by farmers and landowners in community forests is, and will remain, entirely voluntary.
- b. There will be no compulsory purchase of land for community forest purposes.
- c. There will be no support for the planting of trees on tenanted land without the willing agreement of both landlord and tenant.
- d. The creation of a community forest does not alter the present legal position with regard to access. There will be no obligation on farmers, or landowners to provide additional access and the public will not have any right of entry on to private land which does not already exist or is not willingly entered into by the farmer and landlord

The community forest programme will be guided nationally by the Countryside Commission and the Forestry



Forestry Commission



COUNTRY
LANDOWNERS
ASSOCIATION



THE ROYAL INSTITUTION
OF CHARTERED SURVEYORS

COUNTRYSIDE
COMMISSION



Commission, with advice from the Department of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Farmers' and landowners' representatives will be invited to sit on the Officers' Steering Group, or its equivalent, for each community forest and on other working parties which are relevant to their interests.

Community forest project teams will keep in contact with the local farming community. Farmers and landowners within each area will be involved and consulted at the appropriate stages as each community forest proposal is developed.

The community forest project team will facilitate the provision of advice to farmers and landowners who are interested in the increased opportunities for farm diversification. Project teams will also promote the preparation of whole farm plans to maximise landscape, wildlife and other benefits for those farmers who are keen to play an important role in these community forest areas. The teams will help owners to manage existing access (including public rights of way), taking account of the effects of access on farming, and advice on any proposal owners may have for providing new access. The statutory rights of all landowners and occupiers will be respected and community forest project teams will adopt appropriate measures to ensure that the general public are made aware of these rights. The teams will also be seeking to avoid undesirable interactions between new woodlands and adjoining agricultural land.

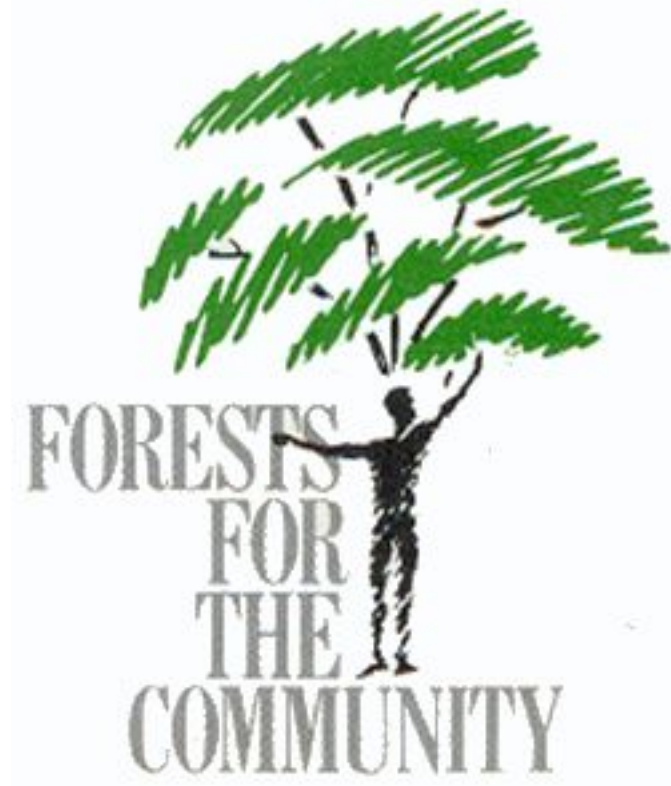
In addition to grants for tree planting and woodland management from the Forestry Commission under its Woodland Grant Scheme, and annual payments from MAFF under its Farm Woodland Premium Scheme, Countryside Commission grants for landscape conservation, informal recreation and access will be targeted towards community forest areas. Special consideration will be given to assessing the need for, and level of, further financial incentives from the Countryside Commission. Grant systems will encourage multi-purpose woodland planting and management schemes.

The Country Landowners Association, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, the National Farmers' Union of England and Wales, The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Countryside Commission, Forestry Commission, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food have jointly endorsed this statement and will maintain regular contact with each other at national level. The Countryside Commission, Forestry Commission, and MAFF will continue

to work with these, and other organisations, to help farmers and landowners to benefit from community forests.

Local Context

- Watling Chase
- National, Metropolitan and Regional Plans
- Local Authority Plans
- The role of the Forest Plan in Development
- Current Land Use
 - Land use analysis
 - Agriculture
 - Forestry
 - Nature Conservation
 - Sport, Recreation and Leisure
- Conclusion



Who will do it?

Creating a community forest like Watling Chase will not require large-scale changes in land ownership. The main approach will be to encourage farmers, landowners and commerce to consider the opportunities which the Forest presents while recognising the importance of efficient, productive farming to the landscape, wildlife and recreation of the area.

How will it be paid for?

Finance for the developing Community Forests will come from a variety of sources. Grants from the Countryside Commission and Forestry Commission, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food and Department of the Environment will help with tree planting, land management, land restoration and providing recreation.

Money will also come from local government, industry and private investment attracted by the potential of the area. Sound business partnerships will be a key concern of those responsible for planning, establishing and managing community forests.

How long will it take ?

Community forests are a bold, long-term vision for the countryside on our urban fringes. They will not appear overnight and will require careful planning and many years of committed support and activity from all sections of the community. Improvements will begin to be felt as soon as planting starts to gather pace. In Watling Chase a start has already been made on projects which are described in Chapter 16 'Landscape Zones'.

The aim is to increase the amount of woodland in Watling Chase over the next 30 years from its present level of less



than 8% to 30%. Thus, by the year 2024, the approved plan will have had a profound impact on the landscape.

This commitment will create a rich, diverse and attractive environment of practical benefit and a source of sustained pleasure to many people. Community forests like Watling Chase will be a legacy to the future, to be used, cherished and enjoyed by generations to come, a change for the better.

The Forest area

2.1 The proposed Forest area covers approximately 16,260 ha (62 square miles) on the northern fringe of the capital and includes parts of the London Boroughs of Barnet and Harrow as well as south Hertfordshire. The boundary of Watling Chase Community Forest is shown on the map below.

2.2 It includes countryside which is subject to considerable urban pressure because it is near London. Creating a new forest in this area should have significant environmental benefits for both the local and wider communities.

2.3 The four motorways (M1, A1(M), M10 and M25), which transect the area, together with other major roads, rivers and railways, have fragmented the landscape. The boundaries of the Forest are largely determined by the urban edges of St. Albans to the north, Hatfield, Potters Bar and Barnet to the east, London to the south and Watford to the west.

2.4 As the Forest develops, the partners will review these boundaries, as and when appropriate.

2.5 This area of south Hertfordshire and north London was chosen for a community forest because:

- a quarter of the area is publicly owned,
- 5% of the land has been damaged and despoiled by gravel extraction, landfill and poor restoration,
- local authorities are strongly committed to resolving the problems of the green belt,
- Hertfordshire County Council and the London Borough of Barnet, with the Countryside Commission,

have pioneered the Countryside Management Service, which is also supported by the district councils. This service will be a prime means of implementing the Watling Chase vision.

2.6 Watling Chase derives its name from the historic route, Roman Watling Street, and Enfield Chase, a mediaeval forest.

2.7 The landscape of this region is dominated by gently undulating valleys and low hills, with Elstree Manor reaching the highest point at 478 feet above sea level. The entire area drains to the River Thames and its major tributaries, the Rivers Colne and Lea (see chapter 16 for a full landscape appraisal). Today's pattern of land use is the result of thousands of years of human activity.

2.8 The earliest evidence for this within the Forest area consists of numerous finds of worked flint tools. Large collections have been found at Harper Lane near Radlett, Bury Hill at St. Albans, Park Street, St Julians Wood, St Albans, and various other sites. These indicate prehistoric activity from as early as the Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) c250,000 BC, although most of the material recovered dates from the Mesolithic (Middle) or Neolithic (New Stone Age) periods, ranging in date from c7000 to c2500 BC. The earliest inhabitants would have been small numbers of hunter-gatherers attracted to the river valleys of the Colne and Ver by the abundance of game and the ready availability of water.

2.9 Later, the light soils of the same valleys proved equally attractive to the earliest farmers and settlers of the Neolithic period who began the first major clearance of the primeval forest. From this point, human settlement developed rapidly and by the time of the Roman invasion in AD 43 there is good evidence of extensive occupation of the area. This is most clearly seen in substantial areas of cropmarks, identified from aerial photography, which show enclosures, field systems, trackways, linear features, ring ditches (the ploughed-out remains of Bronze Age round burial barrows) and other indications of settlement and different land uses, ranging in date from c.3500 BC to the first century AD.

2.10 This process was continued and accelerated by the Romans. The proximity of London and Verulamium (St Albans) both major cities, and the existence of Watling Street running across its heart, ensured that the area was much

favoured.

2.11 At least four villa sites are known within the boundary, three in the Colne Valley to the south of Bricket Wood and the other just to the west of Park Street One of the former, to the south of Ambassador College, included a tile kiln and there is good evidence for the existence of a substantial tile and pottery manufacturing industry elsewhere within the Forest area. There were large production centres at Radlett and Elstree, both within easy access of Watling Street, and substantial sites are also known at Aldenham School, the St Stephen area, Little Munden Farm and Brockley Hill, Barnet, as well as smaller sites elsewhere. Overall there is little doubt that the Romano-British period (AD 43 to c. AD 450) saw the consolidation of the human settlement of the area that had started several thousand years before.

2.12 Archeological evidence suggests that the end of Roman rule was along drawnout process of slow decline, interspersed with intermittent violence In Hertfordshire generally and certainly in the area around Verulamium, there is no evidence of early Anglo-Saxon occupation or settlement It is, however, unlikely that in the so-called 'Dark Ages' anything more significant than a slowing of the continuing process of forest clearance, agricultural expansion and settlement increase took place

2.13 Certainly, there is clear evidence of substantial settlement by the early thirteenth century. South Mimms, Shenley and Aldenham are mentioned in Domesday Book (1086) and Elstree and Ridge are also of mediaeval origin. At least 15 manorial sites are known in the Forest area, some of them moated. Particularly fine examples of moats survive at Salisbury Hall, Shenley; Pennes Place, Aldenham; and Battlers Green Farm, Aldenham; and the site at Colney Chapel is of an unusual oval plan. In the south of the area, Chipping Barnet developed in the twelfth century as a market town owned by St.Albans Abbey.

2.14 There is some evidence of desertion or shrinkage of settlement, much of it doubtless related to the plague and associated economic decline of the later fourteenth century, though this is not as obvious as in the east of the county. The Forest area also includes the mediaeval South Mimms castle, one of the county's principal historic sites.

2.15 The proximity of central London has always made

Barnet and Hertfordshire much favoured by the 'great and the good'. One result is the large number of residences and estates of palatial style and size. The most famous of these, Hatfield, lies just outside the north-eastern boundary of the Forest, but lesser examples actually lie within it. North Mymms and Tyttenhanger Parks originated as mediaeval deer parks, while Durham, Wrotham and Wall Hall illustrate the fashion of designed landscapes from the mid-eighteenth century onwards.

2.16 The population of Barnet and Hertfordshire increased further in the 1800s as the development of the railways brought people and industry to the area. The pattern of settlement was also changing as the process of migration from rural communities to the towns took place.

2.17 New garden cities at Letchworth and Welwyn were established in the early 1900s. Partly as a result, the population of Hertfordshire rose from 243,000 in 1901 to 457,000 in 1939. After the Second World War, new towns were designated at Stevenage, Hemel Hempstead, Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City. Population growth in Hertfordshire continued, but has now slowed. 563,000 in 1951, 927,000 in 1971 and 976,000 in 1991. This increase led to a significant change in land use from agriculture to industry and housing. In Barnet, the 1991 Census recorded 293,500 people living in the borough, a decrease of 3% since 1981 and continuing a trend of local population decline evident since 1951, when the peak was 230,500.

2.18 The area remains attractive to industry and for commuters to London, although recession has had a major impact on local industry and commerce, especially aerospace. Currently, the rate of population growth has slowed, but the trend towards smaller households maintains strong pressure for new homes. Reconciling these pressures with green belt and other environmental policies is the job of the statutory development plans, the subject of the next chapter.

National Planning Guidance

3.1 This Forest Plan was written in the light of official advice and policies as they stood in autumn 1994. Guidance on formulating policies and topics requiring consideration for statutory plans is given in Government circulars and notes (eg Planning Policy Guidance Notes -(PPG) Policies and targets are also set out in regional and county documents. This plan works within that general framework and that of the detailed local plans of the district councils and the unitary plans of the London boroughs.

3.2 Relevant Planning Policy (PPG) and Regional Planning (RPG) Guidance Notes are:

PPG 2	Green Belts (edition dated 1988)
PPG 27	The Countryside and the Rural Economy
PPG 16	Archaeology and Planning
PPG 17	Sport and Recreation
PPG 21	Tourism
PPG Draft	Nature Conservation
RPG 3	Strategic Guidance for London
RPG 9	Regional Planning Guidance for the South East

The following Minerals Planning Guidance (MPG) Notes are particularly relevant:

MPG 2	Applications, Permissions and Conditions
MPG 4	Review of Mineral Working Sites
MPG 6	Guidelines for Aggregates Provision
MPG 7	Reclamation of Mineral Workings

Metropolitan green belt

3.3 All of non-urban Watling Chase is in the metropolitan



green belt. The five purposes of the green belt set out in PPG2 (1988) are to:

- check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- safeguard the surrounding countryside from further encroachment,
- prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another,
- preserve the special character of historic towns,
- assist in urban regeneration

3.4 A revised PPG2 is in draft form. The principle revisions affecting Watling Chase are:

- the positive role of green belts is emphasised in respect of access to the countryside, outdoor sport and recreation, retention and enhancement of landscape and improvement of damaged and derelict land,
- guidance is provided on development proposals not normally acceptable in green belts local planning authorities should balance the advantages and disadvantages when deciding whether permission should be granted on the basis of very special circumstances,
- any large-scale development or redevelopment of land (including minerals, waste disposal and road schemes) should contribute to the objectives of the green belt,
- specific guidance is provided on community forests, as follows:

'Community forests offer valuable opportunities for improving the environment around towns, by upgrading the landscape and providing for recreation and wildlife. An approved Community Forest Plan may be a material consideration in preparing development plans and deciding planning applications. Any development proposals within community forests in the green belt should be subject to the normal policies controlling development in green belts, and should respect the woodland setting'.

3.5 PPG7 is a wide-ranging document which is relevant to

many countryside issues affecting Watling Chase. It has three main sections:

- policies for the countryside,
- development in the countryside,
- special considerations in designated areas.

It includes guidance on rural enterprises diversifying into other areas of business; the re-use and adaption of rural buildings; protecting the best agricultural land; and tourism, sport and recreation.

3.6 The aim of this Plan is to offer diverse and alternative uses for green belt land consistent with existing national and local policy and advice (see paragraphs 3.9 to 3.27).

Regional plans

3.7 In 1994 the Government published Regional Guidance for the South East (Department of the Environment 1993). The Government is advised on regional planning and transport issues by the South East Regional Planning Conference (SERPLAN). RPG9 refers to extensive areas of urban fringe where land uses conflict and environmental problems arise. It calls for a positive approach to planning and managing the urban fringe to improve the environment, achieve a better use of land and increased public access as an amenity for the residents of the whole area. It mentions community forests as follows:

'A recent development, in this context, is the joint Countryside Commission and Forestry Commission initiative to create new community forests around major conurbations. Three such forests are proposed in the South East: Thames Chase in east London; Marston Vale in Bedfordshire; and Watling Chase in South Hertfordshire. Development plans should take account of these community forests, which are intended to provide a positive means of upgrading the landscape and nature conservation interests in their areas, as well as new opportunities for leisure and recreation. Guidance for local authorities on the preparation of Indicative Forestry Strategies is contained in Circular 29/92 (Department of the Environment 1992b). Such strategies should be fully integrated with development plans'.

Local Authority Plans

3.8 Watling Chase is in south Hertfordshire, Barnet and Harrow. The county structure plan provides the basic policy framework in Hertfordshire, with the various district and borough-wide local plans providing the detail. Within the London area the unitary development plans (UDP) provide both the policy framework and the detail in one document. Each of the relevant local authorities has approved plans or review documents in preparation.

Hertfordshire County Council

3.9 Strategic planning guidance is contained in the Hertfordshire County Structure Plan 1986 Review, incorporating the 1991 alterations, which were approved with modifications by the Secretary of State in June 1992. A consultation document on the Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review was published in May 1994, and the Deposit version was due in late 1994. Structure Plan Policy 1 refers to the metropolitan green belt, whilst policies 5A-24 on Hertfordshire's 'Green Mantle' cover issues such as landscape, nature conservation, archaeology, forestry, leisure and mineral extraction.

3.10 The following policies are particularly relevant:

Policy No 1

'It is the County Councils policy to maintain a green belt in the south of the county as part of a green belt about 12-15 miles deep around London with limited extensions along the main radial transport corridors as indicated on the key diagram The precise boundaries of this green belt are defined in district local plans Within the green belt, except for development in green belt settlements referred to in policy 51 or in very special circumstances, permission will not be given for development for purposes other than that scale facilities



for participatory sport and recreation, or other uses appropriate to a rural area, or the use for hospitals or similar institutional purposes of existing grounds, provided (a) the buildings are not suitable for continued residential use, and (b) the proposed use is not such as to lead to a demand for large extensions or for additional buildings in the grounds. The circumstances and locations in which development will be allowed will also have regard to the other policies of this plan.'

Policy No 6 (Landscape Conservation) and Policy No 7 (Landscape Development)

Landscape Conservation Areas are countryside areas of regional and county value where landscape conservation and enhancement should be emphasised. Landscape Development Areas have significant visual and environmental problems, and landscape creation, improvement and enhancement is required (see Map 5 at end of this plan).

Policy No 15A refers specifically to Watling Chase Community Forest

The County Council will support the establishment of a community forest in the south and east of the county for the purpose of landscape conservation, recreation, wildlife conservation and timber production.'

In addition, Policy 15A seeks to preserve forestry land and supports additional woodland development and timber production.

Policy No 16

Medium and low intensity leisure development could be acceptable in locations such as the river valleys and the M25 corridor and within visually damaged or unfarmable areas with good access from the urban fringes. Medium-intensity uses are meeting halls, neighbourhood sports facilities, flying, trail-bike riding, golfing, clay-pigeon shooting, 'combat games', camping and outdoor entertainment. Countryside recreation pursuits such as walking and picnicking are defined as low intensity.

3.11 The Hertsmere District Plan First Review 1991, which was approved in May 1991, covers a large part of the Forest area. It aims to:

'Protect and enhance the metropolitan green belt by diverting development pressures and generally encouraging uses appropriate to a rural area; and balance and regulate the various demands made upon the countryside as a resource, including those arising from settlements, agriculture and recreation, whilst conserving its natural features.'

3.12 The 1991 Annual Policy Review (non-statutory, published in December 1991) details policies on sport and recreation, golf courses and driving ranges, and management and development in the countryside. Further guidance on countryside issues is in the Annual Policy Review 1992, approved in November 1992, which also gives clear support for the concept of the Watling Chase Community Forest. The topics covered in these non-statutory reviews will be in the next full review of the statutory plan.

St. Albans City and District Council

3.13 The St. Albans Draft District Plan Review of the 1985 plan was the subject of a local public inquiry (March-July 1992) and the Inspector's report was received in June 1993. The draft contains a non-statutory policy intention to support the community forest and some additional material was included in the Pre-Inquiry Proposed Changes (November 1991). The Inspector recommended that this intention was upgraded to policy status. The Council published its Proposed Modifications in June 1994, and the Inspector's recommendation has been incorporated.

3.14 Policy No 143A states that 'The District Council will support the establishment of the Watling Chase Community Forest in the general location indicated on Figure 21A. Within the community forest, the Council will welcome detailed proposals for the purposes of landscape conservation, recreation, nature conservation and timber production. Proposals should be consistent with green belt policy (Policy I) and the other policies in this Plan, particularly policies 91, 96, 103 and 106.

3.15 More detailed guidance on some key sites within Watling Chase is given in District Plan Review Policy No 143.

Welwyn Hatfield Council

3.16 The Welwyn Hatfield District Plan was adopted in March 1993.

Policy No CR3 states that 'Within the boundary of the community forest defined on the Proposals Map the establishment of the forest for purposes of landscape conservation, recreation, wildlife conservation and timber production will be encouraged.'

Watford Council

3.17 The Watford District Local Plan Deposit Version (March 1994) states in policy SE4C that 'The Council will seek to protect and enhance the character and improve the use of land within the green belt by encouraging the establishment of Watling Chase Community Forest as identified on the proposals map, whilst seeking adequate public access and nature conservation measures.'

London Borough of Barnet

3.18 The Barnet Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in November 1991. This plan contains many policies which are directly relevant to the objectives of the Watling Chase initiative, especially Chapter 3, Environmental Quality. The community forest has been identified as a topic for inclusion within the review of the Unitary Development Plan.

London Borough of Harrow

3.19 The deposit version of the Harrow Unitary Development Plan, approved in February 1992, refers to the community forest in a paragraph supporting a policy on the Green Belt Management Strategy. It notes that the Council 'supports the concept of the community forest' and points out that normal green belt policy will apply to the area. A small part of Harrow's green belt is within the Forest's boundary.

London Borough of Enfield

3.20 The London Borough of Enfield abuts Watling Chase and therefore the Enfield Unitary Development Plan adopted

in September 1991 is significant. Some land within the Hertsmere part of Watling Chase is owned by the Borough as part of its Enfield Chase Estate, held under the Green Belt Act, and as such is subject to the Hertsmere District Plan.

Other relevant strategies and plans

3.21 The Hertfordshire County Council's Minerals Local Plan has been subject to a public inquiry and, as a result of the Inspector's report, the county council is putting forward modifications which went on deposit in September 1994. This plan fully supports the community forest objectives for the restoration of sand and gravel extraction sites and is, therefore, of particular significance in Watling Chase. The county council at the time of writing is also preparing a Waste Local Plan, which is soon to be placed on deposit. Other county council strategies which reinforce the objectives of the Forest Plan are the non-statutory Woodland Strategy for Hertfordshire and the Countryside Strategy.

3.22 The London Borough of Barnet has produced a Countryside and Green Space Management Strategy. which has specific policies supporting the community forest, an Environmental Strategy and a Management Plan for Moat Mount and Scratchwood Countryside Park.

3.23 These strategies also share common objectives with the Watling Chase initiative, and the plans for Moat Mount and Scratchwood Countryside Park mean that these sites could be promoted as gateways to the Forest.

3.24 The London Borough of Harrow has produced a broadly based Green Belt Management Strategy and, recently, site-specific management plans for Stanmore Common and Stanmore Country Park. These were produced by the London Ecology Unit for Harrow Council, in conjunction with English Nature Discussions over the development of the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital include making arrangements for further planning and management of the hospitals grounds.

3.25 The London Borough of Enfield is preparing a green belt management plan including a landscape strategy and recreation proposals, especially improved public access.

3.26 The National Rivers Authority published a Recreation Strategy in 1993, its main objective being the optimisation of

the recreational use of rivers. It will also be preparing a Catchment Management Plan for the Co1ne Valley, which will set clearly defined objectives for the water environment, and will develop an action plan that will achieve these aims through close consultation with the community and other interested organisations.

3.27 The Eastern Council for Sport and Recreation (ECSR), which covers Hertfordshire, published in April 1994 its regional strategy for sport and recreation, entitled Sport in the East - Partnership in Action. It emphasises the importance of community forests to sport and recreation. The ECSR has also published other studies relevant to Watling Chase, including ones covering golf, water recreation and sports development plans.

3.28 All the plans and strategies in this chapter contain a wide range of policies relevant to Watling Chase. They cover agriculture, woodland, the countryside and wider environment, mineral extraction and restoration, sport and recreation and the designation of sites of special value (ecological, archeological and landscape). They also contain broad expressions of support for the community forest as a major environmental initiative.

3.29 They define two key points:

- development restraint and
- commitment and support for Watling Chase.

Boundary changes

3.30 Some small changes to local authority boundaries came into effect on 1 April 1993. They do not alter the status of these statutory plans and strategies. Where boundaries have changed the approved plans remain in force until incorporated in revised plans prepared by the authority which has taken over.

The role of the Forest Plan in development control

3.31 The Watling Chase Forest Plan, once adopted and approved, will not be statutory, but will give guidance on the future management of the countryside within its area, particularly the location, size and structure of its future woodland. Planning decisions within the Forest will influence how owners manage their land. These decisions will be based on the local authorities' statutory development plans. The Watling Chase team will advise local authorities on major planning applications where they relate to community forest objectives.

3.32 In relation to town and country planning, the Watling Chase Forest Plan will seek to:

- achieve the aims and objectives of the Plan by promoting action and implementation,
- support the policies of development plans which relate to the countryside and resources of the area,
- help inform development control decisions where it is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications

3.33 The objectives of this Plan clearly reflect those of the local authorities:

- green belt and development restraint,
- reclamation of derelict land to productive uses, particularly wildlife conservation and recreation,
- protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats and the management of new areas for wildlife,



Hilfield Park Reservoir

- increased provision for outdoor recreation, with an emphasis on informal access to the countryside and giving priority to facilities for horse-riding and cycling,
- policies to favour specific sports, recreational or tourism developments, including, at appropriate sites, water sports, camping and caravan sites,
- protection and enhancement of traditional landscapes,
- protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land from irreversible development,
- protection for areas of archeological and historical interest.

Sustainable development

3.34 As this Forest Plan went to print, the issue of sustainable development was assuming a much higher priority at both central and local government levels. Sustainable development is defined as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs'. Agenda 21 from the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 encourages local authorities to adopt a sustainable development strategy, a Local Agenda 21, for their communities. The sponsoring authorities in Watling Chase are currently looking at how they will do this. Hertfordshire County Council, for example, in its Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review Consultation Document, aims to set a framework for planning sustainable growth and development in the county. The consultation document sets out 16 key aims, nine of which are directly related to the community forest. When this plan is reviewed in three years, local authority policies on sustainable development will have been defined and agreed, and will be incorporated more fully in this document.

Land use analysis

4.1 Land use analysis of the area (Table 4.1) shows that the built-up areas of London Colney, Park Street, Chiswell Green, How Wood, Bricket Wood, Radlett, Shenley, Bushey, Elstree, Borehamwood, Barnet (part) and Arkley occupy some 11.6% of the total forest area. The value of trees to the urban areas within Watling Chase is important and it is intended that more trees will be planted within these settlements to soften the built environment and create wildlife corridors.

Table 4.1 Land use in Watling Chase in 1993		
Land use	Area (ha)	Percentage
Agriculture, (excluding land affected by past extraction)	10556	65%
Agricultural land affected past extraction	650	4%
Active Extraction	120	0.7%
Existing Woodland	1210	7.4%
Open Water	84	0.5%
Urban	1893	11.6%
Other, eg golf course, rural parkland, cemeteries	1747	10.8%
Total	16260	

Agriculture

Quality of agriculture land

4.2 The quality of agricultural land is classified by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on the basis of its physical characteristics. There are five grades, grade 1 being the best and grade 5 the poorest. In Watling Chase there are small areas of grade 2 land between St. Albans and Hatfield, east of London Colney and around Radlett. Most of the land in the forest area is grade 3 and this limitation in quality dictates the choice of crops, timing of cultivations or level of yield.

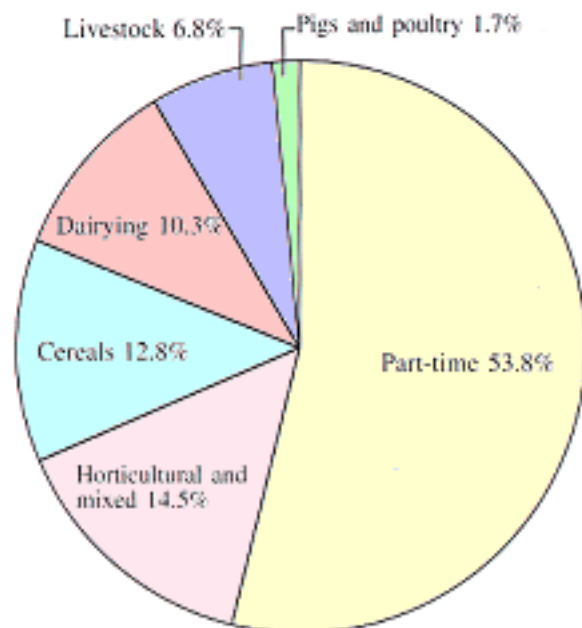
4.3 The area of better grade 3 land (3a) in the forest area is not known, but there is likely to be sufficient poorer quality land to achieve the scale of tree planting proposed without encroaching on the more versatile land (see policies for agriculture in Chapter 8).

Land ownership

4.4 Agricultural land-holdings are estimated to cover some 10556 ha (26073 acres), about 65% of the Forest area. This area is farmed by an estimated 51 farmers and is divided into about 117 holdings. Three quarters of these holdings are rented by tenant farmers. Only 44 holdings are farmed directly by the landowners and they represent only a small percentage of Watling Chase. The special position of tenant farmers is recognised and agreements must be negotiated jointly with tenants and landowners. This is discussed in more detail under policy A2 in Chapter 8.

Number and size of holdings

4.5 The majority of holdings, some 75 in all, are under 50 ha and many of these are under 10 ha.



NB. Part-time is defined as less than 250 standard working days

4.6 Seven holdings are larger than 200 ha (494 acres) and these may be particularly suitable for creating areas of farm woodland. However, since there are few large farms to create woodland as major partners within Watling Chase, it will be especially important to involve the tenants and owners of small ones.

4.7 So far, the Watling Chase tree-planting schemes have been undertaken by landowners who do not depend on farming for their livelihood. In such situations, tree planting and other habitat creation and maintenance can be a very attractive option for the landowner, as well as fulfilling the objectives of the Watling Chase Forest Plan.

4.8 About half of the agricultural land is arable, while the rest is grassland for grazing, hay and silage. This helps to sustain the traditional pastoral landscapes which will be part of the community forest.

Set-aside

4.9 At the time of writing, Common Agricultural Policy regulations allow the non-rotational set-aside option for:

- non-food schemes, including short-rotation coppice (willow/poplar plantations cut every 3-5 years),
- natural regeneration,
- field margins, to provide green corridors which are valuable for wildlife and public access.

These proposals are intended to carry forward the Government's objective of encouraging farming practices which:

- protect and enhance wildlife, habitat and natural resources,
- conserve and enhance our most attractive landscapes;
- promote new opportunities for the public to enjoy the countryside.

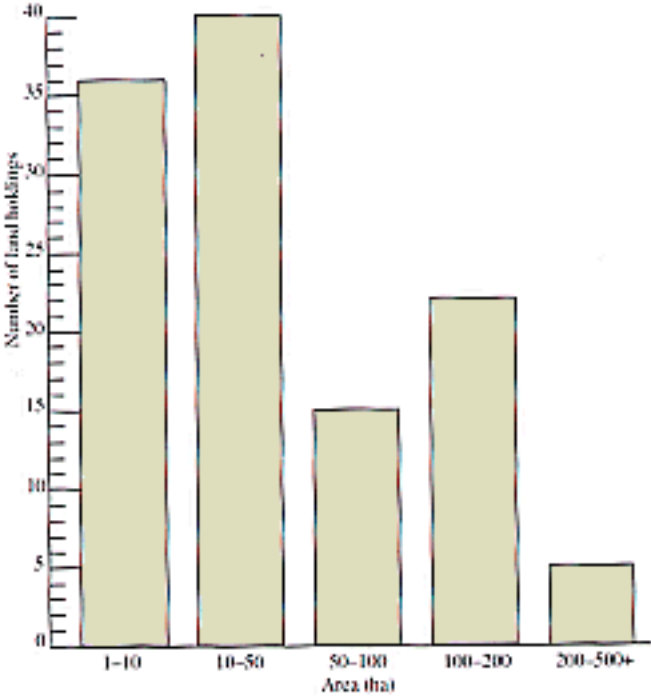


Figure 4.2 Number and size of land holdings in Watling Chase.

As well as fulfilling Government objectives, they will help to achieve Watling Chase policies.

4.10 How farming is likely to develop in Watling Chase should become clearer when decisions are taken on whether woodland planting will be allowed on non-rational set-aside land and the Agri-Environmental Regulations come into effect. Some long-term general trends are already clear. There will be fewer farmers and they will be performing a wider range of tasks. Diversification means that farmers already do more than simply produce food and are developing their skills across a wide range of new activities (eg. farm tourism, arts and crafts). See section on 'Agricultural Change' in Chapter 1.

Future trends in farming

4.11 There will be rather less land under cultivation and more land afforested or managed for other environmental and recreational purposes. This is because the public funds used to support farming will, at least in part, be switched from food production to environmental objectives, although they are still only a small element of the Common Agricultural Policy.

4.12 There will be more technological advances leading to greater efficiency but not greater uniformity. Food production should become stable, but the range should be increased to satisfy increasingly sophisticated consumer demands.

4.13 Most of these general trends will affect farms within Watling Chase and there is likely to be a broader mixture of land uses than at present. Supported by grant aid and new set-aside arrangements, traditional forestry, innovative agro-forestry and diversification, farmers could maintain their livelihood while enhancing their stewardship of the countryside and helping to implement the Watling Chase Community Forest (see Our Farming Future, (European Community 1992).

Forestry

Existing tree cover

4.14 Around 7.4% of Watling Chase, 1210 ha (2904 acres), comprises woodland, narrow treebelts and small copses. Additionally, there are many trees in hedges and parkland, on golf courses and other sports grounds, along roadsides and railway lines, in gardens and cemeteries, on derelict land and in industrial areas. All contribute to the overall forest framework of Watling Chase.

Types of woodland

4.15 About a third of the total woodland is 'ancient semi-natural', which means that it is has been continuously wooded since at least 1600 and often since prehistoric times. Such sites are particularly important for nature conservation because of the continuity of woodland cover and the range of native flora and fauna supported. A good example is Hazel Grove on the edge of Hatfield.

4.16 Other semi-natural woodlands have come into existence in recent centuries as a result of natural regeneration on formerly open land. Much of Bricket Wood Common is a good example of this type of woodland.

4.17 Plantations are woods which have been established by planting, mostly since the nineteenth century. Many plantations have been created on sites where ancient or other semi-natural woodland has been felled, such as in Myrnmshall Wood, near South Mirnms. Other plantations are on former agricultural land, for example old estate plantings on the Wall Hall estate near Aldenham.

Species



*Bricket Wood
hornbeam coppice*

4.18 The main locally native tree and shrub species are oak, hornbeam, ash, field maple, wild cherry, birch, crab apple, hawthorn, blackthorn, elder, hazel and holly (the only evergreen species). Willows and alder are characteristic of riversides and other wet areas.

4.19 Beech has frequently been planted, and sycamore, a non-native species, is increasingly abundant because of prolific natural regeneration. Other planted species include lime, sweet chestnut and horse chestnut.

4.20 Conifers have been widely established in plantations, mainly pine and larch which were often planted in mixtures with broadleaved species. Such mixed plantations are particularly attractive and can become valuable wildlife habitats as they mature.

Woodland management

4.21 Most of the ancient and other semi-natural woodlands were formerly managed by coppicing to produce firewood and other products. However, since about 1900 most coppice woodlands have been neglected because of a decline in traditional markets for small hardwood timber.

4.22 Good woodland management to produce high quality, large timber requires regular thinning of the smaller, poor quality trees in order to provide enough space for the better quality trees to mature. However, many young plantations have not been adequately thinned because of the depressed timber markets of recent years.

4.23 Grey squirrels are now a major problem for woodland owners. This introduced species from North America causes severe damage to potentially valuable timber trees, especially broadleaved species, by stripping the bark. Muntjac deer and rhododendron are two other non-native species which cause management problems in local woodland.

Ownership

4.24 Local authorities Own about 30% of the existing woodlands, mainly near Aldenham and in the London Boroughs of Basset and Harrow. Most publicly owned woodland already has open access. Very little new woodland

has been created this century and so far new planting has been mostly limited to land in public ownership.

4.25 The only substantial area of recent new woodland is on local authority land adjacent to the A1(M) at Bullens Green, near Hatfield.

4.26 Private woodlands belong to a diverse range of owners. Some woods are part of traditionally managed estates and farms. Others are historic commons. Many woods are owned by institutions, industry, developers and individuals for whom rural land management is not an important source of income. As a result, many private owners are unaware of the potential economic value of their woods and the skills necessary to manage them.

Non-woodland trees

4.27 Since the war, Dutch elm disease, hedgerow loss and, latterly, storm damage have had a striking effect on the Watling Chase landscape. Although there has been widespread smallscale planting, this has not been sufficient to compensate for the previous losses. Many of the remaining mature trees which are important within the landscape show signs of declining health.

4.28 However, non-woodland trees are crucial. They not only create a visual link between woodlands but are also 'corridors' for wildlife, and could once again become a significant source of timber.

Nature Conservation

4.29 Although modern developments, such as new buildings, the M25, gravel pits and railways tend to dominate the scene in many areas, fundamentally Watling Chase is largely an ancient landscape with its own character: the product of a long history of human impact on natural habitats.

Geology

4.30 The underlying geology has determined the basic habitat types from which all present-day features stem. Towards the north, a narrow belt of Reading gravel outcrops from below the London clay along the southern flank of the Colne Valley, resulting in drier soils. Chalk is also not far below the surface along the north side of the Colne Valley, as well as around North Mymms. River gravel associated with the Colne or its ancient precursor, a forerunner of the River Thames, occur along the Colne Valley and have strongly influenced land use as well as plant communities. Much of the central and southern areas is dominated by wet, acid London clay which supports mainly pasture. In the far south of the area, at Stanmore Common and Harrow Weald, the London clay is overtopped by a dry, sand deposit, the Claygate Beds, which gives rise to healthy conditions in this area. More recent glacial deposits of boulder clay exist at Bricket Wood, and of pebble gravel in a few places further south on top of the London clay.



*Heath spotted orchid
Stanmore Common*

Types of habitat

4.31 The natural woodland in this area seems largely to have been oak with hazel on the acidic London clay, with more birch on lighter soils, and hornbeam on freer-draining loams. The oak/hazel woodland is found only in Hertfordshire, with fragments along the fringes of London. Ancient woodland fragments still occur quite widely, but

particularly at Mimms Woods, and are largely of oak and hazel, as well as hornbeam. Oak/hazel woodland was also the original type at Berrygrove Wood, Aldenham and at Combe Wood, Shenley, and in other smaller woods on the acidic London clay. North of the Colne, an isolated block of wet boulder clay has given rise to wet woods of oak/birch and oak/hornbeam at Bricket Wood, as well as supporting the unique wet heath of Bricket Wood Common itself.

4.32 Further south, the acidic Claygate Beds oak/birch woodland at Stanmore Common, and also the relic ancient woods such as Pear Wood, with its wood ants - the only place in Hertfordshire and London where they occur. In some places, areas of former ancient woodlands have mostly been replaced by conifers, such as at Potters Crouch.

4.33 While the poorest soils have allowed ancient habitats to survive in old woodlands and on common land, much of the area has been enclosed for farmland for centuries. Around Ridge and Shenley these enclosures were probably quite late and the neat patchwork of small fields, bounded by ancient hedges, derives from clearances made in the former woodland. Any grassland is largely improved for agriculture, but isolated fragments of old grassland still survive in places such as Rabley Park. Old grassland also occurs in the east near Brookmans Park and the Dollis Valley at Totteridge.

4.34 Because the London clay is so wet, the area has always had some open water. Old, often neglected, field ponds still occur in many places, but more recently ornamental lakes, such as Tykes Water, Aldenham, have been constructed along natural watercourses. Still reservoirs have also become a feature of the area, firstly for canal supply at Aldenham, then for drinking water at Hilfield Park. Both these sites have become highly important for waterfowl and other wetland wildlife and the latter is a Local Nature Reserve managed by the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust with the Three Valleys Water Company.

4.35 Rivers, streams and the aquifer are also important. The Colne, the largest river, suffers in some parts from pollution and loss of riverside marsh and wet meadows. The Mimmshall Brook, flowing north, is notable for disappearing down a swallowhole at Water End to re-emerge near Ware as Chadwell Spring. Smaller watercourses like the Catharine Bourne and Dollis Brook are also locally important for their wetland wildlife.

4.36 Later developments have created new, secondary habitats. Most obvious are the extensive gravel pits at Old Parkbury, Tyttenhanger and Colney Heath, which, when allowed to develop, have produced rich wildlife habitats. These are important not only for aquatic wildlife but also for insects and flowers of rough grassland and scrub. Good examples include the remnant pools at Old Parkbury, pits at Sleepshyde and some of those at Colney Heath. Other important refuges include railway banks and motorway verges, which add to the waste ground on older roadsides, and forgotten greens which have survived from earlier times in many places.

Designated sites

4.37 There are six Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):

- Moor Mill Quarry, West Geological SSSI
- Redwell Wood Woodland SSSI
- Castle Lime Works Quarry Geological SSSI
- Water End Swallow Holes Geological SSSI
- Bricket Wood Common Woodland, Remnant Heath SSSI
- Stanmore Common Woodland, Remnant Heath SSSI

Local Nature Reserves are also statutory sites, declared and managed by local authorities under section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949). There are currently two Local Nature Reserves:

- Rowley Green Common
- Hilfield Park Reservoir.

Barnet's Unitary Development Plan offers statutory protection to Metropolitan and Borough Sites of Nature Conservation Importance. These are:

Metropolitan

- Hadley Green
- Rowley Green Common
- Totteridge Fields and Highwood Hill
- Moat Mount Fields
- Shooting Grounds Grasslands

Borough Grade 1 Sites

- Arkley Lane and Fields
- Monken Hadley Common Woods
- Scratchwood Open Space
- Mill Hill Golf Course
- Glebe Lane Pastures, Barnet

Borough Grade 2 Sites

- Sulloniaca Pastures
- Edgwarebury Brook
- Moat Mount Open Space/Mote End Farm
- Laing Field
- Totteridge Common
- King Georges Field, Hadley
- Dollis Brook
- Northern Line, High Barnet.

4.38 Other sites of value for nature conservation and earth science importance have non-statutory status. These are:

Heritage sites

- Colney Heath
- Saffron Green

HMWT Nature Reserve

- Broad Colney Lakes

Regionally Important Geological/ Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)

- Potters Crouch Section
- Radlett Field
- Radlett Plantation

Sport, recreation and leisure

The national policies of the key partners are:

Sports Council

4.39 The Sports Council published A Countryside for Sport - A Policy for Sport and Recreation in 1992 following wide-ranging consultation. The broad thrust of the policy is that.

- a strategic approach should be adopted by all those involved in planning for countryside sport and recreation, including national government bodies, local planning authorities, landowners and farmers, conservation groups and national agencies. 'Demand needs to be identified and then met through appropriate land use planning and effective management of the natural resources on which the activities take place',
- everyone should have the opportunity to take part in and develop their competence in countryside sports,
- the countryside environment must be safeguarded against inappropriate or excessive use for sport and recreation and there must be appropriate management and cooperation between users,
- sustainable development of sport and recreation in the countryside should be based on the statutory land use system.



*In the countryside
Albion Way*



Sailing at Aldenham Country Park

Countryside Commission

4.40 The Countryside Commission's policies for recreation are set out in Policies for Enjoying the Countryside (1989), Enjoying the Countryside. Priorities for Action (1989) and

Enjoying the Countryside: Policies for people (1992). The policies relate to:

- how and why people enjoy the countryside,
- how countryside resources can best be used for recreation, as well as agriculture, forestry and other land uses,
- how policies can be best implemented and managed.

4.41 The key objective is to improve and extend opportunities for the public to enjoy the countryside, but, in doing so, to emphasise the link between conserving an attractive countryside and its enjoyment by the public.

4.42 In order to fulfil this objective, the Countryside Commission will:

- recognise that its responsibilities extend to the public as a whole, not to particular interest groups,
- focus attention on the informal aspects of enjoying the countryside,
- concentrate on facilities available to the general public, recognising that activities organised into clubs or competitive activities are primarily the concern of the Sports Councils and the bodies represented on the Central Council for Physical Recreation,
- give priority to recreational activities that do not cause significant disturbance to others, recognising that comparative tranquillity is one of the main attractions of the countryside,
- urge local authorities to ensure that places are available for more noisy activities; recognise that, while a sense of freedom and discovery is an important part of peoples enjoyment, management is sometimes needed to ensure that opportunities are extended and conflicts resolved,
- give priority to funding those facilities and activities where public investment is essential, because few if any, charges can be made - for example, public

access to open land and rights of way.

Forestry Commission

4.43 The Forestry Commission has a key role to play in establishing Watling Chase Community Forest, by grant-aiding new woodland planting and the management of existing woodland and, potentially, purchasing and managing land for afforestation.

4.44 The commission is also experienced at providing for recreation in its own forests. The Forest Recreation Guidelines published in 1993 give valuable guidance to private landowners, and local authority and voluntary-sector managers on the principles and standards of good recreation management practice in forests and woodlands.

Watling Chase: the current position

4.45 Many countryside Sports and active recreation take place in Watling Chase at present. In line with national patterns, walking, cycling, jogging and horse-riding are the most popular leisure activities in the Forest area. Footpaths, bridleways and cycleways exist to a varying extent in different parts. Overall, the rights of way network is reasonably extensive, but there are missing links, particularly in the bridlepath system. It is estimated that there are about 210 km of footpath, 30 km of bridleway, 13 km of roads used as public paths and 4 km of by-ways open to all traffic in the Forest area. The network is reasonably well signed and the Countryside Management Service, the highway authorities, parish councils, user groups such as the British Horse Society, Ramblers Association and the local foot path societies carry out a considerable amount of maintenance and improvement.

Walking, jogging and cycling

4.46 There are several waymarked walking trails, including the Alban Way, the Ver-Colne Valley Walk, the Dollis Valley Greenwalk and the Bentley Priory Circular Walk.

4.47 The only specific cycle routes are the Alban Way, the Dollis Valley Cycleway, and the A1 and A41 cycle routes. There is no special provision for informal running or jogging.

Horse-riding

4.48 There are few bridleways in most parts of the Forest area, although horse-riding is popular. The eight riding schools do not give a clear picture of the volume of riding as many people have their own horses.

Golf

4.49 At present there are 12 golf courses in the Forest area and another 10 are proposed. In addition, there are 10 courses close to the boundary most are private clubs.

Team games

4.50 Pitch sports, including football, cricket, hockey and rugby, are well provided for by private clubs, schools and colleges, public playing fields, health institutions and private companies. A new cricket centre has been established at Shenley Park.

Adventure sports

4.51 There are artificial ski slopes at Hemel Hempstead, Welwyn Garden City and Barnet in the area surrounding Watling Chase. Orienteering is a popular activity within the Forest area, but is limited by the lack of substantial woodland. There are three artificial rock-climbing walls in education centres.

Shooting

4.52 Range shooting, clay pigeon and field shooting, as well as paintball games and archery, take place within the Forest area. There is little formal provision for any of these, except a few regular sites for clay pigeon shooting, paintball and archery.

Motor sports

4.53 There are no permanent sites for motor sports. However, some take place on temporary sites, sometimes illegally. Activities have damaged sites of ecological importance (eg Bricket Wood Common SSSI).

Water-based activities

4.54 Water-based activities include angling, dinghy sailing, windsurfing, canoeing, rowing, swimming and diving, water skiing, power boating and cruising. There are few facilities or opportunities for canoeing, rowing, water skiing and motorised water sports in Watling Chase.

4.55 There are various areas of water, concentrated along the Colne and Ver Valleys, although most are small. The two largest are Hilfield Park Reservoir and Aldenham Reservoir in the southwest.

4.56 Angling takes place on most of the water in the area.

4.57 Only the reservoir in Aldenham Country Park is available for sailing, managed by the resident club. Restricted public access to Hilfield Park Reservoir favours nature conservation, and there is a new bridleway route on one side.

Activities in the air

4.58 Many of these pursuits (eg gliding, hanggliding, paragliding, parachuting) are excluded from Watling Chase because it is near Heathrow Airport. However, recreational flying and tuition is available at Elstree aerodrome and model air-craft are flown regularly at some sites (eg Bowmansgreen Farm).

Outdoor activity centres

4.59 These are usually permanent Scout and Guide camping sites (eg Pear Wood, Stanmore) and generally provide opportunities for orienteering and adventure sport.

Sports centres

4.60 There are five local authority sports centres in the Forest area, including three with swimming pools, and centres in all the main urban areas around Watling Chase. Four private centres also offer a variety of facilities.

Leisure activities

4.61 A wide range of other leisure activities occurs in and around Watling Chase. These include visits to attractions such as Aldenham Country Park, the Gardens of the Rose and Bowmansgreen Farm. There are also a number of open areas which are popular for walking and quiet enjoyment (eg Bricket Wood Common, Colney Heath, Scratchwood and Moat Mount open spaces, Shenley Park and Broad Colney Lakes Nature Reserve).

4.62 Although informal countryside recreation is by far the most popular activity, it is constrained by the rights of way network. There is little or no provision for many activities which require special facilities and this needs to be addressed in the sport and recreation strategy for Watling Chase (see Watling Chase Community Forest Sport and Recreation Study. Final Report 1993).

Conclusion

4.63 In this section we have given a brief description of Watling Chase as it is today; a product of human activity over a considerable period of history. Changes have often damaged the environment, but there is still much to admire in the area. The Watling Chase Forest Plan aims to increase woodland cover, conserve existing nature conservation interests and recreate wildlife habitats which have been reduced or lost.

4.64 Agriculture will remain a major land use in the area and the Plan will be used to encourage farmers and landowners to diversify towards a wider range of economically viable objectives rather than just food production. Some landowners who are not wholly dependent on farming for their income have already embraced the Plan for Watling Chase and are planting trees and creating glades, rides and ponds on their land.

4.65 The Plan will be carried out with people and wildlife in mind. It will create a countryside which supports many varied pastimes and pursuits without damaging the wildlife or the habitats. Watling Chase Community Forest will bring the countryside to more people's doorsteps and create all ideal environment in which to live, work and relax.

Vision for Watling Chase

- Context
- Community Involvement
- Landscape
- Planning and Development
- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Nature Conservation
- Archaeology and History
- Sport, Recreation and Leisure
- The Arts
- Education



Policy Context

The policies for Watling Chase form the cornerstone of this Plan and define the main principles which will be followed in achieving the community forest. It is important that these principles are accepted and the policies endorsed by all the organisations involved in creating Watling Chase. This includes not only the local authorities and national partners, but also other statutory bodies and voluntary organisations.

Ten subject areas are identified and each forms the basis of one policy section. Some policy topics such as recreation and education also apply across other policy areas. Each section begins with a statement of objectives. Community forest policies are then presented in bold type and followed by a brief explanation.

These policies do not override any policy, strategy or proposal within local authority statutory development plans. Maps providing additional information on each subject are at the end of this Plan.



Community Involvement

Objectives

5.1 The objectives of the Plan are to:

- develop a high level of local community interest in and commitment to the concept and implementation of the Watling Chase Community Forest,
- involve the local community in the planning, development, management and use of the Forest,
- ensure that Watling Chase develops in response to local needs and desires.

Benefits

5.2 The benefits of community involvement are that:

- Watling Chase will develop in response to local needs and desires,
- the concept will become more easily identified and accepted,
- potential problems and conflicts can be identified and resolved before they become damaging,
- it will generate more ideas, identify new expertise and result in more and wider practical help and input into the design and implementation of the project, giving a better result,
- people will identify with the Forest and this will



Figure 5.1 Much of the success of the project will depend on local action 'on the ground'

enhance local commitment and a feeling of 'ownership'.

Policies

C1 A shared vision: local action

Local community involvement will be actively pursued during the development and implementation of the Watling Chase initiative.

Much of the success of the project will depend on local action 'on the ground'. The Plan needs to be enthusiastically endorsed by all sections of the community to ensure the feeling of local 'ownership' and shared commitment to planning and implementing Watling Chase. The Forest is for future generations and it is especially important to include children wherever possible. Community action will be encouraged as the best way of producing a sustained partnership. The range of projects in which local people could get involved include tree planting, conservation tasks, creative arts and access. Every effort will be made to build strong relationships with local people to help achieve these at both the individual and group level. Openness and trust will be key elements in developing these partnerships.

Community woodlands and other wildlife habitats will only flourish if they are valued by local people. It will therefore be important that they are involved directly in the planning, implementation and management of local projects, where possible.

To help achieve this participation, new approaches like the 'Planning for Real' exercise will be encouraged. This involves people making a largescale model of their locality and indicating on it what is there already and how they might like the area to improve, perhaps with new footpaths, treeplanting areas and other amenities. They then devise with the local authority a programme of projects and methods of implementation. The project team is currently seeking a locality for a pilot scheme. Another aspect of this work will be to advise community groups on what grants are available to support local projects (eg Rural Action for the Environment).

C2 Local business

Local businesses will be encouraged to support the Forest initiative by helping to develop and implement the Plan and by managing their sites in sympathy with community forest objectives.

Businesses can support local projects by involving their employees in practical tasks and by giving help in kind as well as direct sponsorship of management work and interpretation, This will enhance their public image with both their workforce and the local community.

C3 Local knowledge and expertise

Special-interest groups will be consulted for advice and local knowledge when new projects are planned.

Local people often know their 'patch' better than anyone. This local knowledge needs to be used to full advantage in implementing the Watling Chase Forest Plan. An example of this is the Hertfordshire Beekeepers Association, whose members are experts in the pollination of both native and introduced flowering trees, shrubs and plants in the area.

C4 Local support groups

The Watling Chase team will work with both new and existing community groups through the Community Council for Hertfordshire, the Countryside Management Service and others to mobilise local support for the community forest. The aim will be to establish a network of committed volunteers who will work with the team in planning and implementing local projects and events.

Many existing local groups can be encouraged to become involved in environmental action and participate in the Rural Action local network, Parish Paths Partnership scheme and other local initiatives which support Watling Chase aims and policies, In other areas, where no local groups are currently active, the spontaneous creation of new groups will be welcomed, and experts will be 'on tap', The St. Albans Community Forest Association is a good example of this policy in practice. It has already proved a very successful local group, carrying out work at Knights Wood, Birklands, Napsbury and Shenley Park.

Landscape

Objectives

6.1 The objectives of the Plan are to:

- create an attractive, well wooded and diverse landscape which offers a wide range of environmental, economic and social benefits to local people;
- ensure that landform is a key factor in determining the shape and scale of tree planting in the Forest area;
- play a role in the restoration of derelict land.

This Plan represents a major initiative for landscape change. The evolution of a new, well wooded countryside will require sensitive handling in order to retain and conserve key elements of existing character, restore lost features and create a new landscape of diverse and unique habitats.

A landscape assessment was carried out in order to make the proposals outlined in Chapter 16; more detailed landscape plans will be necessary before any large-scale tree planting is undertaken (see Forest Landscape Design Guidelines Forestry Commission 1989).

Policies

L1 Integrating past and present and developing identity

The development of Watling Chase will respect the past and seek to enhance local identity and 'a sense of place'.



*Motorway Corridor
Junction 21A on the M25*

New tree planting and other habitat creation projects must, therefore, be in keeping with the landscape, both historically and physically. The identity of the area will be reinforced by the design of buildings, rural furniture, signposting, interpretation panels and leaflets.

L2 Design standards

High standards of design will be promoted throughout Watling Chase.

This will include tree-planting schemes, habitat creation, landscape restoration, public furniture, buildings and parking areas within the Forest.

In any scheme to enhance or restore the landscape it will be important to maintain the highest possible standards of design to achieve results which set fine examples of good practice. These standards will be equally important in the design and choice of materials for buildings and public furniture because they can have a profound effect on the countryside. The visual impact should be in keeping with the surroundings to enhance the setting and not detract from it.

The Watling Chase team will encourage liaison between the partners over design standards and assist in developing any design guidelines and principles produced for the area.

L3 Reducing the impact of development

The visual impact of existing and future development in Watling Chase should be reduced by appropriate landscaping.

A particular problem in the Forest area is the numerous main roads (eg M25, M1, A1(M), A414) and proposed road widening and new roads. Tree planting could help to reduce the visual impact and noise of these roads. Planting designs should offer a varied scene from the road, with vistas out into the wider countryside.

On industrial estates and in urban areas it will be especially important for the Watling Chase team to liaise with Groundwork Hertfordshire to ensure landscape improvements.



*Gravel pit site
Harper Lane
Redland Aggregates Ltd*

L4 Mineral extraction and restoration

A creative approach to landscape restoration will be encouraged in order to introduce new forms and features where disturbance has led to loss of landscape character.

There are a number of sites in Watling Chase where gravel is being or has been extracted. Restoration schemes will take account of known geological and nature conservation interest. The possible restoration of these sites is discussed more fully under Policy PD3 in Chapter 7.

L5 Restoration of derelict land

The restoration of derelict land will be encouraged in creating the community forest.

There are areas of derelict land, especially along motorway corridors, which give parts of the area a poor image. However, they are also ideal opportunities for revitalising the landscape with trees and new recreational areas. Grant aid packages through English Partnerships will be sought (see Chapter 17).

L6 Access to expertise and knowledge

Advice will be made available to aggregate companies, landowners and mineral authorities to ensure that the restoration plans for extraction sites make a positive contribution towards Watling Chase.

The Watling Chase team will advise on whole site plans for restoration schemes as well as appropriate species for planting on landfill sites.

The teams primary role will be advisory, referring land managers to specific experts such as the NRA on the water environment, where appropriate.

L7 Historical dimension

The restoration of historic landscapes and

features will be promoted within Watling Chase.

Watling Chase's mediaeval deer parks, historic landscapes, gardens, water features and parkland (eg Dyrham, Wrotham and Wall Hall) need to be protected and enhanced. The project team will offer advice and coordinate grants to help to achieve this.

L8 Visitor confidence

The design of woodlands and open spaces in Watling Chase should aim to develop visitors' confidence by providing a safe and enjoyable environment.

It is important to provide easy access, car parking and other facilities, where appropriate, so that people feel confident about their visits and enjoy them.

Countryside staff, landowners and farmers are important in the creation of a welcoming countryside, as are well defined footpaths and interpretation.

Planning and Development

Objectives

7.1 The objectives of the Plan are to:

- ensure that development within Watling Chase is sustainable and in line with the objectives of the Plan,
- invigorate the green belt and help to ensure that it is permanently green and open,
- protect areas of high quality landscape, or of historical, archeological or nature conservation interest,
- improve the landscape, particularly by reclaiming derelict land,
- give the public and private sectors confidence in the long-term economic prospects for the area, to encourage investment.



*Moor Mill
Redland Aggregates Ltd*

Policies

D1 Greening the green belt

The community forest will play a significant role in implementing statutory planning policies to help realise the local authority planning objectives for the green belt, and to ensure that any development allowed is sustainable.

There has been much discussion about whether there will be unacceptable development within the green belt to help fund the creation of the community forest.



Road Improvement

The Secretary of State, in approving the Hertfordshire Structure Plan Alterations, decided that the plan's policies for the community forest should not refer specifically to enabling development.

PD2 What we have we hold

The implementation of the Watling Chase Forest Plan will try to ensure protection for areas of traditional landscape; historical, archeological, geological and wildlife interest; and the aquifer, and particularly for those sites with statutory protection or identified in statutory development plans.

Although the most important sites have statutory protection or are identified in statutory plans, it is often the ponds, damp corners, verges and areas of scrub which contribute most of the areas richness and diversity. Local planning authorities should consider these features when they are making decisions about change of land use.

PD3 Restoration of mineral sites: a key opportunity

The Watling Chase project team will work with the minerals planning authority, Hertfordshire County Council and the extraction companies to seek to ensure that the whole process of mineral extraction, from planning application and permission through to restoration and after use, reflects the objectives of the community forest.

In some cases this may include appropriate provisions in section 106 agreements. Hertfordshire County Council's Minerals Local Plan (1991) is restoration led and sets restoration objectives for a series of sub-areas within Watling Chase.

Within the Forest area, there are a number of former mineral extraction sites which either have been, or are about to be, restored. For restored sites, the appropriateness of the present use may need to be reconsidered in the context of the Plan. The after-use will not necessarily be forestry; many old workings have developed interesting habitats and an

ecological/geological assessment will often be required before deciding on the most appropriate after use.

Where restoration is about to take place, the afteruse required by the planning permission should be reviewed if this does not fit in with the Plan. There may be scope for creating wildlife habitats or using the site for environmental education or recreation.

The Minerals Local Plan (Hertfordshire County Council 1991) envisages that aggregate companies will produce comprehensive restoration plans for all their sites. It is intended that the operators should seek the advice of appropriate specialists in forestry, ecology, recreation and the water environment to ensure that restoration proposals reflect a range of interests and identify the needs of local people. The county council and the Watling Chase team can assist the operators' advisers in drawing up these schemes. Due regard must always be given to the protection and sustainability of groundwater. Guidance is available in Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater (National Rivers Authority 1994c).

The policy of the Minerals Local Plan to create new landscape features from existing and future mineral workings will help to further the Watling Chase initiative. Within the community forest area there are several sites with major opportunities for revitalising the local landscape and improving the environment.

Landfill sites can be successfully planted with trees, and technical advice and guidance on this is available from the Forestry Authority and the Department of the Environment.

PD4 Transport improvements

Opportunities to improve public transport provision to the community forest, and particularly to peripheral forest gateways, will be pursued. When trunk-road and motorway-widening schemes are approved, they need to be integrated into the landscape and provision made for public rights of way that cross the line of the new roads.

Improved bus and rail links from existing routes and nodes are an important priority, particularly in relation to recreation

sites and access networks. In Watling Chase, major improvements are planned for the M1, M25, A1(M) and M1. The team will work with the Department of Transport to produce strategies for the areas affected by these developments. For proposed local improvements, such as the Elstree bypass, the team will liaise with the county council. Local opposition to widening and new road developments is the responsibility of the local communities affected.

PD5 New planning consents

New planning permission for mineral extraction or tipping should seek to ensure that subsequent restoration makes a positive contribution to creating the Watling Chase Community Forest, and safeguards known ecological and geological interests.

Several options for restoring sites have been worked out. Sites may be restored to agricultural land, new woodland or wildlife habitats, or used for water sports and recreation, or a combination of these. All these options need to be considered in whole-site restoration plans after the existing value of the site has been assessed.

Agriculture

Objectives

8.1 The objectives of the Plan are to:

- protect the best and most versatile agricultural land from irreversible development,
- increase opportunities for farm diversification to support and encourage successful farming in the area,
- encourage farmers to create woodland and other habitats.

A role for agriculture

8.2 Productive and sustainable agriculture will have a positive role within the community forest. Farmers and their families make an important contribution to the local society and economy. They also have a significant part to play in maintaining and enhancing the countryside. For these reasons, it is important that farm units remain economically viable.

A change on the scale of a community forest will take not only time but also considerable powers of persuasion.

The members of the Watling Chase team will take steps to show that they:

- understand the difficulties facing the agricultural industry,
- can create opportunities for consolidating and



Figure 8.1 Awareness and understanding: bridging the gap between town and country.



Conversion of farm building

expanding rural businesses,

to tea room at Battlers Green

- can focus the resources of other organisations to help farmers exploit new opportunities,
- can provide, within the community forest, a framework for encouraging business development which also ensures that this is appropriate to the green belt,
- can ensure that farmers' and landowners' interests are safeguarded in line with the Farmers, Landowners and Community Forest Statement (jointly agreed by the Country Landowners Association, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, National Farmers Union of England and Wales, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Countryside Commission, Forestry Commission, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; see Chapter 1).



Battlers Green Farm Shop

Policies

A1 Protecting high-grade agricultural land

There will be a presumption against irreversible development which would result in the loss of the best agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a).

Although there is a considerable area of grade 3 agricultural land in Watling Chase it is not known how much is grade 3a. This policy will therefore require site-by-site assessment when proposals come forward.

A2 A voluntary scheme

The involvement of farmers and landowners in Watling Chase will be voluntary.

New woodland or other habitats will not be created against the wishes of the owners or occupiers. The views of farmers will be sought during the planning and development of Watling Chase and there will be no compulsory purchase of land for Community Forest purposes.

There are a large number of tenant farmers in the area

whose tenancies are governed by the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986.

Under certain circumstances this legislation can create difficulties for landlords and tenants wishing to plant trees. The Watling Chase team will therefore seek the guidance of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the National Farmers Union, the Country Landowners Association and the Tenant Farmers Association on model clauses which might, with the agreement of the parties concerned, be added to existing tenancy agreements.

The Watling Chase team will not support planting on tenanted land without the agreement of both tenant and landlord.

Although the Plan identifies local authority owned farms as offering potential for woodland planting, it recognises that the tenants of such farms have statutory and contractual rights, particularly security of tenure. The Forest team has neither the power nor the wish to interfere with these rights.

A3 Farm economics and management

Consideration will be given to the effects of development which could fragment a farm holding or threaten the continued viability of it.

The viability of farm holdings is critical in conserving an attractive farmed landscape. Any reduction in farm size or fragmentation because of development may jeopardise this viability, especially as many holdings are small already (Chapter 4).

A4 Farm diversification

Farm diversification will be supported where it is in line with the objectives of Watling Chase.

Well-planned diversification can make a valuable contribution to farm income and the wider rural economy. However, farmers generally see diversification as an additional source of income rather than a replacement of existing revenue.

In general, proposals which provide increased opportunities for sport, recreation, leisure, nature conservation and

education will receive support, subject to statutory local policies, especially the green belt. In most circumstances such uses on their own are not profitable and may have to be supported by other revenue-earning activities.

Opportunities for farm diversification are increased in an attractive landscape. This helps to draw consumers to the areas where the farmbased products and services are available. The community forest initiative could help to stimulate new activities in response to changing agricultural priorities and falling farm incomes. Opportunities for diversification could be created which would ideally, although not necessarily, involve woodland planting.

Grants to support the planting and management of farm woodland are available from the Forestry Authority and MAFF (see Chapter 17). Farmers can get advice on general planting and management from the Forestry Authority and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group. If they are applying for the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme, they can obtain initial advice and general guidance free of charge from the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service.

The Hertfordshire County Council Countryside Strategy (1992) states the intention to 'Investigate the establishment of a Farm Diversification Working Group'. The Watling Chase team would actively support such an initiative.

A5 Benefits of farm woodland

The Watling Chase team will continue to promote the benefits of farm woodland planting.

Farm Woodland

- can be a good long-term investment in certain circumstances,
- improves living and working environments;
- screens buildings and roads and reduces noise impact,
- provides habitat for wildlife and sporting interests, such as shooting,
- provides shelter for stock or horses,
- provides a better environment for future diversification, by enhancing the landscape,
- may increase the asset value and amenity of farmland in the long term.

The Plan will seek to influence all Government agencies and grant-making bodies to improve the economic incentives for creating new woodland. The aim is to make the prospect of tree planting more economically attractive to farmers and to assure farmers of an adequate return on their investments

A6 Re-use of existing rural buildings

The re-use of farm buildings will be supported where the intended activities are appropriate to the Watling Chase objectives and are in line with statutory development plans, particularly where buildings of historic, architectural or landscape value are concerned.

The re-use of farm buildings is often part of a larger farm diversification project. One likely appropriate re-use of such buildings is for rural crafts and workshops. This would help to develop traditional farm-based products and the exploitation of new markets. The re-use of rural buildings, particularly the old brick and timber barns which are part of the Watling Chase landscape is sometimes controversial. However, Government guidance (Department of the Environment 1988a, 1992a) states that agricultural and other rural buildings may be adapted for new uses providing that they stay in keeping with their surroundings; and that any species such as bats are protected as required under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Re-using buildings in this way can help businesses to make the most of an existing asset and may avoid the need for new buildings in the countryside.

Failure to show that a building is redundant for agricultural purposes is insufficient reason, by itself, to refuse permission for a new use. However, where buildings are capable of fulfilling an economic agricultural function, change of use should not be encouraged.

A7 Environmentally friendly farming: whole-farm plans

Farmers will be encouraged to include conservation and recreational objectives in their business plans.

The Watling Chase team will work closely with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) to implement this policy.

The team will also liaise with FWAG in order to compile a database of advisory organisations and sources of funding to help farmers prepare whole farm plans. There is a growing national and European Community-wide trend towards incentives for environmental management of farmland. The Countryside Commission, MAFF and the Forestry Authority all offer grants for a variety of environmental improvements. Whole-farm plans should integrate environmental management with business operation.

Evidence shows that farmers will respond positively to measures that make economic and environmental sense and in turn reduce production.

A8 Public access

Good tree planting design and countryside management will be encouraged. This can help to reduce problems associated with public access, such as the risk of fire, theft and trespass.

Grant aid for tree planting does not oblige the landowner to provide access, although additional funding may be offered as an incentive for improved access. The Countryside Management Service is available to help farmers to overcome local trespass and vandalism problems. Other more general access issues are addressed in policies SRL4 and SRLS in chapter 12.

A9 Bridging the gap between town and country.

Within Watling Chase, improved liaison between local farmers and the Hertfordshire and Metropolitan Police Forces will be encouraged.

The most widespread urban fringe problem is illegal or inconsiderate access, which results in trampled crops and other damage. Managing access to ensure that visitors understand where they can go is therefore of paramount importance to the success of the Forest. The better the

communication and understanding, the easier it will be to resolve conflicts. Both the police and the Countryside Management Service have roles to play. The police will be invited to be represented on conservation liaison groups or new bodies such as Watling Chase Farmers Forum (see A 10). This will help to develop better understanding and reduce conflicts.

A10 Long-term cooperation

Local farmers will be consulted at the earliest stage over developments which affect their interests, both through direct contact and indirectly via the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Country Landowners Association, National Farmers Union and the Tenant Farmers Association.

Representatives of the National Farmers Union and the Country Landowners Association are members of the Watling Chase steering group and they will continue to be involved during its implementation. As the major land managers of Watling Chase, farmers will be an important voice in guiding the development of the community forest. The project team has set up a Watling Chase Farmers Forum as part of a continuing consultative process.

Forestry

Objectives

9.1 The objectives of the Plan are to:

- establish a substantial framework of healthy diverse and well-managed woodland cover to achieve a wide range of environmental, economic and social objectives, with special emphasis on public access and enjoyment,
- ensure that all woodland establishment and management undertaken throughout the community forest area conforms to the environmental guidelines, issued by the Forestry Authority which cover landscape, community woodland design, nature conservation, recreation, water and archaeology,
- achieve a local supply of wood products in order to establish wood-based businesses in the Forest area, as recommended in Local Agenda 21 on sustainability,
- create demonstration woodlands to promote good management practice and multipurpose forestry,
- support the implementation of Hertfordshire County Council's Woodland Strategy for Hertfordshire (1989),
- promote the planting of non-woodland trees in appropriate rural and urban areas.



*Autumn Colour
amenity tree*



Sycamore and Rhododendron

Policies

F1 Choice of species

Planting locally native broadleaved trees and shrubs will generally be encouraged within Watling Chase.

Watling Chase will be a mosaic of woodland, copses and hedgerows formed predominantly of native broad leaved trees and shrubs. However, conifers and non-native broadleaves will have a valuable role to play in specific circumstances, for example where:

- a landowner is seeking an early economic return,
- they will assist in establishing a broadleaved woodland,
- they form shelter belts,
- they may fulfil a useful role in establishing tree cover on difficult sites (eg landfill sites),
- mixed woodland with diversity of form and colour is needed to provide a more stimulating environment in recreational and amenity areas.

F2 Natural regeneration

Natural regeneration will be encouraged as an important method of establishing and managing woods, particularly in association with ancient woodlands.

Natural regeneration is widely accepted as part of managing existing woodlands and can be used to bring about the spread of cover from adjacent woods.

F3 Improving standards

The best woodland establishment and management practices will be promoted throughout the Forest area.

The best techniques will be used to ensure successful and cost-effective tree establishment. The Watling Chase team has an essential role in supplying relevant research information, expertise and training to ensure improving standards.

F4 Restrictions on planting

Tree planting proposals will not be supported where this would damage sites of acknowledged nature conservation value, or known archeological or other heritage interest, including historic landscapes.

Consultation with the appropriate specialist organisation will ensure that the best possible information on constraints is made available and taken into account for each individual site (see also chapters 10 and 11). Consultation on all new grant schemes is undertaken between the Forestry Authority and the county's archaeology team for Hertfordshire or English Heritage for Barnet to ensure that 'good practice' is adhered to and that archeological sites are preserved.

F5 Wood production

High quality wood production will be encouraged.

Wood production may include traditional and short-rotation coppice as well as agroforestry (ie integration of agriculture and timber production on the same piece of land). The cropping of wood to supply local markets will be an important objective (see policy F10).

Good woodland management will not only produce high quality timber but will also be compatible with public access, recreation and nature conservation and help to create new jobs.

F6 Managing existing woodland

Woodland owners within Watling Chase will be encouraged to manage their resource more effectively, within an agreed management plan.

Most of the existing woodland in Watling Chase is undermanaged and often neglected. Positive management, within an agreed management plan, will enable the potential benefits to be realised in full (eg quality timber and other wood products). As new woodland is created, it is essential that the existing resource is well managed to ensure that markets are not lost and new ones can be created. This will enhance the economic viability of woodland management once the early grant aided establishment period is over.

The Watling Chase team will help to identify markets and encourage the cost-effective management of woodlands and cooperative marketing of their products, especially among the owners of smaller sites (eg charcoal production).

F7 Woodlands in the rural economy

Establishment of new wood-based enterprises, including local forestry contracting, rural crafts and timber processing, will be encouraged where appropriate.

The future woodlands of Watling Chase will provide opportunities for local business to help create and manage new plantings and process the timber. Thus, locally produced timber could be used for wood and craft-based products. It might also be possible to create a market by encouraging other small local industries to install woodburning stoves and boilers.

Work currently under way in the Wildwood area of south-east Hertfordshire may provide a basis for cooperative marketing of timber in the future. The Thames and Chilterns Conservancy of the Forestry Authority has recently set up a woodland initiative in partnership with all the county councils in the conservancy, including Hertfordshire. The initiative will act as a networking organisation for woodland owners, wood-using industries, conservation groups and the general public

F8 Wood as a renewable energy source

The use of wood as a local energy source will be encouraged.

Wood is a renewable resource, which, when burnt in solid-fuel boilers for local heating or electricity production, causes no net increase in atmospheric carbon. The Watling Chase team will explore the viability of arable energy cropping, where fast growing poplar and willows are cut on a short rotation, as a possible alternative use of agricultural land. Establishing markets for wood energy products would not only satisfy this alternative land use but might also be an incentive for managing existing woodlands by creating an outlet for the early thinnings.

F9 Access

Providing public access to new and existing woodland will be encouraged through appropriate incentives and management agreements.

One of the main objectives of the Watling Chase Forest Plan is to meet the recreation needs of the large population living in and around the area. The size of a woodland has a marked bearing on its possible recreational uses. For example, Forestry Authority research shows that a woodland of more than 75 ha is capable of sustaining 100,000 visitors per year, whereas woodland of less than 10 ha is much more affected by the wear and tear and disturbance to wildlife caused by large numbers of people (see Community Woodland Design Guidelines Forestry Commission 1991a). The revised Woodland Grant Scheme offers payment for public access.

F10 Community involvement

Local people will be invited to become involved in the creation, maintenance and longer-term management of woodland, and of non-woodland trees.

Local woods and smaller planting areas will form a network for the community to use and enjoy. A number of tree planting events and practical task days have already involved local people. This will be developed.

It may also be possible, with the support of the Woodland Trust and other voluntary organisations, to raise sufficient funds to buy local sites for new planting.

F11 Wildlife management

Certain species may have to be managed to prevent unacceptable levels of damage to trees, other wildlife and farm crops.

Wildlife management is essential in new and existing woodlands. Because of lack of natural predators, increasing numbers of rabbits, deer and grey squirrels will need to be managed, where damage has been caused, using the most humane and practicable methods available.

F12 The urban forest

The care of existing trees and tree planting in built up areas and on the urban edge, will be encouraged as part of the wider programme of environmental improvement and management.

The amenity and landscape value of non-woodland and urban trees to the community forest should not be underestimated. Trees in churchyards and parks, along roadsides and particularly in private gardens enhance the environment.

However, there has been growing public concern over trees near buildings, especially after the storms of recent years. Uncertainties about management of such trees should be countered by encouraging careful siting and choice of appropriate species, particularly close to buildings.

Planting on urban fringes needs to be designed to give visitors a feeling of personal security.

Nature Conservation

Objectives

10.1 The objectives of the Plan are to:

- ensure that Forest planning is ecologically sound,
- conserve and enhance existing sites of nature conservation, geological and geomorphological value or potential in the Watling Chase area,
- seek opportunities for creating new wildlife habitats in appropriate locations.



Colney Heath

Agricultural intensification, urban spread and transport routes have reduced most natural and semi-natural habitats and affected sites of geological and geomorphological interest in Watling Chase. The remaining areas are small and vulnerable to change and disturbance.

Surveys have identified most of the areas of wildlife importance. Further liaison with the Hertfordshire Environmental Information Service, London Ecology Unit, English Nature, Herts. and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, London Wildlife Trust and the Hertfordshire RIGS group will make sure that all sites are correctly identified and that further surveys are initiated where appropriate (eg major tree planting schemes). This will ensure that the impact of any planting near sites of known wildlife, geological or geomorphological interest will be determined beforehand and this will influence the design and compatibility of the new woodland. Good use of the Hertfordshire Environmental Information Service alert maps and London Borough of Barnet ecological data base will be important

Policies

NC1 An integrated approach

Nature and earth conservation principles will be integrated into all aspects of Forest planning.

These principles are described in Forest Nature Conservation Guidelines (Forestry Commission 1990), Nature Conservation and the New Lowland Forests (English Nature 1991), Forest Policy for Great Britain (Forestry Commission 1991c) and Nature Conservation in Community Forests (London Ecology Unit 1993). This will help to create a landscape of diverse form, function and habitat.

NC2 Managing existing habitats

Managing existing sites of nature conservation value, both woodland and non-woodland, will be actively encouraged as part of the implementation of the community forest.

The County Heritage Project under the Countryside Management Service will help to improve existing sites, by persuading landowners to manage specific areas of land for nature conservation within schemes such as Countryside Stewardship, and by inputting advice and preparing management agreements.

NC3 Habitat creation

Opportunities for habitat creation, for example on previously cultivated land and on areas of degraded or highly disturbed land, will be encouraged.

English Nature guidelines are useful in this context; they suggest that:

- opportunities should be taken, where feasible, to create new open habitats of conservation interest within the Forest. Such habitats include open water and wetlands, rough grassland and hedgerows. Even new large-scale tree planting will give the opportunity for creating glades, rides, ponds, shrub and ground layers plus edge habitats,

- new habitats should only be made on habitat which is currently artificial (eg crops and sown grassland),
- where possible, new habitats should be created on sites adjoining existing semi-natural habitats, so that species can naturally spread into the new area,
- nutrient-rich top soil will sometimes have to be removed, or the nutrients reduced by cropping, from sites where habitat creation is to take place,
- advantage should be taken of the low nutrient levels of derelict industrial sites and disturbed land in the creation of new habitat, but care should be given not to destroy developing habitats on such areas,
- care should be taken that removing plants from existing semi-natural sites to colonise new areas does not damage the existing sites,
- the species grown on new areas should 'be characteristic of similar plant communities on similar sites,
- rare plants and/or animals should not be established in new habitats except as part of an agreed introduction programme,
- advice should be taken from specialists and local ecologists before creating new habitats. It will be important to link these new wildlife habitats with other wildlife areas by means of corridors (eg hedges, streams). Where the new sites are next to existing wildlife areas, natural regeneration and the use of local plant material will be encouraged (see Nature Conservation and the New Lowland Forests English Nature 1991).

NC4 Access, interpretation and education

In Watling Chase, appropriate levels of well-managed access will be encouraged to all but the most sensitive habitats, allowing people to enjoy a diversity of wildlife.

The ecological carrying capacity of sites will not be

exceeded. However, opportunities for interpretation and education associated with these habitats and the Forest as a whole must be maximised. This will be achieved by working closely with the Countryside Commission, English Nature, Countryside Management Service, Hertfordshire Environmental Information Service, Groundwork Hertfordshire, and the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.

NC5 Safeguarding sites of regional importance for geology and geomorphology (RIGS)

The Hertfordshire RIGS group is working with English Nature to safeguard Hertfordshire's and Barnet's heritage of rocks, minerals, fossils and landforms, as an educational and research resource.

The Watling Chase team will liaise with the RIGS group or English Nature to ensure that restoration/planting schemes take account of known earth science interest.

Archaeology and History

Objectives

11.1 The objectives of the Plan are to:

- identify, conserve and manage the heritage of the Forest, especially areas of archeological and historic importance,
- ensure that adequate appraisal or survey is carried out prior to new planting taking place.

Historic sites can be especially important for the sense of identity and 'place' which they provide. They are a tangible link with the past which will help to create a sense of history and unique identity for the Forest.

Valuable remains are under constant threat from developments in town and countryside and measures must be taken to ensure their conservation or to record features before they are destroyed or damaged. Sites are designated according to their importance.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

11.2 These sites of national importance (eg Verulamium, St. Albans) are scheduled by the Secretary of State for the Environment and are protected under the Ancient Monuments Acts (1913-1953). There are 55 recorded Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Watling Chase, marked on map 7 and listed in the key at the back of the Plan.

Countryside Heritage Sites



Excavating a Roman Well

11.3 These are sites of county importance in Hertfordshire which are not protected by a statutory designation. However, designation as a Countryside Heritage Site does help to safeguard an area against damage or loss. In Barnet, all the non-urban land within Watling Chase is designated as Heritage Land. In their Unitary Development Plan, London Borough of Barnet seeks to 'ensure that Heritage Land remains as attractive countryside with any historically important landscape, wildlife habitats and archaeological features respected'.

Policies

AH 1 A valued resource

The community forest will seek to preserve the tangible and visible remains of the past and will presume against the development and disturbance of sites of archeological and historic significance.

Appropriate expert advice will be taken on the archeological or historic implications of all Forest proposals. Where necessary, experts may advise field evaluations to be paid for by the developers. Subsequent action will be based on this advice. In other cases, aerial surveys, although expensive, would be an effective means of identifying sites. For example, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England is funding an aerial survey of the Bricket Wood and Shenley areas in 1994/95 to locate previously unknown sites.

Local archeological societies will have an important role in conducting field-walking surveys, mapping earthworks and recording ancient hedgerows, where appropriate. Any necessary excavations should be directed by experienced archaeologists. For new tree planting, consultation on all new grant schemes is undertaken between the Forestry Authority and the County Archaeologist (for Hertfordshire) or English Heritage (for Barnet) to ensure that 'good practice' is adhered to and archeological sites are preserved. Forestry Commission publications *Archaeology in the Lowlands* (1989) and *Forests and Archaeology* (1989) cover these issues.

AH2 Historic woodlands

Managing existing woodlands, especially ancient ones, will take account of any archaeological or historic interest.

Some important sites (eg South Mimms Castle) already have tree cover which may require management. This will need to be sensitive to the archaeological or historic interest, and may include the careful removal of felled trees and replanting only where appropriate.

AH3 Landscape protection

Landscape features of historic importance within the area should be protected and enhanced.

Historic field patterns, for example, can be protected from full-scale planting, but enhanced by tree and hedge planting along the boundaries (eg ancient enclosure hedges around High Canons). In some landscape areas of particular historic significance, minimal intervention will be best.

AH4 Access and interpretation

Where appropriate, access and/or interpretation will be actively promoted to maximise a site's educational potential and people's appreciation of it.

If people are to value archaeological sites and support their conservation, it will be important for them to learn about them and enjoy their visits. English Heritage grant aid, which has access as one of its criteria, may be available to support this work. Themed trails will be developed in areas rich in history, eg lower Ver Valley and around Aldenham, drawing on local knowledge and expertise (see policy EI in Chapter 14).

AH5 Continuing management

Management strategies for heritage sites in Watling Chase will be prepared and implemented.

Without a management strategy, sites will be in danger of damage through neglect and apathy.

Sport, Recreation and Leisure

Objectives

12.1 The objectives of the Plan are to:

- create a well-wooded countryside which is equipped and managed to cater for a wide range of appropriate sport, recreation and leisure activities and which is promoted as such,
- increase opportunities within Watling Chase for sport, recreation and leisure activities which encourage people, especially groups who are currently under-represented, to enjoy the countryside,
- incorporate play as a means of exploration and learning about the Forest and elements within it such as farming, wildlife or woodland management.

The community forest is for everyone. Access is, therefore, of paramount importance if everyone is to have an equal opportunity to enjoy the countryside. Providing facilities, access and appropriate interpretative materials needs to be carefully planned to meet everyone's requirements. Because of its position on the northern fringe of London, Watling Chase will be in demand for a wide range of sport, recreation and leisure activities. In addition to land-based activities, the water environment has a positive role to play in satisfying this demand. Watling Chase will serve both local and regional needs.

The Sport and Recreation Study Final Report (1993) summarises what is currently provided and indicates the likely future demand for activities within the Forest. The



*Broad Colney Lakes
disabled access*



broad elements of this study have been incorporated into the Plan.

Policies

SRL1 An integrated approach

Planning for sport, recreation, leisure and access will be an integrated and sustainable part of Watling Chase's development.

This planning will take account of the long-term projections of demand for various activities.

If local authorities do not have a strategy for sport and recreation within their development plans, they will be encouraged to produce one. The Sports Council advocates district sports and recreation strategies and suggests a methodology in its District Sport and Recreation Strategies (1991).

To achieve these objectives, liaison will be important between all the interested Parties especially the Sports Council and other representative bodies at local and regional level (eg governing bodies of sport, local sports councils).

In principle, all sports will be considered appropriate in Watling Chase. The aim is to offer a wide range of activities within the constraints of the other policies for the community forest. A sports and recreation strategy based on the consultant's report will set out a coordinated approach.

SRL2 Enjoyment and participation for all

Every effort will be made to encourage groups which currently under-use the countryside, for example people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and women. A special emphasis will be given to facilities for the physically disadvantaged.

The design and layout of recreational facilities and access as well as that of interpretative materials is crucial if all groups are to have an equal opportunity to enjoy sport, recreation and leisure in the countryside.

SRL3 Satisfying local and regional needs

Within Watling Chase, a wide range of facilities and activities will be encouraged to satisfy local and regional demand for sport, recreation and leisure appropriate to the community forest.

A balance between different types of activities will be found so that both formal and informal, noisy and quiet pastimes can take place. The demand for activities which make use of the natural resources of the countryside and its open water is increasing fast and is likely to grow further, given the developing interest in healthy life styles and green issues.

SRL4 Access and interpretation

Increased recreation, access and interpretation of the countryside in Watling Chase will be actively supported where appropriate.

Access to the Forest from the surrounding area is excellent because of the national road and rail network, London Underground and local buses. Forest 'gateways' need to link access routes to the recreation opportunities within Watling Chase. They will be supported by high quality signs and information leaflets, plus safe car parking where appropriate. Access is also covered in policies A8 (Chapter 8), F9 (Chapter 9), AH4 (Chapter 11) and E3 (Chapter 14).

SRL5 Rights of way network

Priority will be given to informal access to the Forest on foot, cycle and horseback.

It is a major objective of the community forest to facilitate informal public access for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders. The existing rights of way network will be looked at in order to establish continuous routes throughout the area, and promoted to encourage sustainable use. The rights of way must be considered both as a means of access to the Forest and as a link between recreation or other areas of interest. Plans for the outer London orbital path are well advanced, and proposals for a Colne Valley Way are included in St Alban's local plan.

The Countryside Commission is seeking the support of the

highway authorities to achieve its target that the entire rights of way network be legally defined, properly maintained and well publicised by the end of the century.

SRL6 Reducing conflict

Potential conflicts between incompatible activities, user groups or land uses will be minimised.

Through strategic planning much of the conflict between different land uses should be avoided. It will be essential to separate certain types of conflicting activities if the needs of all countryside users are to be met fairly and amicably.

It will also need to be made clear to everyone where access is permitted, so that trespass and conflicts are kept to a minimum. Recreational activities and access to the countryside should not be detrimental to local residents and farmers. Conflict will be reduced by good planning and design in the management of this access, for example, providing small car parks at appropriate sites and separate routes for different types of user.

SRL7 Sport, recreation and leisure strategy

A sport, recreation and leisure strategy will be developed for the Forest.

This strategy will be prepared by the Watling Chase team in consultation with the Sports Council, local authorities, and local specialist organisations.

The Arts

Objectives

13.1 The objectives of the Plan are to:

- develop and promote the arts within Watling Chase to benefit all sectors of the community. This will help to establish the Forest's character and identity as well as to develop its cultural role.

Policies

AR1 Sense of place

Watling Chase will respect and enhance the character of the area and seek to create a distinct identity for it.

Our artistic and cultural heritage is very much linked to our local area. Watling Chase Community Forest activities, such as events which reflect the local historical background and involve local artistic talent, will enhance this identity.

AR2 Arts strategy

An arts strategy for the Forest will be prepared.

There are several exciting initiatives already taking place in the area and these need to be coordinated if their full potential is to be realised. Help from organisations and specialists active in the arts will be sought to prepare the strategy, drawing on this existing local expertise.

AR3 A role to play



*'The one that got away'
by Jenny Ulrich
in Aldenham Country Park*

The Watling Chase team will seek to involve the arts community in delivering an arts strategy within the Community Forest.

The arts community will play an important role in helping to shape Watling Chase. This can be achieved through:

- involving local people in creative projects,
- using the arts as a medium to increase awareness and understanding about the countryside,
- influencing the design and quality of signs, waymarks, interpretation panels, displays, leaflets, etc, thus helping to establish the image of Watling Chase,
- setting up multi-media performances, exhibitions and celebrations within the Forest setting,
- helping to establish new partnerships between local organisations involved in the arts, education and the environment (eg University of Hertfordshire, Countryside Management Service, Eastern Arts Board, London Arts Board, Hertsmere Leisure Community Arts team),
- helping to identify a central open-air location for some major activities within the Watling Chase area.



Tree Dressing

There are several exciting projects currently under way with the University of Hertfordshire's Wall Hall campus and the Shenley Park Trust. Both projects involve sculpture parks and open air theatre and the Watling Chase team will play a full part in their development.

AR4 Economic advantages

The economic advantages of supporting the development of the arts within Watling Chase will be promoted.

This development should not be seen as a selfish initiative for a few people, but as an enhancement for all members of the community. The economic advantages of the arts are that they:

- improve the image of an area and make it a better place in which to live and work,
- stimulate tourism.
- catalyse rural investment,
- contribute to the local economy,

- may help to establish new local craft based enterprises,
- develop the talent of local artists.

The project team welcomes the Arts Development Plan for Hertfordshire (Hertfordshire County Council 1984) as a sound framework within which to work.

Education

Objectives

14.1 The objectives of the Plan are to:

- raise awareness of the community forest initiative among school children and involve them in as many practical projects as possible so that they become committed to its development,
- work with other environmental agencies to develop a wide range of facilities and opportunities for using the Forest as a major educational resource,
- establish a range of educational experiences which cover a selection of different habitats, especially urban, to assist schools in meeting the environmental studies components of the National Curriculum, including history and archaeology,
- provide new opportunities for educational use of the area across a large part of the National Curriculum,
- encourage the widest range of environmental education, from practical estate management to improved leisure expertise (eg botany for beginners).



Studying the results of pond dipping at Denis Bland Education Centre

Policies

El An outdoor classroom

The Forest will be developed as a rich learning resource for environmental education, serving local schools, colleges and amenity groups.

The project team can help to develop the teaching resource in the area by supporting the:

- development of field study and outdoor adventure facilities within Watling Chase,
- development of teaching aids,
- training of teachers in environmental studies.

There is currently only one field study centre within Watling Chase. This is the Denis Bland Environmental Education Centre in Barnet .Its future is uncertain, but the Watling Chase team will endeavour to support its continued work. It is a very valuable resource which should not be lost to the local community, especially school children. The environmental education of children today will ensure caring and responsible adults tomorrow.

E2 Greening school grounds

School grounds will be improved and managed to develop their use as an educational resource and make them more attractive places in which to work and play. This will include tree planting, pond creation and wildlife areas for environmental studies.

With schools responsible for their own budgets under local management and changes to the Environmental Education Advisory Service, there is a particular opportunity which may allow a joint initiative to take advantage of this situation.

The London Borough of Barnet Landscape Unit is promoting a 'learning through landscape' initiative in local schools. The Countryside Management Service and Hertfordshire County Council landscape team also work closely with a number of schools. The Watling Chase team will look to support new initiatives with advice and resources, and will play a coordinating role between the agencies. Funding will be sought through the Learning Through Landscapes Trust for a specialist officer (see policy E4).

E3 Equal access

Within Watling Chase, equal access to Forest sites by local schools will be encouraged.

Efforts should be made to make facilities available to schools that do not have easy access to Forest sites.

E4 Coordinating environmental education

The team will play a role in rationalising and coordinating environmental education in Watling Chase.

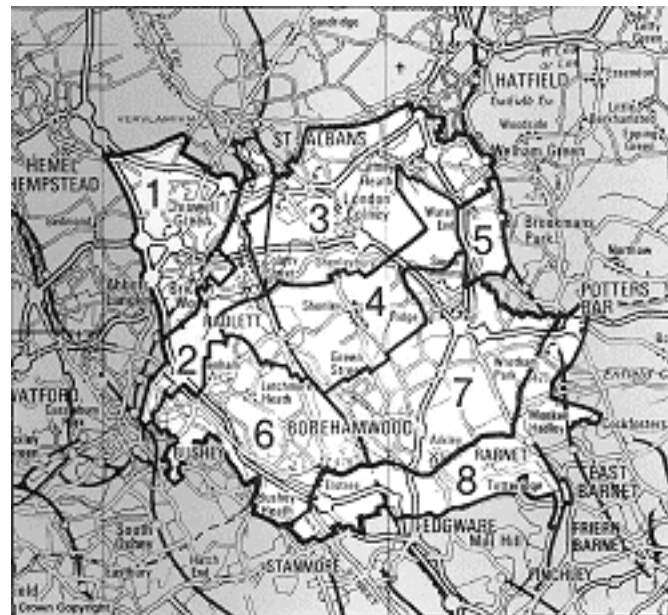
There have been recent changes in school funding, Hertfordshire's Environmental Advisory Service and the Denis Bland Environmental Education Centre in Barnet. In addition, the Forestry Authority launched their Forest Education Initiative in 1994, with Watling Chase acting as a pilot area. The team will be active in trying to coordinate these various initiatives, and funding will be sought for a seconded officer to carry out this role.

Strategies for tomorrow

The Watling Chase area consists of varied scenery, which landscape architects have classified into different zones based on field surveys, analysis of maps and aerial photographs. Eight landscape zones have been identified from factors such as topography, field patterns, existing woodland cover, other land uses and landscape history. These landscape zones are.

Landscape Zones

1. St Stephen Plateau
2. Ver-Colne Valley
3. Vale of St Albans
4. Shenley Ridge
5. Gobions Ridge
6. Aldenharn Plateau
7. South Mirnms and Arkley Plateau
8. North London River Valleys



15.1 Each zone has been considered in terms of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths are existing features which fulfil the objectives of Watling Chase and need to be conserved, while the weaknesses are negative features which detract from it and need remedial action. Opportunities are where there is scope for woodland planting and other action. Threats are potential developments which could damage the landscape and so lead to further deterioration in the countryside.

15.2 The distinctive character is described and landscape proposals show how each zone might contribute to Watling Chase. Targets for woodland Cover indicate the new planting envisaged in each zone within 30 years.

The Watling Chase visions

15.3 In each landscape zone (except the very small Gobions Ridge zone), an area has been chosen to illustrate what Watling Chase Community Forest might look like. 'An existing view' shows the area at present. ;The vision; gives the scope of possible changes, the benefits which the community forest could bring and some of the ways of achieving the changes However, these are not specific proposals, merely visions of what is possible within Watling Chase. The visions have been included as a means of portraying to local people the longer-term landscape changes envisaged, given the active and voluntary involvement of landowners and managers, the right economic incentives and, for certain activities, the demand. The visions are a conceptual, marketing medium, and there is a disclaimer on the bottom of each to explain their role. 'The development shown in this vision has not been (and may not be) granted planning permission by the planning authority concerned. It is portrayed for the purposes of illustration and example and does not represent intended or actual proposals'.

These visions also reflect another major objective of the project which is access to the countryside for sport and recreation. Establishing and developing the community forest offers an unsurpassed opportunity to provide for the countryside sport and leisure needs of people living in and around the Watling Chase area. Over the next 30 years or so, new facilities and new access will be created to extend greatly, in an even more attractive wooded landscape, the existing range of sports that already take place in the Forest area. (There are a few minor errors on some of the 'existing views'. These have not been altered in the final Forest Plan because of the cost involved.)

Opportunities

15.4 In addition to the visions, certain sites have been identified to illustrate further how Community Forest objectives might be achieved. However, it is not possible to predict precisely where and when opportunities for planting and other actions will arise. The making of Watling Chase Community Forest will depend on negotiations with landowners and tenants to implement proposals which satisfy their aspirations as well as the Watling Chase Forest Plan.

Sport, recreation and leisure

15.5 The Sport and Recreation Study Final Report (1993) will form the basis for developing a sport and recreation strategy for Watling Chase. In the meantime, many suggestions and proposals in the study have been incorporated in this Plan.

To create opportunities to meet future needs of residents and visitors for countryside sport and recreation, the strategy will need to:

- provide access to land and water for sport and recreation within Watling Chase Community Forest, with appropriate buildings where necessary,
- support mechanisms to encourage people to use those facilities.

In terms of enhancing sport and recreation opportunities, the strategy should build on and reinforce existing facilities, to identify:

- increased access to the countryside through rights of way by delineating and waymarking paths and linking new regional and strategic routes to long-distance routes outside Watling Chase and to public transport,
- sites for sports and active recreation; Radlett Aerodrome is identified as such a site, which, once gravel extraction has been completed, might be developed as a major outdoor countryside sports park,
- improved marketing of existing opportunities, events, coaching and information.

Forest Gateways

15.6 Among the opportunity sites there are a number of proposed Forest Gateways. These sites will link access to the Forest with public transport and roads. They will provide a focus for sport and recreation close to the urban fringe and provide entry points to the network of paths and routes through Watling Chase. They will be supported by good

signs and information leaflets, plus safe car parking where appropriate. Not all Forest Gateways will see a lot of change. Some are already well-used recreation sites and will simply be identified as principal points of entry to the Forest. Others may need only small-scale improvements to visitor facilities, such as parking. A few may be suitable for more substantial recreational facilities.



St. Stehen Plateau



Ver-Colne Valley



Vale of St Albans



Shenley Ridge



Gobions Ridge



Aldenham Plateau



South Mimms and
Arkley Plateau



North London
River Valleys

St. Stephen Plateau

This zone lies in the north-west corner of Watling Chase and comprises gently undulating landforms, rising above the Ver-Colne flood plain. In some parts, the flow and direction of valley slopes give the landscape a strong sense of character.

The rural areas are mainly arable but there is often no field pattern except where defined by country lanes. The few hedges are mostly along these lanes Hedgerow trees are now scarce and often damaged or dying Some attractive mixed woodlands exist, especially along the M10 corridor and on Bricket Wood Common, where remnant heathland vegetation also survives.

The zone is dissected by major roads with embankments, cuttings and junctions, notably the M1, M25, M10 and A405/A414 These transport corridors badly damage the landscape and create noise Fly-tipping is a serious eyesore along many roadsides.

The zone is also spoiled by the intrusive suburban edges of Chiswell Green, How Wood Estate and Bricket Wood There is derelict land close to the M1/M10 interchange and Junctions 21 and 21a of the M25.

Landscape proposals

Extensive woodland planting is proposed to screen the main roads, reducing their visual impact as well as noise and air pollution.

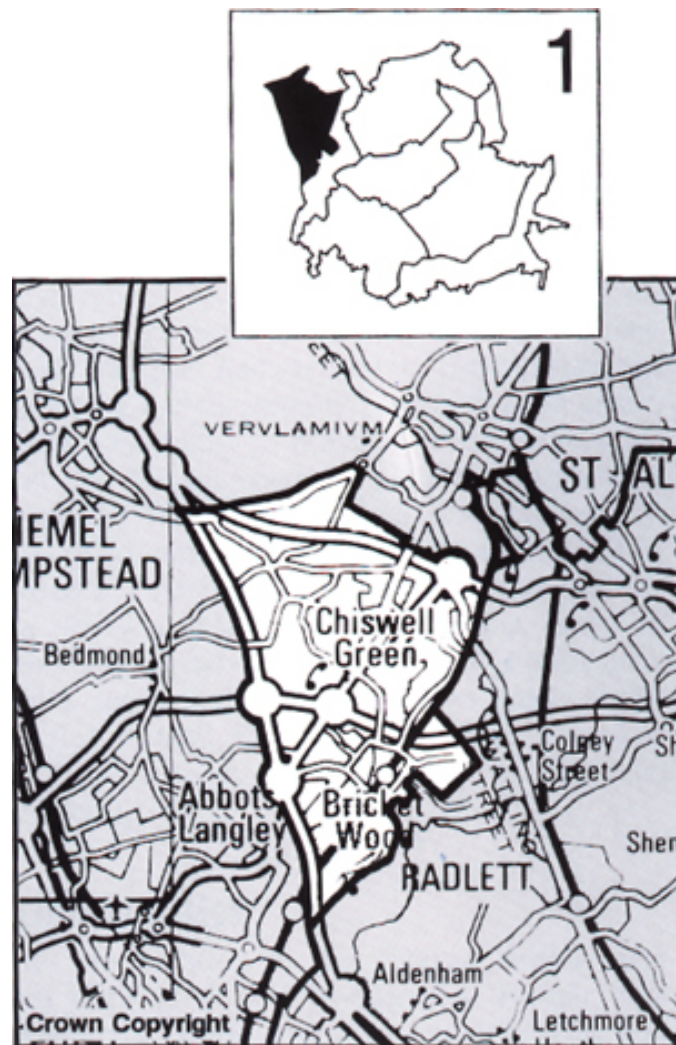
Elsewhere hedge and hedgerow tree planting needs to be emphasised to restore historic field patterns Additionally, planting many small woods and copses will emphasise topography, screen built-up areas and provide a better setting for recreation.

It is envisaged that implementing these proposals will increase woodland cover in the zone from the present 15% to approximately 27%, equivalent to about 180 ha (445 acres) of new planting In addition there needs to be extensive hedgerow and other tree planting outside woodlands.

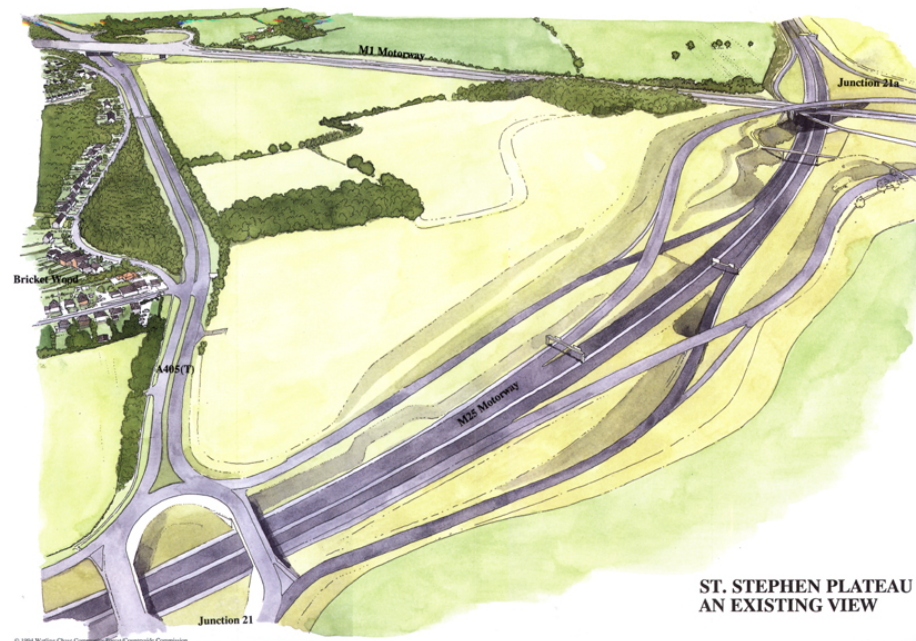
It will also be important to encourage the management of existing woodland and heathland restoration on Bricket Wood Common. Heath is a distinctive feature here, so the aim is to create more on appropriate sites near Bricket Wood.

Vision

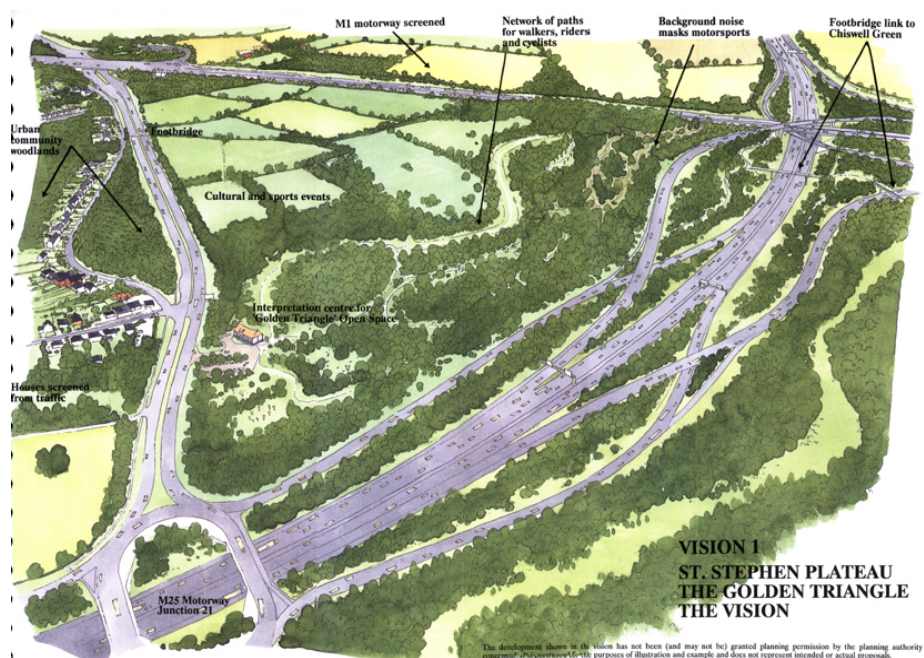
An example: Bricket Wood Common and Greenwood Park (owned by St. Stephen Parish Council) are sites where existing land uses and



management plans exemplify the objectives of Watling Chase, so they will be used to demonstrate what the project seeks to achieve elsewhere:



An existing view: The above view shows part of the plateau at present, with very little to offer visually or for recreation.



The vision: Within an area known locally as the Golden Triangle, the Department of Transport proposes to widen the M1, north of Junction 6a, to eight lanes. The aim will be to negotiate with the Department and adjacent landowners for significant 'off-site' government-funded planting to reduce the motorway's impact. Planting and recreational proposals could be prepared for extensive areas of unused land owned by the Department next to Junction 21a of the M25. These would include enhancing the existing foot-path, bridleway and cycling network as well as seeking appropriate locations for an interpretation centre with parking and other recreational facilities. Given the background noise in this area, it may be appropriate to consider noisy sports near the motorway junction,

as long as they conform with green belt planning guidelines

Opportunities

Important opportunities have been identified in this zone.

- Forest Gateway Bricket Wood Common. On the edge of Watford, this Gateway leads into the western side of the Forest via the Bricket Wood Common SSSI.
- Forest Gateway. Greenwood Park in Chiswell Green. Here, the parish council has already developed playing fields, an adventure play area and sports hall.
- Most of the land around Potters Crouch on both sides of the M10 is part of one very large private holding. The aim will be to negotiate a comprehensive and coordinated scheme to enhance the landscape and provide new countryside recreation facilities. Additional opportunities may be created by extending the Gardens of the Rose.
- Hertfordshire County Council owns the two tenanted farms close to the M10 and M25 motorways. The aim will be to negotiate with the council and tenants for hedgerow and small-scale woodland planting, or possibly heath creation or more extensive new woodland with access for walking, riding and cycling.
- The City and District of St Albans owns land at Park Street on the site of the old sewage works. The Council will be preparing a planning brief which will contain proposals for countryside recreation and woodland planting. The Burston Tyler Nursery and Garden Retail Centre is prominent on the A405. This is another important visitor destination, which also includes arable land where restoration of rural parkland, tree planting and appropriate new recreation uses could be proposed.
- Planning permission has been granted for a golf course between Lye Lane, the A405 and the M25 and this will provide opportunities for landscape enhancement and tree planting.

Ver-Colne Valley

This long river valley stretches from the heart of St Albans south towards Watford. It consists of a flat, twisting, river flood plain with valley sides which are steep in places. There is a strong sense of continuity along the valley, an established recreation corridor along which the Ver-Colne Valley Walk runs. The rivers, wet areas and associated wildlife are the distinctive attractions which characterise the area.

Land use is very mixed. Historically, hedged pastures predominated with a few woods on the steepest slopes. However, extensive areas west of Frogmore and Colney Street have been disturbed by aggregate extraction and landfill. Arable farming has replaced large areas that used to be grazed grassland. Golf courses have been created near Aldenharn and Sopwell.

The valley is interrupted at several points by the A414, M25 and M1, which cut across it, causing background noise and fragmenting the landscape. There is extensive derelict land near the M25.

Built-up areas are visually intrusive in places, yet much of the valley still provides a sense of rural tranquillity, especially along the central section from Otterspool to the confluence of the Colne and Ver. This remains one of the finest landscapes in Watling Chase.

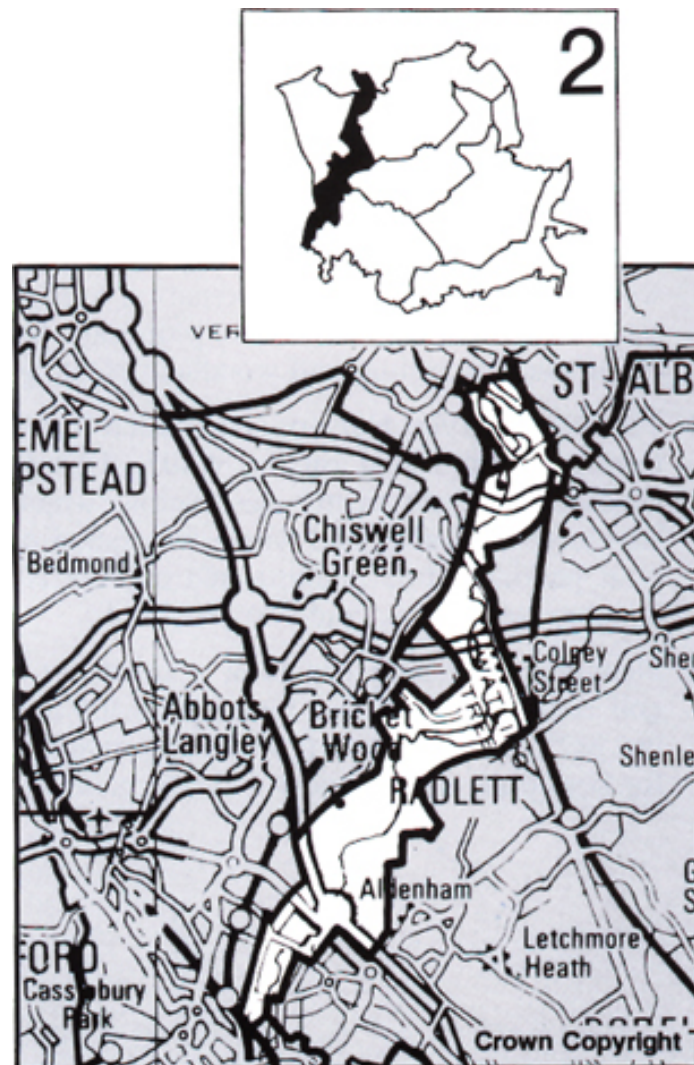
Landscape proposals

Very large-scale woodland planting would be inappropriate along what needs to remain an essentially open river corridor. However, the landscape can be significantly improved by many small plantings to screen roads, soften urban edges and accentuate slopes, increasing the feelings of seclusion along the valley floor.

Such planting should increase woodland cover in the zone from 11% to approximately 20%, equivalent to about 100 ha (247 acres) of new planting.

Restoration and sensitive management of the historic hedgerow pattern is also needed, as are many more willows to replace losses along the river.

In addition to planting, it will be crucial to support traditional grazing of the surviving waterside meadows and, in places, to allow arable land to revert to appropriate grassland.



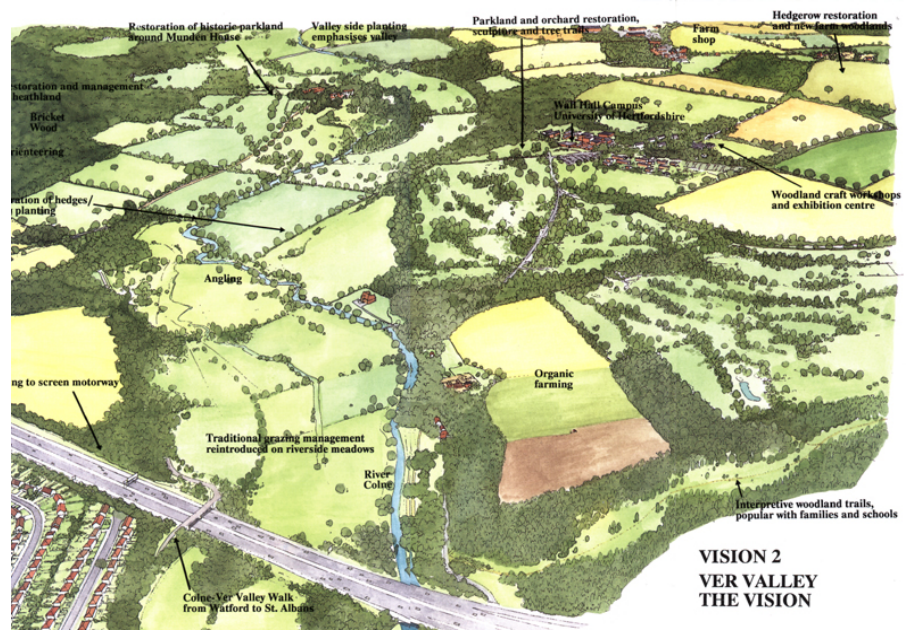
The Countryside Commission's Countryside Stewardship Scheme could provide financial incentives for greater public access and enjoyment of the valley. It is estimated that 20% of land in this zone may be eligible for stewardship.

Vision

An example: On the Hertfordshire County Council's Wall Hall Estate, the existing mixed woodlands are open to the public and will be ideal to demonstrate the benefits of creating well-designed and managed woodlands elsewhere in Watling Chase.



An existing view: The above view shows a valued landscape with public access via the Ver-Colne Valley Walk.



The vision: On five separate river valley landholdings between the M1 and St. Albans, there are opportunities to negotiate coordinated

conservation management and more public access on waterside pastures through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, coupled with appropriate woodland planting on the valley sides.

The Ver-Colne Valley Walk is already a major footpath between Watford and Redbourn via St. Albans, but cyclists and horse-riders need improved access.

The Wall Hall campus of the University of Hertfordshire, with its drama department, sculpture trail and open-air amphitheatre set in a mature historic landscape, is an ideal setting for developing the arts in Watling Chase. Nearby, the county councils' estate wood yard may be appropriate for a wood crafts and exhibition centre. Some of the campus grounds are being considered for inclusion in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

Opportunities

Important opportunities have been identified in this zone.

- Forest Gateway the Otterspool area in the Colne Valley, close to north Watford
- At Moor Mill, land to the north and south of the M25 owned by Redland Aggregates Limited offers considerable scope to negotiate extensive planting and public access for informal recreation. This, too, could become a Forest Gateway
- Land between central Watford and the M1 owned by the Three Valleys Water Company is surplus. The company is already developing a conservation, access and recreation strategy for its water-based sites in this region and this may provide opportunities for traditional management of waterside pastures and increased access for informal recreation, supported by Countryside Stewardship, and for sport
- The water environment of the Rivers Ver and Colne has been recognised by the NRA as offering opportunities
- Sopwell Meadows is an important wetland habitat alongside the River Ver and is suitable for Countryside Stewardship

Vale of St. Albans

This tract is the very shallow and open basin of the River Colne and its tributary valleys, the watercourses of which are often dry. Their gentle topography provides pleasing views, and the long Shenley Ridge to the south is visible from most of the vale.

A belt of sand and gravel deposits stretches across the vale, so this landscape is dominated by aggregate extraction and, usually, subsequent landfill waste disposal Sites at Tyttenhanger, Sleafshyde and Harper Lane include water-filled pits, some of which are still operational. Many past workings have yet to be comprehensively restored to a high standard. Extraction has recently commenced on the disused Radlett Aerodrome. Elsewhere, there are commercially viable deposits which may be worked in the future.

Away from the sand and gravel sites, the vale is still mainly agricultural. Arable farming predominates, though cattle and sheep graze in places, especially around London Colney.

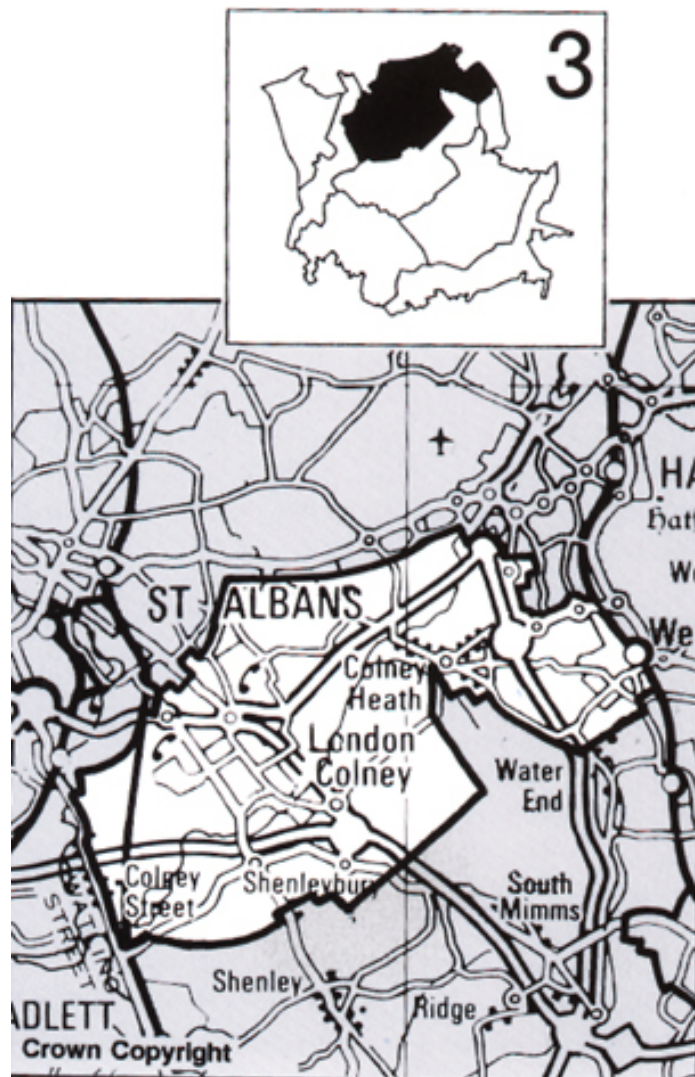
There are no golf courses and few horses are kept. Little woodland exists except around Tyttenhanger Park. Many hedges have been lost or are slowly deteriorating because of damage.

The landscape is fragmented and despoiled by the A414, A1(M) and M25, which cut across the vale. Parts of the urban fringes of St. Albans, London Colney, Colney Heath and Hatfield are also intrusive. There are many poorly screened industrial, commercial and institutional premises. These, together with extensive derelict and unused green-belt land, pylons, road lighting and fly-tipping all greatly detract from the rural qualities of the vale.

Landscape proposals

Planting small woods, copses, shelter belts and new hedges is proposed to screen roads and unattractive built-up areas and to lead the eye south towards views of the Shenley Ridge. The aim will be to create a strong framework of trees enclosing a diversity of attractive open spaces, both farmland and restored gravel pits, suited to a wide range of recreation and leisure. Recreation of heathland habitats would be desirable near Colney Heath and Smallford.

Additionally, in large areas of the vale, relatively flat arable expanses provide ideal topography for much more extensive, large-scale woodland planting. However, given the current financial situation, persuading landowners to plant on a large scale may be difficult. Eventually, big glades and other open ground within the new woods



would provide paths for people to enjoy the experience of being in a mature and truly magnificent broadleaved forest.

Implementing the less bold of these proposals would increase woodland cover in the vale from only 4% to perhaps 15%. However, creating the large woodlands which are envisaged would lead to woodland cover of almost 30%. This would be equivalent to 680 ha (1680 acres) of new woodland, of which as much as 136 ha (336 acres) could remain unplanted as wild open areas in the wood.

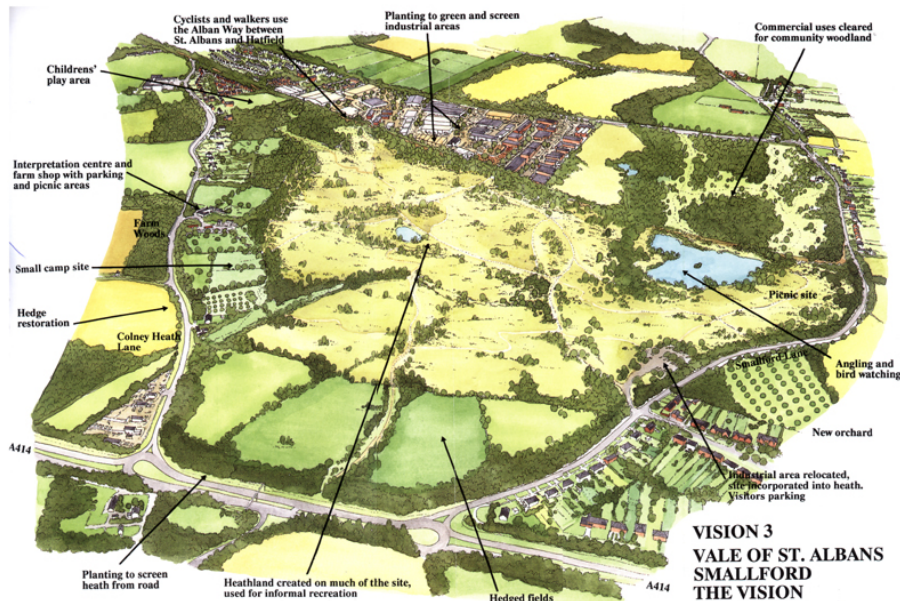
Vision

An example: Parts of the landscape around Colney Heath, with its heathland, guide camp and new community woodland at Bullens Green, already give a vivid impression of a community forest landscape in the making.

SMALLFORD: EXISTING VIEW



SMALLFORD: VISION



HARPER LANE: EXISTING VIEW



HARPER LANE: VISION



Existing views: The above views show two parts of the Vale. Smallford is a former landfill site partially owned by Hertfordshire County Council, which is currently evaluating solutions to problems caused by its past use. Around Harper Lane, Redland Aggregates Limited owns extensive land for its sand and gravel operations.

The vision: Much of the Smallford area could become an expansive heath for wildlife and quiet recreation, with other parts zoned for a range of different activities. This heathland restoration could qualify for support from Countryside Stewardship.

Redland Aggregates owns land mainly at Harper Lane and Broad Colney and near Colney Heath. A coordinated approach is needed to restore the land for mixed leisure uses, including water sports, informal countryside recreation and wildlife conservation. In addition to

tree planting, grazing hay meadows close to watercourses and wetlands should also become cherished features of a fully restored landscape. Some areas may qualify for the Countryside Stewardship scheme. The sites are easily accessible from the main roads and so some would be particularly suitable for country parks with a visitor centre and educational use. The area could also serve as a Forest Gateway.

Opportunities

Important opportunities have been identified in this zone.

- Forest Gateway. Bowmansgreen Open Farm with its shop and other visitor facilities, including environmental education, is an attraction which could be enhanced.
- Forest Gateway Bullens Green area, where initial Forest planting has been established, giving access to an existing regional footpath and the proposed Forest Walkway.
- Hill End/Cell Barnes, Napsbury and Harperbury Hospital sites are likely to be redeveloped after they become redundant. A planning brief for Hill End/Cell Barnes has already been prepared, taking on board community forest principles, and a planning brief for Napsbury is in preparation. Creating more public open space in these urban fringe sites will provide new opportunities for countryside recreation. Structural planting will improve the landscape on all three sites. The development could benefit from support by the Countryside Around Towns Scheme. The hospital sites are also potential Forest Gateways.
- Hertfordshire County Council owns extensive tenanted farmland, mainly between SL Albans and the A414 and around Napsbury Hospital. In the short term, there is scope only for smallscale planting and hedgerow restoration. In the medium to longer term, it may be possible to negotiate with council and tenants for more substantial woodland planting and improved public access for informal recreation.
- There are substantial areas of derelict and disused land on either side of the A1081 leading into St. Albans, next to Aylotts Garden Centre, north of the Alban Way near Welham Green, Colney Heath, Roehyde and elsewhere. Such areas are usually prominent and are already unofficially enjoyed by local people. Proposals for future management of different sites will include woodland, hedgerow and rural parkland planting together with heath and other habitat creation, possibly with sport and recreation where appropriate.
- Strategic, large-scale establishment of new woodland may only be possible following negotiated land acquisition by the Forestry Commission or the Woodland Trust. It might be best to buy land for new planting next to existing mature woodland on the Shenley Ridge. This would establish a distinctive wooded core for public enjoyment in the heart of Watling Chase.
- Linked to some of the above proposals would be off-site remedial planting associated with the proposed widening of the M25 and A1(M),

to be funded by the Department of Transport.

- Coppice Wood and Bush Wood are attractive ancient woodlands which need support for environmental management It would also be desirable to negotiate improved public access.
- Radlett Aerodrome offers a major opportunity both during the restoration following gravel extraction (due for completion in 1998) and when the land passes to Hertfordshire County Council in 2006. A range of sports and recreation compatible with the green belt and easily accessible by road and rail would then be appropriate.
- Areas of open water created by mineral extraction next to the River Colne provide opportunities for recreation and nature conservation Groundwork has made a successful bid to English Partnerships for a major environmental improvement initiative in the Upper Colne Valley, including the proposed Colne Valley Way. The lakes at Tyttenhanger have been identified by the Eastern Council for Sport and Recreation as a potential water-skiing site.

Shenley Ridge

This ridge runs from south-west to north-east, with its relatively steep northern slope facing over the Vale of St. Albans and its southern slope dropping down more gently to the Barnet Plateau. The slopes are cut by several tributary valleys which add interest to the rolling land. There are many distant panoramas in most directions.

Mixed, but now mainly arable, farming predominates. Substantial areas of pasture have been converted to arable in recent decades. The 18% existing woodland cover with remaining hedges makes parts of the ridge already feel well wooded. Many paddocks, a mature golf course at Radlett, rural parkland at Shenley and, more extensively, at Myrnm's Park all serve to diversify this elevated landscape at the heart of Watling Chase.

Many hedges and hedgerow trees are deteriorating and slowly disappearing because of neglect or mismanagement. The M25 and pylon lines are intrusive. Some urban areas are already quite well screened, as with much of Radlett and Shenley. However, the northern edge of Borehamwood detracts from the scenery of the Wood Hall Estate, otherwise one of the most attractive parts of the Forest area.

Landscape proposals

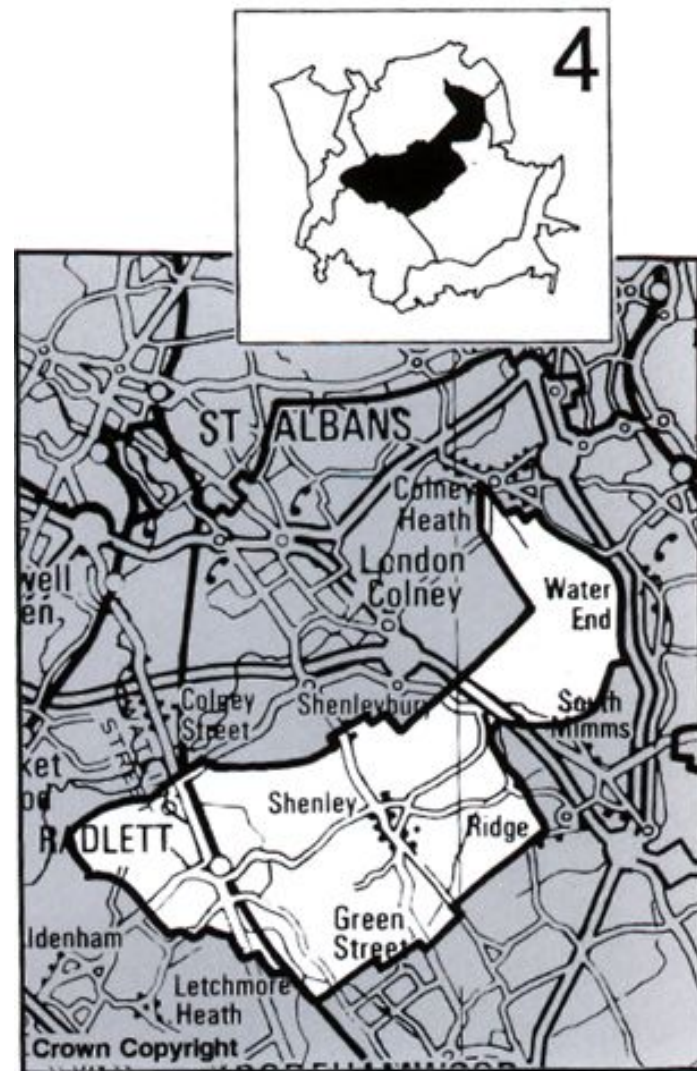
Obvious priorities will be planting to soften the impact of the M25 and to screen intrusive built up areas. Restoration and good management of the historic hedges and hedgerow trees will also be important, as will be planting to restore historic parkland, improve paddocks and integrate golf courses better into the countryside.

The character of the ridge would be strengthened by more woodland planting on higher ground, especially to enlarge or link up existing woods, to emphasise the topography and frame views, and in field corners to reinforce the hedge pattern.

These proposals would increase woodland cover from 18% to almost 30%. There would be about 230 ha (568 acres) of new woodland, in many small and medium sized plantings.

Vision

An example: Many parts of this zone are already very attractive and will need only minimal planting and hedge restoration.





An existing view: The above view shows shows a landscape which is already very attractive and mostly requires only minimal work It is central to the Forest area and would be ideal as the future project base of the Watling Chase team.



The vision: The matching vision shows the Shenley Hospital site. Within that, the Shenley Park Trust, with its walled garden, orchard and cricket centre of excellence, could play a special role as a visitor centre at the heart of Watling Chase. The Trust's plans for development on the old hospital site have many objectives in common with the Forest Plan and could support the future implementation of Watling Chase. Existing woodland needs improved management and might be linked to new planting, which could spring from the acquisition of bare land by either the Forestry Commission or the Woodland Trust The land between Shenleybury and the M25 could be enhanced. Selective planting and heathland glades could screen the motorway and provide informal recreation (eg walking and horse-riding) A London orbital cycle route is proposed from Chiswell Green

in the west to Welham Green in the east via Shenley.

Opportunities

Important opportunities have been identified in this zone.

- Restoration of the historic parkland of North Mymms Hall, possibly grant aided through the Countryside Stewardship scheme.
- Hertfordshire County Council owns extensive tenanted farmland around Shenley, where there is scope for hedgerow restoration and small-scale planting. In the longer term, there maybe opportunities to negotiate more woodland planting with council and tenants.
- Planting, funded by the Department of Transport, is needed to reduce the impact of the proposed M25 widening.
- New planting on the Borehamwood periphery of the Wood Hall Estate and on the north-west edge of Radlett would be desirable.
- Harperbury Hospital, straddling the boundary between the Vale of St Albans and Shenley Ridge, is a key location in the heart of Watling Chase. It is due to close by the end of the century and offers a major opportunity to adopt community forest policies in its redevelopment.

Gobions Ridge

A wide valley holding the A1(M) separates this small zone to the east of the motorway from Shenley Ridge to the west. The zone is bounded by Potters Bar to the south and Welharn Green to the north. The area is an extension of the Broxbourne Plateau further east beyond the railway, which is the boundary of Watling Chase.

The land comprises a gently undulating and mainly west-facing ridge crossed by small water-courses, some of which are of geological interest (swallow holes). It is mainly an attractive patchwork of hedged grassland with small woods. There are many fine views, but parts are spoiled by the busy motorway and by the urban edges of Potters Bar, Welharn Green and Brookmans Park.

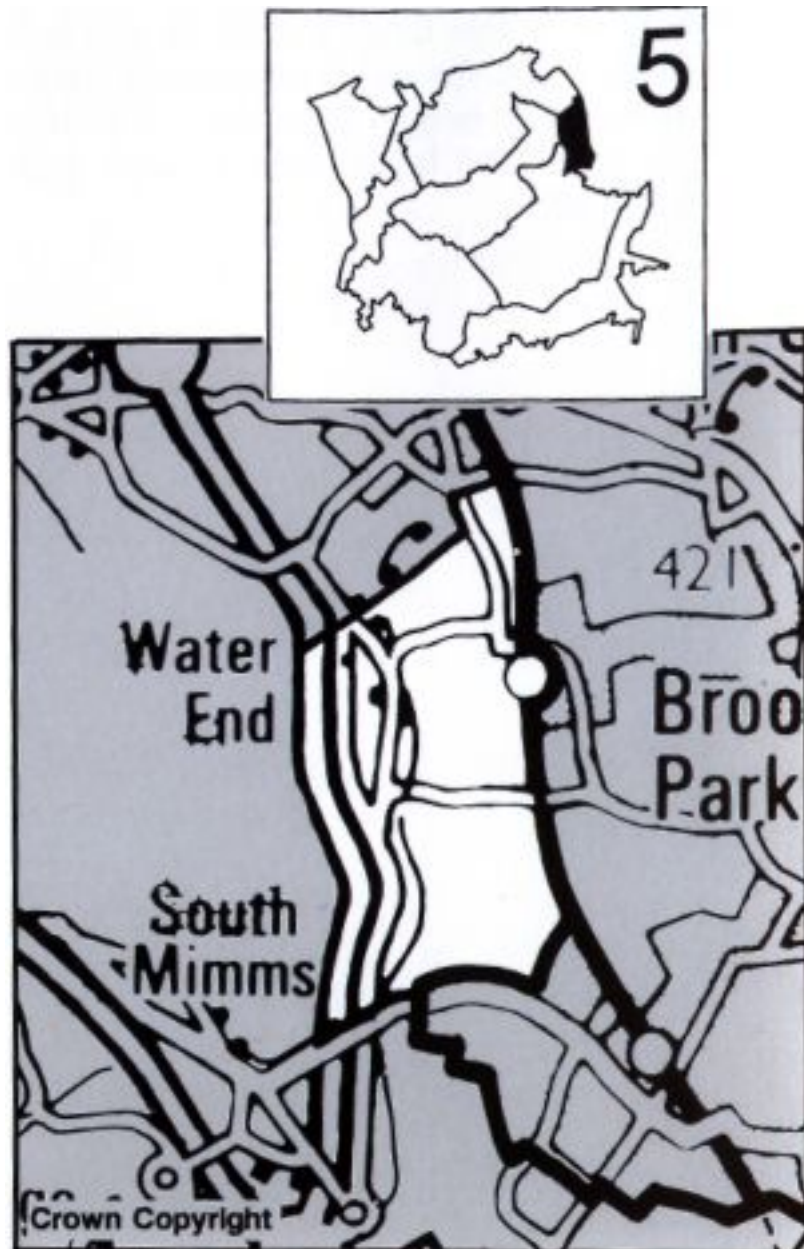
Landscape proposals

Main priorities will be small woodland, shelter belt, copse and hedgerow planting effectively to screen the A1(M) and built-up areas. An increase in woodland cover from 4% to 20% is envisaged, equivalent to no more than about 70 ha (173 acres) of planting.

Opportunities

This is a small, relatively attractive area and hence is not of high priority for action. Nevertheless, opportunities have been identified.

- Planting funded by the Department of Transport, to reduce the impact of the A1(M) widening could be extended to screen the edge of Potters Bar.



- Planting would improve the landscape around Brookmans Park Station and the footpaths which lead into Watling Chase via bridges across the A1 (M).
- The Royal Veterinary College, with its historic park and garden, could be an important partner in the restoration of the parkland, assisted by Countryside Stewardship.
- The water environment of Mirnmsshall Brook and the swallow holes has been recognised by the NRA as offering opportunities.

Aldenham Plateau

This is a gently undulating area, with no strong structure to the land. It is bounded by Watford, Bushey, Radlett and Borehamwood.

Farming is mainly arable, restricted to a few large, tenanted estates. There is very little woodland other than on Stanmore Common and the grounds of Haberdashers Askes School. Many hedges have been lost or are deteriorating through neglect. Characteristic are the large areas occupied by horse paddocks and the grounds of education, health and leisure institutions, including Elstree Aerodrome. The Aldenham Country Park and Hilfield Park Reservoirs comprise the only important open water in Watling Chase outside the Vale of St Albans. There are two golf courses and others have been proposed.

The zone has been badly affected by the M1/A41(T) corridor, which fragments the countryside. Brockley Hill has been spoiled by landfill. Overhead pylons and urban land, especially commercial premises, are very prominent. Overall little of this urban fringe landscape retains a strong rural character.

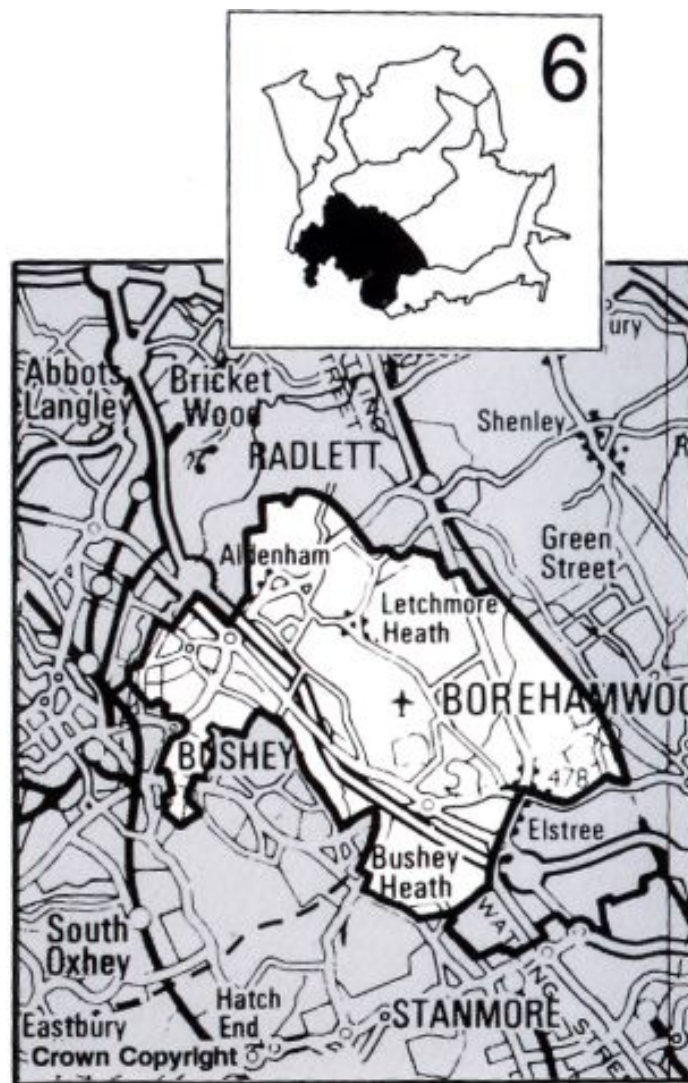
Landscape proposals

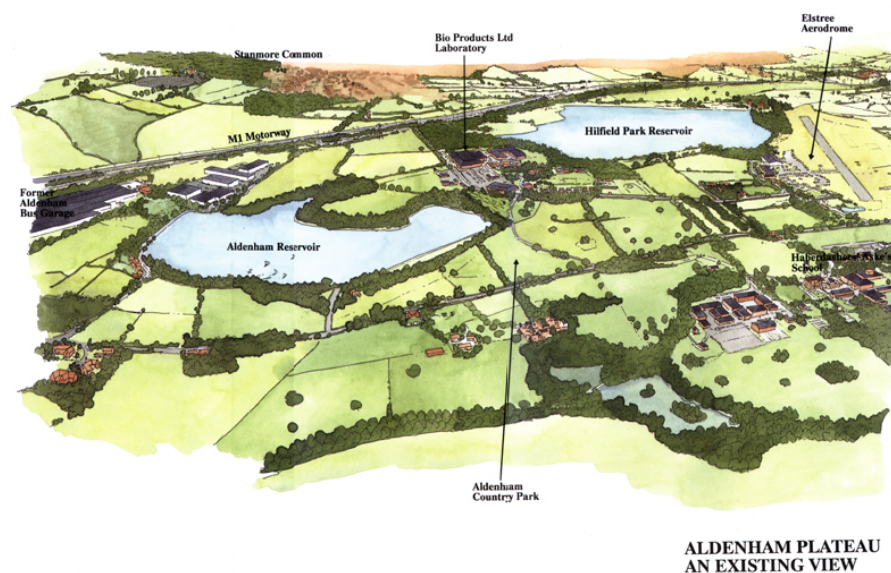
Much of the M1/A41(T) corridor is such a badly damaged landscape that it would benefit from large-scale planting to create a strongly wooded character.

Extensive planting would also be desirable elsewhere to create a high quality rural landscape where many people would be able to experience adventure or tranquillity on the fringe of London. Depending on the success of negotiations with landowners and their tenants, these proposals could eventually increase woodland cover from 6% to 19%. This would involve the creation of about 250 ha (617 acres) of new woodland. This target depends on community organisations, the Woodland Trust or the Forestry Enterprise acquiring land. Even if this target cannot be reached, there will be scope for much small-scale woodland planting and hedge restoration and tree planting in parks and institutional grounds such as playing fields.

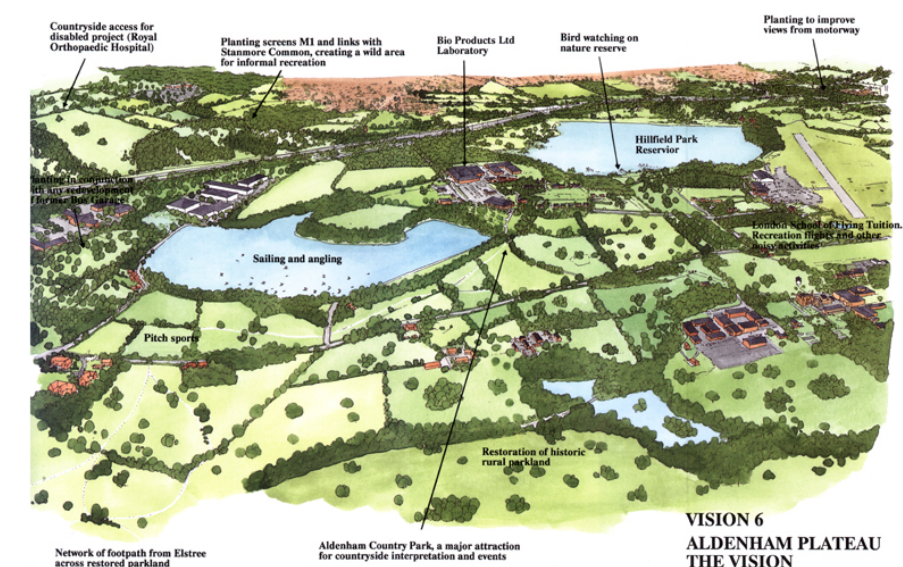
Vision

An example: The wooded Stanmore Common, Hilfield Park Reservoir nature reserve and nearby Aldenham Country Park are each places which already fulfil community forest objectives.





An existing view: The above view shows a landscape which already has much to enjoy, with the two areas of water providing a range of recreational activities.



The vision: Aldenham Country Park is ideally placed to be the central southern 'gateway' to the Forest. Plans are already under way to enhance the woodland at Hillfield park Reservoir and to review the country parks potential. These developments will provide further chances to enhance the sites in line with Watling Chase objectives. The most extensive planting is likely to be associated with the M1 corridor, while smaller plantings might occur around the former Aldenham Bus Garage and associated with the Elstree bypass. It might also be possible to negotiate further planting on farmland between Bushey and Letchmore Heath and on either side of Watling Street. The restoration of the historic parkland at Aldenham Park with support from Countryside Stewardship and any new golf course planning permissions would provide additional scope for planting and hedgerow restoration.

Opportunities

Important opportunities have been identified in this zone.

- Forest Gateway. Stanmore Country Park This links with the existing regional footpath and the proposed London orbital footpath.

- Restoration of rural parkland, owned by Hertfordshire County Council, at Haydon Hill and elsewhere on the edge of Watford, supported by Countryside Stewardship.

- Planting to enhance existing and proposed golf courses and holdings used for horse-riding.

- Planting in the area of Brockley Hill landfill site.

- Enhancement of the grounds of large institutions. The integrated nature trail at the Mike Heaffey Centre (Royal National Orthopedic Hospital) at Brockley Hill is an example of this.

South Mimms & Arkley Plateau

This gently undulating plateau between the Shenley Ridge and the Arkley Ridge to the south has been shaped by the shallow valleys of several small streams. The zone is bounded by Potters Bar to the north, Hadley Wood to the east, Barnet to the south and Borehamwood to the west.

Land is still mainly arable. Many hedges and hedgerow trees have been lost. There is little woodland, but woods on surrounding high ground are noticeable, especially on the Shenley Ridge to the north. Wrotham Park is in the *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest* (English Heritage 1985). There are three golf courses and several horse-riding enterprises. These recent changes in land use reflect leisure demands typical of the London fringe.

The landscape is fragmented and spoiled by the M25 and A1(M), especially around their busy junction/service area near South Mimms. There are proposals to widen these motorways, possibly involving a major reconfiguration of junctions. Several visually intrusive pylon lines cross the plateau. The urban edges of Potters Bar, Hadley Wood, Barnet and Borehamwood further detract from the rural quality of the zone, much of which is noisy and in which there are few opportunities for informal countryside recreation.

Landscape proposals

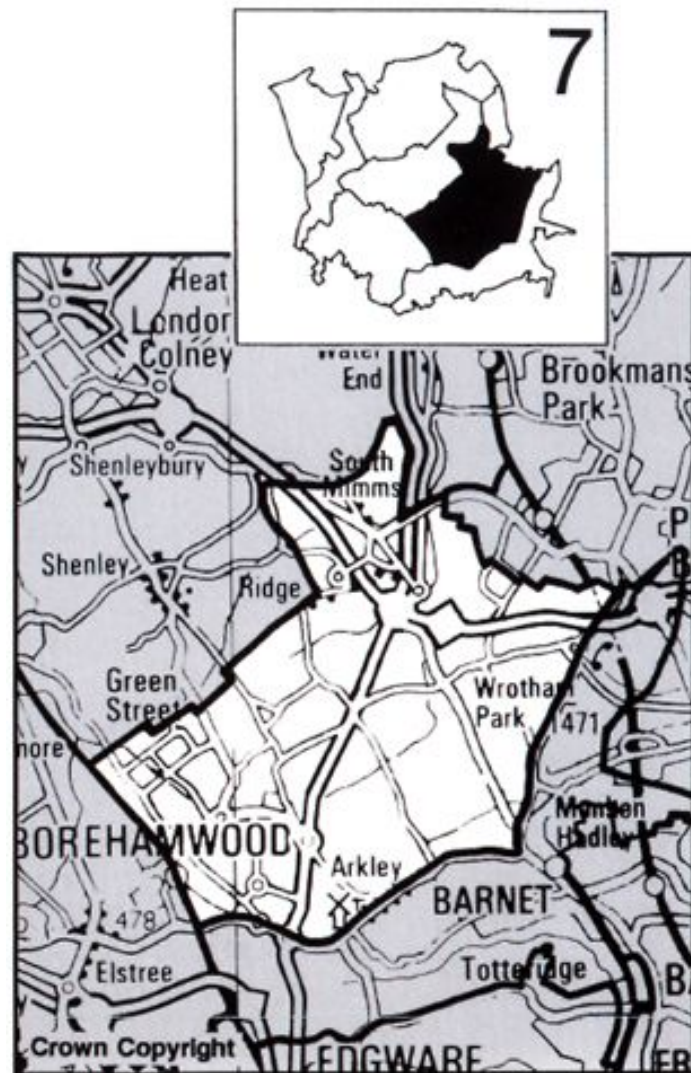
Planting along the motorways and to screen built-up areas is a priority. Restoration of rural parkland and historic hedgerows is also desirable. Small-scale woodland planting will be appropriate on parts of the remaining farmland and on golf courses. Overall, such plantings could increase woodland cover from only 3% to perhaps 10%.

However, as in the Vale of St Albans, parts of the plateau are now rather unexciting and much more extensive planting is proposed to create a well-wooded and, in places, a wild environment well suited to countryside leisure and recreation. Particularly appropriate areas for large-scale planting are on either side of the M25 between Potters Bar and Wrotham Park, north-east of Borehamwood, and around Barnet and Arkley.

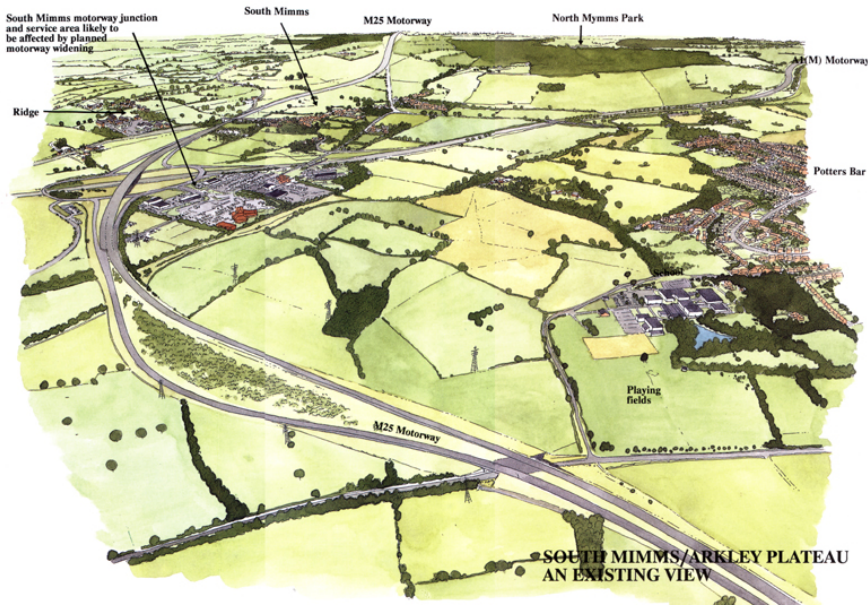
Planting on this scale would increase woodland cover to approximately 30%, involving 620 ha (1531 acres) of new woods.

Vision

An example: Apart from established golf courses and riding centres,



the area has little to offer local people or visitors.



An existing view: The above view shows how the South Mimms junction (23) of the M25 and A1(M) dominates the view from the urban fringe of Potters Bar.



The vision: The area around the South Mimms junction has much potential as a Forest Gateway. Much of the land is privately owned, but negotiation might lead to large-scale planting to screen the motorways and the South Mimms junction (23) as well as the urban fringe of Potters Bar. This would allow greater public access and recreational use of the area. Groundwork Hertfordshire's 'gateway' project is already improving the South Mimms Service area and creating a wildlife site at Wash Lane. This service area could become an important information point where visitors could learn about the Forest and its wide range of recreational opportunities.

Opportunities

Important opportunities have been identified in this zone.

- Most of the remaining area comprises tenanted farmland owned by Hertfordshire County Council, the London Borough of Barnet and Hertsmere Borough Council These authorities and their tenants will be important partners with whom to negotiate.
- The impact of the proposed widening of the M25 and A1(M) with possible reconfiguration of motorway junctions should be reduced by substantial planting funded by the Department of Transport.
- Planning permission for a golf course in St Albans Road, High Barnet has been granted and this will provide opportunities for tree planting and hedgerow improvements
- Planning to the west of South Mimms village will help to screen the M25.
- Large areas of this zone are part of the Wrotham Park Estate, including the historic park and garden, and this should provide opportunities for open-air recreation with associated tree planting and enhancement of the historic park itself This restoration might well be supported by Countryside Stewardship

North London River Valleys

This London fringe comprises tributary river valley systems flowing mainly from west to east. The landform is quite strong, providing attractive enclosed views along valleys and wide open vistas across and beyond them. The area is bounded by the fringes of Borehamwood, Arkley, Chipping Ballet, Hadley Wood and Potters Bar to the north, and by Stanmore, Edgware, Totteridge and Whetstone to the south.

There is a little arable land near Potters Bar, but otherwise a clear geometric pattern of hedged grasslands characterises what is still an attractive historic landscape of considerable nature conservation value. There are important woods on Monken Hadley Common and at Scratchwood, Moat Mount and Stanmore. These emphasise the topography and effectively demonstrate the screening and buffering qualities of woodland along roads and on the urban fringe.

Horses graze much of the pasture. Many hedges are neglected, deteriorating and in need of sensitive management. The M1, A1 and the Junction 24 stretches of the M25 near Potters Bar are visually intrusive and noisy. Widening of the M25 motorway and increasing traffic levels are in prospect.

Landscape proposals

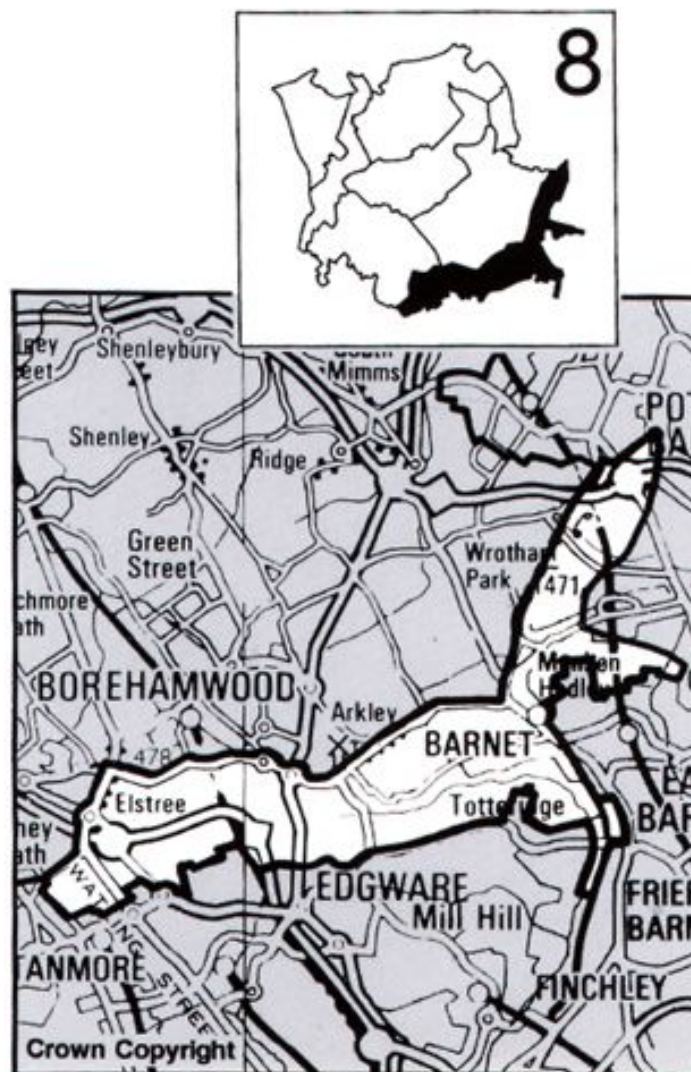
Extensive woodland planting near Potters Bar is proposed to screen and buffer this heavily populated zone from the motorways.

Elsewhere, hedgerow restoration and sensitive management, including hedgerow tree planting, will be a priority. Most opportunities for woodland planting will be small-scale, in field corners and as copses and shelter belts, where existing grassland is of no intrinsic conservation value.

Opportunities will also exist for planting in institutional grounds and enhancing golf courses and public open spaces.

These proposals will increase woodland cover in the zone from 8% to around 16%. This would involve about 170 ha (420 acres) of new planting, mostly in small schemes.

It will also be important to assist with exemplary management of existing woodlands, most of these are already open to the public, and have attractive glades and other open areas and so are valuable demonstrations for the design of new woods elsewhere in Watling Chase.



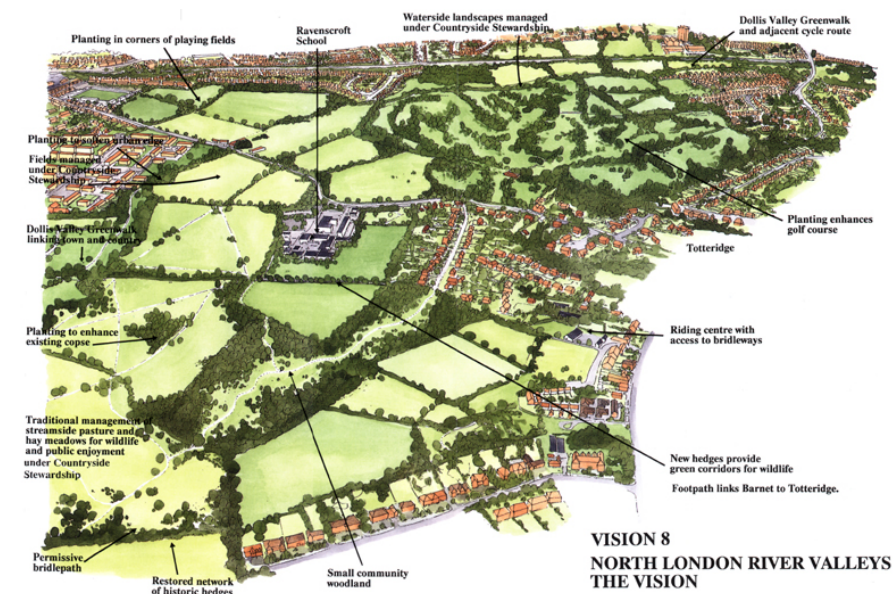
Another priority will be assistance for managing remaining grasslands of conservation value in traditional grazing or hay meadows, possibly through the Countryside Stewardship scheme. It may be desirable to re-create certain areas of former grassland habitat which have been lost. Nearly 200 ha within this landscape zone may be eligible for stewardship. Several agreements have already been successfully negotiated.

Vision

An example: This area already has hedged pastures, woods, parks and golf courses, but further sensitive conservation management is needed.



An existing view: Much of the area seen in the above view is publicly owned and already managed to achieve wildlife conservation and recreational objectives.



The vision: Planting will concentrate on field corners, shelterbelts and hedgerow restoration and screening urban fringes. The largest planting would establish a community woodland with new recreational and educational opportunities. The waterside meadows are of considerable conservation value and their traditional management would be encouraged by Countryside Stewardship. The Dollis Valley Greenwalk and Cycleway are already well established and could form the basis of an enhanced network for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Opportunities

Important opportunities have been identified in this zone.

- Forest Gateway. Monken Hadley Common. This area should become an important gateway to Watling Chase. An information point could encourage people to explore and enjoy the Forest. A proposed London orbital bridle way will run from this area to Haydon Hill in the south-west, although a route has not yet been identified.
- Forest Gateway. Scratchwood Open Space. This too should become an important Forest entry point with a visitors centre distributing information about recreation within Watling Chase.
- A proposed London orbital footpath will run through this region from the Dollis Valley Greenwalk in the east to link with the Stanmore and Bentley Priory Circular walk in the south-west.
- The proposed widening of the M25 and possible building of an AI to M1 link will provide opportunities for off-site screen planting by the Department of Transport.
- Any new golf course planning permission granted by the London Borough of Harrow should include opportunities for major tree planting and landscape enhancement.
- Redevelopment of a site next to Roman Watling Street, as proposed in the London Borough of Harrow's *Unitary Development Plan*, should enhance the appearance of this historic route through Watling Chase.
- Local authorities own extensive tenanted farmland. Negotiations with them and their tenants will focus on the scope for more planting and managing the grassland traditionally for nature conservation. This, coupled with greater access and appropriate recreational use, could be supported by Countryside Stewardship.
- Extensive woodland planting would also be desirable around Junction 24 of the M25

Implementation

17 Targets and Funding

- How much woodland?
- Where will trees be planted and over what time-scale?
- Paying for the planting
- Changes in the use of land, acquisition, sponsorship and control

18 Making it happen: Key Players

- National Partners
- Local Partners
- What do these partners need to do?
- Voluntary Sector
- Schools and Colleges

19 Marketing and Promotion

20 Progress and Monitoring

21 Long-term future

To achieve the vision of Watling Chase Community Forest will require imagination, commitment and an enthusiastic corporate effort by the partners involved, especially local communities.

This section outlines how success can be achieved within existing policies and resources and identifies key roles for the many agencies and organisations involved.

Although the project is clearly long term, it is important that the plan identifies realistic priorities and targets in order to make progress and measure success. A time-scale, however imprecise, will help to set the framework for action.

How much woodland?

17.1 The broad target of around 30% woodland cover, which is reflected in the visions in chapter 16, was strongly endorsed in public consultation. However, many farmers and landowners questioned whether existing financial incentives were adequate to ensure this level of planting, given the profitability of agriculture in the area under the current Common Agricultural Policy. The Watling Chase project team has therefore undertaken a review, sought additional advice and re-estimated likely planting rates. These rates are shown in Table 17.1

Table 17.1 A strategy for woodland creation in Watling Chase 1994-2024

Landscape Zone	Area (excluding urban areas)	Area (ha) in agriculture by land-grading (includes 255 ha existing woodland and 650 ha affected by extraction)			Existing woodland (255 ha on agricultural land, 15 ha on urban land, 940 ha on other land)		Increase in woodland cover		Total woodland cover by year 30	
		2	3	4	ha	%	ha	%	ha	%
St.Stephen Plateau	1430	-	1200	-	209	15%	180	12%	389	27%
Ver-Colne Valley	1102	52	725	-	124	11%	100	9%	224	20%
Vale of St Albans	2644	454	1500	16	95	4%	680	26%	775	29%
Shenley Ridge	2035	-	1537	-	365	18%	230	11%	595	29%
Gobions Ridge	426	-	390	-	17	4%	70	16%	87	20%
Aldenham Plateau	2083	168	1454	48	142	6%	250	12%	392	19%
Sth.Mimms & Ark. Plat	2312	-	2062	-	64	3%	620	27%	684	30%
N. London Riv Valleys	2320	-	1615	240	194	8%	170	7%	364	16%
Total	14352	674	10483	304	1210	8.5%	2300	16%	3510	24.5%*

* This does not include amenity tree planting which would increase the tree and woodland cover over the whole community forest area to over 30%

17.2 It is clearly very difficult to make projections of this type over a period as long as 30 years. No one can predict what the Common Agricultural Policy, or incentives for tree planting will look like so far ahead. Given the well-established trend to make agricultural policies more responsive to environmental concerns, and the UK government's commitment to secure European agreement to tree planting on set-aside land, 30% woodland cover is considered a reasonable target over the full 30 year timescale. This figure of around 30% comprises the 25% woodland cover shown in Table 17.1 plus an additional 5% or more for non-woodland trees and shrubs in hedges, shelter belts, orchards, parkland, cemeteries, industrial and residential areas, sports grounds and golf courses, and on road and rail verges.

17.3 The project team has also looked at targets for Countryside Stewardship, as the environmentally appropriate management of traditional landscapes and features for public benefit is an important element in the community forest concept. The river valleys of the Ver-Colne and Dollis offer considerable potential for stewardship agreements, and these opportunities are reflected in the targets set in Table 17.2 Up to 5% of land in Watling Chase would be eligible for stewardship If this figure is added to the 30% woodland target, around 35% of Watling Chase could be covered by woodland and traditional landscapes by the year 2024

Table 17.2 A strategy for Countryside Stewardship in Watling Chase 1994-2024						
Landscape Zone	Land suitable for stewardship		Total area of new woodland cover and stewardship		Total (including existing woodland)	
	Area (ha)	% Zone	Area (ha)	% Zone	Area (ha)	% Zone
St.Stephen Plateau	12	1%	192	13%	401	28%
Ver-Colne Valley	220	20%	320	29%	444	40%
Vale of St Albans	40	1.5%	720	27	815	31%
Shenley Ridge	38	2%	268	13%	633	31%
Gobions Ridge	10	2%	80	19%	97	23%
Aldenham Plateau	49	2%	299	14%	441	21%
Sth.Mimms & Ark.Plat	79	3%	699	30%	763	33%
N.London Riv Valleys	198	9%	368	16%	562	24%
Total	646	4.5%	2946	20.5%	4156	29%*

This does not include amenity tree planting which would increase the total tree, woodland and stewardship cover of the community forest to around 35%.

17.4 The projected rates of planting have also been reconsidered in the light of current and possible future policies The targets for the first 10 years have been lowered and the projections of planting rate in years 2004 to 2024 raised (Table 17.3).

Table 17.3 Projected rate of woodland planting in Watling Chase 1994-2024					
Years	Planting rate (ha/year)	Total area planted in each period (ha)	Total area of new woodland (ha)	Total area of woodland (ha)	Percentage of forest area (%)

1-5	55	275	275	1485	10
6-10	65	325	600	1810	1.3
11-20	100	1000	1600	2810	19.5
21-30	70	700	2300	3510	24.5

Where will the trees be planted and over what time-scale?

17.5 A large proportion of the Forest area (24.4%) is publicly owned and this will constitute a major target for new woodland and non woodland planting. Much is managed by tenant farmers and this is discussed earlier, in the section on agriculture (see Chapter 4).

17.6 It is envisaged that private landowners will be interested in a comprehensive approach to planting, especially to enhance the capital value and income-generating potential of larger holdings.

17.7 An early priority for creating woodland and other habitats is land damaged and despoiled by gravel extraction, landfill and poor quality restoration. These areas add up to nearly 5% of the area and include some of the county's oldest landfill sites. The landfill sites often have problems of leachates and gases (eg methane). However, it should still be possible to create new habitats, such as ponds, heathland, grassland and wetlands, at appropriate sites, in addition to woodland planting.

Paying for the planting

17.8 Many grants and incentives are available to farmers, landowners and community organisations. Some grants are specifically for tree planting and others encourage management of land for conservation, landscape and wildlife.

17.9 The publication *Conservation Grants for Farmers* (MAFF 1993b), is an excellent source of information and contains details of schemes offered by:

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

- Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Agri-Environment Programmes
- Farm Woodland Premium Scheme

Forestry Commission (Forestry Authority)

- Woodland Grant Scheme

Countryside Commission

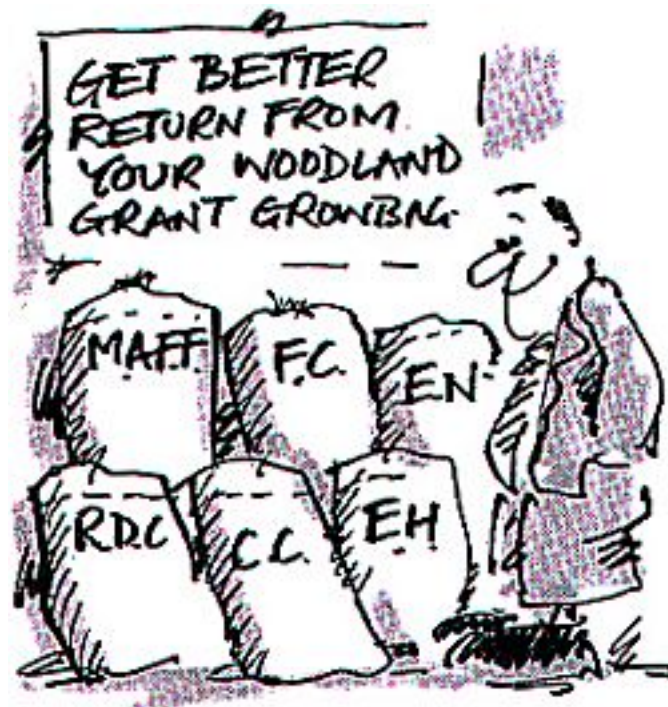
- Countryside Stewardship incorporating the Hedgerow Incentive Scheme
- Landscape Conservation Grants

English Nature

- Project Grants

Rural Development Commission

- Redundant Buildings Grants
- Refurbishment Grants



There are many grants and incentives available to farmers and landowners

Forestry Authority's Woodland Grant Scheme

17.10 The Forestry Authority, part of the Forestry Commission, supports the establishment and management of new and existing woodland through the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS). This has been revised and extended in line with the development of national forestry policy towards broader and more flexible objectives.

17.11 The latest revision was announced on the 19 July 1994, with new applications being accepted from 19 September 1994. In brief, the changes simplify the scheme and allow for discretionary payments and the encouragement of new planting in priority target areas. It is hoped that Watling Chase will be considered for Special Area Status.

17.12 The broader more flexible objectives of the scheme are reflected in a series of forest environmental guidelines which set out standards for designing and managing existing woods and new planting in relation to landscape, conservation, water and recreation. Grant aid will only be approved if the guidelines are followed.

17.13 Establishment grants, with supplements for planting on better quality agricultural land and for public access in community woodlands, together with annual payments under the MAFF Farm Woodland Premium Scheme should be available for all planting which meets the aims of the scheme. Each Woodland Grant Scheme allows up to 20% open space for management, Conservation or recreation and up to 10% of the area for woody shrubs, where appropriate to the objectives of the scheme.

17.14 The Woodland Grant Scheme will be the main financial incentive for creating and managing woodland to achieve Watling Chase's 30-year planting target of 2300 ha.

17.15 Annual Management Grant is available for any age of woodland of special environmental or recreational potential requiring additional management input. A reduced establishment grant for restocking by planting existing woodlands is now payable, while restocking by national regeneration is encouraged by an additional discretionary payment based on the proportion of Cost. This could be supplemented by the Annual Management Grant in

woodlands of special environment value. In addition, a Woodland Improvement Grant may be available as a discretionary capital payment for work in existing woodlands which will result in significant environmental benefits, but will be based on targeted special areas.

Woodland Trust License Planting Scheme

17.16 The Woodland Trust's License Planting Scheme aims to encourage tree planting on land not in Trust ownership. The scheme provides a complete service to landowners who wish to create new woodland on their own land. Where eligible, such schemes would be carried out under the Forestry Authority Woodland Grant Scheme.

Countryside Stewardship

17.17 Countryside Stewardship offers management agreements to enhance and conserve important English landscapes, their wildlife habitats and history. Payments are made for changes to farming and land management practice, which produce conservation benefits or improved access and enjoyment of the countryside. The scheme is run by the Countryside Commission, working with English Nature and English Heritage and MAFF. Hedgerow restoration plans are run jointly with MAFF's Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme. It is open to anyone who can enter a 10-year agreement farmers, tenant farmers, landowners, voluntary bodies and local authorities.

17.18 Within community forests, wide-ranging agreements can apply to different landscape types. A number of agreements have already been entered into by farmers in Walling Chase, and several more potential sites are being looked at in detail by the Project Manager. This follows the 1994 survey of farmers which revealed considerable interest in Countryside Stewardship. The scheme offers great potential for the achievement of community forest objectives (Table 172).

Grants from the European Union

17.19 The three Structural Funds (Agricultural, Regional and Social) are the most important sources of finance and there are five main areas to support:

- forest planting and management, including creating new forests,
- conserving forests for wildlife and landscape,
- promoting recreation and tourism connected with new and existing forests,
- processing and marketing forest products, including small businesses, craft industries, and marketing groups,
- training and developing employment connected with forests.

17.20 However, 100% finance from these funds is rare. Support is usually 25%, and 50% is the highest. This should be in addition to any government grant.

17.21 Other funds support environmental initiatives (eg LIFE, Renewable Energy Sources, Green Tourism). Other community forests have already bid successfully for some of these funds, and the Watling Chase team will seek to emulate them.

Other sources of funding

17.22 In 1994 two initiatives were launched which could provide considerable amounts of funding to projects in community forests. The National Lottery has been set up by the Government to raise money for 'good causes' which do not have priority for public funds. Sports, arts and heritage projects all stand to benefit and the team will work with its partners to identify schemes suitable for a bid to the Lottery funds.

For economic regeneration projects, English Partnerships will offer opportunities. English Partnerships is a new agency which has taken over the former derelict land grant, city grant and English Estates. It will be publishing guidelines in autumn 1994 and will be offering a unified investment regime. Some derelict land money is already being attracted to sites in Walling Chase, and Groundwork Hertfordshire has negotiated a funding package with English Partnerships which includes the Upper Colne Valley area.

Grants to voluntary organisations and community groups

17.23 Where public land has been made available to

voluntary organisations or community groups, it may be possible to support local projects with grants from English Nature, Countryside Commission, Rural Action for the Community, the Shell Better Britain Campaign, etc.

17.24 The Watling Chase team will need to keep local groups informed of these grant schemes and assist with applications where appropriate. A great deal can be achieved even with these smallscale projects eg areas can be planted, ponds restored, existing woods managed, access and interpretation improved, all to the benefit of wildlife and local people.

Changes in the use of land

17.25 If the Watling Chase Forest Plan is to be implemented, landowners will need to change the use of some of their land. There are three ways in which this might be brought about:

- by sound economic advice supported by adequate grants and agreements,
- by buying land at market price,
- by giving planning consents with agreements and conditions.

The key players to enable this to happen are detailed in chapter 18.

Land acquisition

17.26 As presently constituted, a community forest cannot own land. However, Watling Chase could help other organisations (eg Woodland Trust, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust) to acquire sites consistent with the overall philosophy of the Forest. Various bodies, such as the Countryside Commission, Royal Society for Nature Conservation, Forest Enterprise, World Wide Fund for Nature, English Nature, Woodland Trust and National Lottery, can give grants for buying land, provided that certain criteria are fulfilled.

17.27 The Countryside Commission can offer up to 50% of the market price approved by the district valuer. It can also offer up to 50% of the cost of capital projects which help to conserve the countryside and increase peoples enjoyment

17.28 It is proposed that a key woodland and a bare site are bought in the first year or two This would demonstrate the purchasing power of the partnership, and create the opportunity to show good management practice and

successful implementation.

Commercial sponsorship

17.29 Commercial sponsorship for purchases and work will be actively sort where appropriate

Planning control

17.30 Planning policy and development control are the responsibility of local authorities Their adopted Local Plans identify where development is acceptable, the form it should take and how it could contribute towards implementing Watling Chase Community Forest The objectives of this Plan may be important considerations when determining planning applications in Watling Chase.

National Partners

Central Government

18.1 The Department of the Environment has extended the flexibility of Derelict Land Grant so as to apply to community forests, and it is now administered by English Partnerships.

18.2 It could review the relationship of community forests to other regional regeneration programmes, including those with European Union funding. As a major source of countryside grants, it will be central in financing community forests.

18.3 MAFF already supports the transfer of appropriate land from agriculture to woodland, through the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme.

18.4 The Department of Transport will also have an important impact on Watling Chase because of motorway widening schemes. Its assistance with effective planting around these corridors and junctions will help to realise some of the objectives of the *Watling Chase Forest Plan*.

Countryside Commission

18.5 The Countryside Commission is a statutory agency which cares for the countryside of England and helps people to enjoy it. It acts as the Government's adviser on countryside matters. It first promoted the concept of community forests in its policy statement *Forestry in the Countryside*, in 1987. Since then, the commission has played a central role by establishing and funding project teams and carrying out research. It will continue to play a major part in sustaining commitment and support from all partners. Grants are likely to be available for:



*Houses of Parliament
Central Government support*

- continued funding for the project team,
- Countryside Stewardship,
- Countryside Management Service projects,
- buying land and developing recreation,
- arts in the countryside,
- environmental education,
- support for community groups,
- Parish Paths Partnership and an accessible countryside.

Forestry Commission

18.6 The Forestry Commission is the Government department responsible for forestry policy and implementation. It is now divided into the Forest Enterprise, which manages forests, and the Forestry Authority, which advises, gives grants and sets standards. The Forestry Authority is the arm which is largely responsible for implementing the Watling Chase Community Forest under the commitment outlined in the statement Forestry Policy for Great Britain (Forestry Authorities 1991). The Forestry Commission will play an important role by providing:

- the necessary forestry expertise and technical advice, training, research and publications,
- grants as incentives to create and manage woodland,
- a review of available grants to ensure that they are appropriate and adequate to the tasks,
- acquiring new areas of multipurpose woodland through Forest Enterprise.

English Nature

18.7 English Nature advises Government on nature conservation. It promotes, directly and through others, the conservation of England's wildlife and natural features.

18.8 English Nature has stated its support for the community forest initiative and has given guidance on the design and management of the new forests in its publication *Nature Conservation and the New Lowland Forests (1991)*.

It will play an important role in the success of the venture by providing:

- ecological surveys, research advice and an overview

- of nature conservation planning,
- coordination between various local agencies,
- grants for creating new habitats,
- support for voluntary management of local wildlife areas and environmental education

Sports Council

18.9 The Sports Council is an independent body established to increase participation in sport and physical recreation and the quality and quantity of sporting facilities, raise standards of performance and provide information. The Sports Council provides the secretariat to the Eastern Council for Sport and Recreation (ECSR), which is a regional advisory body for sport. The ECSR is required to produce regional strategies.

18.10 The Sports Council has made a significant contribution to the plan by supporting the research on sport and recreation in the area, and will in future act as an agency for the National Lottery.

18.11 In the context of the recent policy statement *A Countryside for Sport (1992)*, the Sports Council will be very important in.:

- advising landowners on providing and managing recreational facilities on their land,
- setting up demonstration projects to help to promote a range of activities,
- providing funds to help to achieve appropriate facilities,
- setting up joint training and liaison with governing bodies and sports clubs to identify suitable sites for activities and to help mutual understanding,
- supporting the funding of a possible sport and recreation development post in Watling Chase,
- helping to promote the active use and enjoyment of the Forest by local people, in a sustainable manner.

English Heritage

18.12 English Heritage (Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission) is a statutory body responsible for heritage conservation.

18.13 By contributing to the Plan through the county archaeologist and others, English Heritage will have a key role in developing Watling Chase. Its support will be needed in:

- acquiring further knowledge in the area to ensure the conservation of important sites,
- giving advice and financial assistance to landowners where key sites are involved,
- advising on the management and interpretation of existing archeological and historic sites

Eastern Arts

18.14 Eastern Arts is the regional arts board for the east of England, covering Watling Chase. With the Arts Council of Great Britain, the Crafts Council, the British Film Institute and the nine other regional arts boards, it forms part of an integrated national structure to support and develop the arts.

18.15 The boards work covers the whole arts field and includes financial help to artistic organisations and events, and for a wide range of regional projects and services, including advice and general support to arts organisations, local authorities and other agencies.

18.16 The boards mission is to develop a wide range of activities of the highest quality, to stimulate artistic innovation and creativity and to extend involvement in the arts throughout the regional community. It can play its part in the community forest initiative by.

- supporting a partnership-funded arts development post in Watling Chase,
- helping to develop an arts strategy for the Forest,
- encouraging local authority partners to produce mission statements for the arts and preparing specific arts policies,
- considering grants for specific arts/crafts activities and commissions,
- providing advice and guidance for arts initiatives,
- providing information to the Watling Chase team on regional and national arts developments

National Rivers Authority

18.17 The National Rivers Authority (NRA) was established in 1989 with statutory responsibilities and powers for pollution control, water resources, flood defence, fisheries, recreation, conservation and navigation in England and Wales. The NRA also undertakes an extensive research and development programme to ensure that the best ways of protecting, improving and managing the water environment are used.

18.18 The NRA welcomes the community forest initiative, which will contribute to environmental improvement and benefit recreation and amenity. It will help the implementation by:

- funding river corridor surveys in the Forest area,
- providing guidance on appropriate tree planting and management beside rivers and streams,
- helping to create and restore habitat, through the enhancement programme, where funding is available,
- investigating, implementing and monitoring solutions to low-flow problems,
- preparing the Colne Catchment Plan (due to be produced during 1996-1998),
- developing the amenity and recreational potential of waters and associated land,
- working in partnership on the water environment with other organisations.

Water companies

18.19 The water companies (eg Three Valleys Water Services plc and Thames Water plc) are obliged to liaise and consult on conservation, access and recreation under the 1989 Water Act Code of Practice.

18.20 They are studying the potential use of their water-based sites and are preparing strategies for conservation, access and recreation.

18.21 They can contribute to the development of the community forest by:

- supporting the Watling Chase initiative,
- including Watling Chase objectives within their conservation, access and recreation strategies,
- providing financial support or help in kind for projects of mutual benefit

Local Partners

18.22 The four partner authorities (Hertfordshire County Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council and the London Borough of Barnet) will be especially important in planning and implementing Watling Chase Community Forest. They continue to make direct financial contributions to the project.

18.23 The Watling Chase team is also seeking to involve neighbouring local authorities in the partnership and has approached the London Borough of Harrow, Watford Borough Council, Welwyn Hatfield Council and the London Borough of Enfield, which owns land within the Forest.



*Napsbury Hospital
Potential redevelopment and planting site*

In general local authorities can:

- develop a corporate approach to the Forest across all departments and committees,
- incorporate Watling Chase objectives, not only into the development and management of their own land in the Forest, but also in to their planning, leisure, arts, education, conservation and sport policies and strategies,
- support, with other agencies, the acquisition and development of appropriate sites in the creation of the Forest,
- consider the approved community forest plan in preparing development plans,
- have regard to the community forest plan, where appropriate and pending the review of development plans, as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications,

- contribute expertise through close liaison with the project team

What do these partners need to do?

Hertfordshire County Council

18.24 Hertfordshire County Council needs to:

- continue to support the Watling Chase project by helping to core fund the project team and supporting the initiative in the structure plan,
- support Watling Chase objectives through its highways and minerals functions and actively pursue the implementation of schemes,
- manage highways positively,
- continue positive land reclamation programmes, particularly on land it owns,
- retain farm buildings and, in cooperation with tenants, manage land in line with Watling Chase objectives,
- where possible, make land available for planting trees and creating habitat,
- support and promote appropriate farm diversification in cooperation with tenants,
- encourage whole farm plans for all farms,
- continue to core fund the Countryside Management Service as a major co-ordinator and manager of local projects and sites,
- continue to facilitate community action and volunteer



*Shenley Park Trust orchard
Countryside Stewardship site*

involvement,

- continue to support the Hertfordshire Environmental Information Service,
- encourage new forest-related enterprises and jobs,
- continue to support the Environmental Foundation Centre initiative and the various successful county environmental trusts (eg Groundwork Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire Archeological Trust and Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust),
- designate and encourage management of Countryside Heritage Sites,
- ensure that the definitive rights of way map is accurate and up to date,
- support the Countryside Commission's aim to have the entire rights of way network legally defined, properly maintained and well publicised by 2000,
- continue the Parish Paths Partnership to give local people resources and skills to enable them to improve the condition of their rights of way and to keep them open and in use,
- allocate money for the developing access to the countryside,
- continue its development plans for Aldenham Country Park,
- protect monuments,
- promote development of codes of practice for locating and managing potentially contentious sports,
- develop new methods of support for environmental education,
- develop new ways of supporting the arts,
- collaborate in preparing and publishing design guidance for converting farm buildings.

London Borough of Barnet

18.25 London Borough of Barnet needs to:

- continue to support the Watling Chase project,
- consider the approved community forest plan in preparing development plans,
- have regard to the community forest plan, where appropriate and pending the review of development plans, as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications,
- support the Countryside Management Service,
- support other voluntary environmental organisations,
- improve footpaths, bridleways, cycleways and open spaces,
- promote and encourage environmental education and the use of school grounds for environmental studies,
- ensure that woodlands, heaths, grassland, common and open spaces are appropriately managed,
- encourage local communities to be involved in local environmental projects (eg Barnet Gate Wood),
- encourage tenant farmers to participate in Countryside Stewardship, improve hedgerows and plant trees,
- identify and provide sites for planting trees and creating habitat within the Forest,
- establish new picnic sites, small car parks and viewpoints,
- encourage new forest-related enterprises and jobs,
- collaborate in preparing and publishing design guidance for converting farm buildings,

- review and update the Countryside and Green Space Management Strategy,
- manage highways positively,
- update the definitive rights of way maps,
- support the Countryside Commissions aim to have the entire rights of way network legally defined, properly maintained and well publicised by 2000,
- continue to support the London Ecology Unit, with their specialist ecological knowledge and advice.

Hertsmere Borough Council and St. Albans City and District Council

18.26 Hertsmere Borough Council and St. Albans City and District Council need to:

- continue to support the Watling Chase project,
- consider the approved community forest plan in preparing development plans,
- have regard to the community forest plan, where appropriate and pending the review of development plans, as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications,
- prepare local strategies to help to promote and implement the Watling Chase Forest Plan.
- support the Countryside Management Service,
- support other voluntary environmental organisations by maintaining grant aid,
- improve paths and open spaces,
- ensure that local communities are involved in environmental projects,
- manage sites in their ownership according to

community forest principles,

- identify and provide sites for planting trees and creating habitat within the Forest,
- establish new picnic sites, small car parks and viewpoints,
- collaborate in preparing and publishing design guidance for converting farm buildings,
- encourage new forest-related enterprises and jobs

Parish and town councils

18.27 Parish and town councils are active in much of the Watling Chase area and are a very important link with local communities. They have a key role in developing and maintaining community woodlands and recreational and leisure facilities, especially rights of way.

They will need to:

- Support the *Watling Chase Forest Plan*.
- help to disseminate information about the Plan.
- help to identify local projects and get people involved in them.
- work closely with the Countryside Management Service and other voluntary organisations.
- manage and improve any land they own, with Watling Chase objectives in mind.
- join the Parish Paths Partnership.

Farmers and Landowners

18.28 The Country Landowners Association, the National Farmers Union and other bodies (eg Tenant Farmers Association, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, MAFF) will play an important part in developing the Forest.

They will need to:

- help to publicise the Watling Chase initiative through their membership.
- disseminate information about grants and incentives as well as opportunities for diversification.
- keep the Watling Chase team up to date with changes in Common Agricultural Policy and other matters which affect *Watling Chase Forest Plan*.
- help to set up a farmers forum and ensure that the farming community is fully represented during the implementation of the Plan.
- help the Watling Chase team in the search for farms with sites for planting trees and creating habitats.

Individual farms and landowners will need to:

- manage existing woodland as an example of good practice.
- sustain healthy and productive agriculture within the Forest.
- incorporate environmental and recreational objectives into their whole farm plans.

Business Community

18.29 Watling Chase will be attractive to local business and industry because it will improve the local environment for their workforce and customers.

Their involvement can take various forms and bring several benefits. They can:

- manage sites in keeping with the objectives of Watling Chase Community Forest.
- carry out environmental improvements on their sites,
- include environmental benefits in line with the Watling

Chase objectives in any new development proposals,

- encourage staff to participate in local tree planting or site management projects,
- give help in kind for events, promotions and practical projects,
- sponsor local projects,
- develop new forest-related enterprises and create jobs,
- become corporate members of local environmental trusts

Countryside Management Service

18.30 Much of the role of the Countryside Management Service is defined by the Countryside Strategy (Hertfordshire County Council 1992). It will be able to:

- provide advice, practical help and possible sources of funding for planting trees, creating habitats and managing sites,
- facilitate community action and involvement in the rural action network,
- help to identify sites where trees or hedges could be planted or habitats created,
- assist in designating sites as Local Nature Reserves and Countryside Heritage Sites,
- devise integrated management schemes for common land, village greens, roadside verges and other sites,
- encourage and coordinate the involvement of volunteers from local communities in Watling Chase projects,
- help to develop access and interpretation,
- support the Parish Paths Partnership,

- work to improve the rights of way network and circular routes,
- encourage and promote a wide range of quiet, informal recreation in Watling Chase,
- assist with establishing gateways to the Forest and information points within it,
- help to plan, organise and publicise events and activities on a range of themes,
- help to develop an environmental education strategy.

Voluntary Sector

Environmental groups

18.31 A large number of organisations will have a special role in helping to:

- support the initiative and spread information about it,
- help to manage existing trees and woods, plant trees and create habitats in Watling Chase,
- increase knowledge about the value of sites,
- acquire sites by supporting and organising appeals,
- manage existing sites

They will do this with the help of their local members and other established networks.

Woodland Trust

18.32 The Woodland Trust is Britain's largest charity concerned solely with the acquisition and management of woodland. The Trust protects Britain's heritage of native and broadleaved trees by acquiring existing woodland and open land on which to plant trees, and by managing those woods in perpetuity. The Trusts own objectives link closely with the community forest vision and it backs the initiative wholeheartedly and wishes to be an integral part of its work. It will need to:

- seek to acquire existing woodlands to manage as examples of good practice,



*BTCV Volunteers
Scratchwood open space*

- seek to acquire bare sites on which to create woodlands,
- seek sites for license planting schemes,
- maintain the national priority for community forests and support for the Trusts Community Forest Liaison Manager,
- develop partnerships with private and public landowners for creating and managing woodland,
- liaise at local level over individual tree planting projects,
- supply resources to support appropriate projects in the Forest area,
- provide advice and help through the local woodland officer,
- involve local communities and encourage informal recreation on Trust sites.

Groundwork Hertfordshire

18.33 Groundworks mission nationally is to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement and management of the local environment by developing partnerships which empower individuals, businesses and organisations to maximise their impact and contribution to environmental, economic and social well-being.

18.34 Groundwork has already been involved in some key projects with the Watling Chase team (eg the Gateway to Hertfordshire at South Mimms) and this relationship will develop further. It will need to:

- encourage volunteer and community participation in implementing the project,
- advise on reclaiming sites and organise the funds to support the restoration,
- help to plan and implement projects in built-up areas,

industrial sites and the urban fringes,

- help to develop access and interpretation,
- identify urban wildlife sites and opportunities for habitat creation,
- work to improve the rights of way network and circular routes,
- help to devise an environmental education strategy for the Forest area,
- continue its work to improve road corridors and junctions in line with Watling Chase objectives,
- take the lead on the Upper Colne Valley project,
- help to promote the community forest area and identity.

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

18.35 A registered charity, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) enables volunteers from all sections of the community to take practical action in towns, cities and the countryside.

18.36 The BTCV is especially active in the London Borough of Barnet and is already involved in joint projects with the Watling Chase team. It will need to:

- continue employing staff to coordinate projects,
- help to involve volunteers and the community in local projects,
- assist with training and establishing good practice among these volunteer groups,
- appoint a volunteer coordinator;
- work closely with the Countryside Management Service in the area.

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group

18.37 This charity (FWAG) relies upon the support of its members, conservation bodies, national and local government and other organisations, including the National Farmers Union.

18.38 Through its farm conservation advisers, FWAG provides advice to farmers on both wildlife conservation and landscape. This work helps to stimulate the management of an attractive living countryside in ways which can benefit everyone. It will need to:

- support the Watling Chase initiative,
- continue its valuable work with farmers which already helps to achieve community forest objectives (eg whole farm plans),
- advise on the best methods of communicating with farmers in Watling Chase

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust

18.39 The Trust is a registered charity dedicated to protecting wildlife and wild places for everyone It is one of 47 county wildlife trusts in the Royal Society for Nature Conservation (RSNC), the Wildlife Trusts' Partnership. The Trust has already been involved in joint projects with Watling Chase and will continue to make a significant contribution. It will need to:

- continue to manage its nature reserves in Watling Chase (eg Hilfield Park Reservoir, Broad Colney Lakes),
- consider, within its acquisitions policy, establishing new nature reserves within Watling Chase,
- provide advice, expertise and support for implementing the Watling Chase Plan and especially its nature conservation policy guidelines,
- assist in surveying existing and developing woodland and other sites of ecological importance,

- assist landowners in drawing up plans for managing specific sites,
- identify sites for habitat creation,
- help to involve local communities in a variety of activities,
- distribute information about access and recreation within Watling Chase,
- help to devise an environmental education strategy for the area.

London Wildlife Trust

18.40 The London Wildlife Trust (LWT) is also a member of the RSNL and operates within the London boroughs. It will, therefore, have a special role to play in the London Borough of Barnet. It will need to:

- continue to manage its nature reserves in the area (eg Rowley Green Common, jointly with the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust);
- consider establishing new nature reserves within Watling Chase,
- help to improve access and site interpretation,
- assist in involving local communities in a range of activities within the Forest area,
- work to devise an environmental education strategy for the area,
- distribute information about access, recreation, events and activities within Watling Chase.

Hertfordshire Conservation Society

18.41 The Hertfordshire Conservation Society cares for the county's countryside. It seeks to ensure that any changes inflict as little harm as possible on the county and its towns

and villages. The society monitors planning applications and promotes protection of the countryside through initiatives such as the Hertfordshire Conservation Awards. As representatives of the Council for the Protection of Rural England in Hertfordshire, the society deals with major issues on its behalf. It will need to.:

- support the Watling Chase Community Forest initiative,
- continue to monitor planning applications within the Forest area,
- continue to make a positive contribution to preserving the quality of rural life (eg Best Kept Village Competition, Hertfordshire Conservation Awards)

Community Council for Hertfordshire

18.42 The Community Council for Hertfordshire is very experienced at working with community groups, especially at parish level. It offers advice, support and training. Its special place in the network of rural community groups and volunteers is therefore of value to the Watling Chase initiative. It will continue to make a contribution by:

- coordinating Rural Action for the Environment by administering project grants and networking with relevant organisations,
- spreading information about the WatlingChase initiative via its magazine Hedgehog,
- offering expertise on village appraisals and parish maps.

Hertfordshire Archeological Trust

18.43 The Hertfordshire Archeological Trust (HAT) is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. It provides a comprehensive range of archeological expertise. However, its specialism is project based fieldwork and includes the recording of the built and buried environment. The Trust supports the Watling Chase initiative and:

- provides advice on archeological fieldwork matters,

- produces research designs and work specifications,
- executes 'desktop studies', field survey and evaluations,
- assists with mitigation strategies,
- inputs educational information.

Local People

18.44 The success of Watling Chase Community forest is irrevocably linked to the support, commitment and participation of local people.

18.45 Their practical involvement in raising money, developing ideas, undertaking practical work and enjoying their own countryside will be vital to the success of this long term plan.

They can help to implement the vision by:

- spreading the word about *Watling Chase Forest Plan* and encouraging others to take part in the consultation process,
- helping to raise funds and support for local projects,
- helping with the practical tasks such as planting trees, managing woodland, clearing footpaths and restoring ponds,
- organising events and activities,
- encouraging the setting up of local countryside watch schemes,
- enjoying the existing and new countryside facilities

Getting people involved will be achieved by:

- disseminating information using a variety of methods and opportunities,

- the consultation process itself which will help by seeking people's views on the concept and content of the *Watling Chase Forest Plan*,
- practical involvement in local projects,
- encouraging them to take part in local planting, after-care and management,
- using the local network of volunteers (eg Countryside Management Service, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Community Council for Hertfordshire, Groundwork Hertfordshire, PArish Councils etc),
- gaining sponsorship and help in kind from local businesses for community projects
- ,
- developing the feeling of local ownership of community woodlands and other projects.

Local Community, amenity and interest groups

18.46 These groups have genuine concerns about the future of their countryside and, as such, will be important in influencing local decisions and participating in local projects, fundraising and events. In some cases they will ultimately take responsibility for managing local sites.

18.47 A good example of this is the St. Albans Community Forest Association, which has, in a very short time, become involved practically on two local sites and helped to raise awareness of the Forest through a range of publicity, exhibitions and events. It received a Barclays Community Forest award as a result.

Local groups and societies can make an important contribution by:

- giving specialist advice and support during the implementation of the Watling Chase Plan,
- sharing practical land-management expertise,

- becoming members of appropriate advisory committees,
- disseminating information,
- involving their members in practical tasks, fundraising and events.

Schools and Colleges

Youth and community groups

18.48 Local schools and colleges have already contributed a lot to the Watling Chase initiative, e.g. tree planting, tree dressing, Christmas card recycling). Gaining the commitment of young people is essential if the long term ambitions of the Forest are to be realised. We have already made an excellent start but we will need continued support by:

- inviting groups to participate in local events and projects,
- using the Forest as a teaching resource,
- helping young people to enjoy the local countryside and its facilities,
- encouraging schools to manage grounds for wildlife,
- using the Denis Bland Environmental Education Centre and other Field Study Centres for environmental education,
- ensuring that other youth and community groups (such as Scouts and Guides) continue and develop their involvement. Individual projects may qualify for various schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award.



Bromet School

Watling Chase Team

18.49 The Watling Chase team has a central role in ensuring the successful implementation of a community forest in the area. Its key function is one of 'enabling':

working with the national and local partners, inspiring, advising and catalysing new projects. The function of the project team derives from:

- the central place and exclusive focus of the community forest on the project team's agenda,
- the teams ability to take a strategic view of the area, drawing together policy and implementation work, and coordinating and guiding expenditure programmes
- the project teams links into external resources of finance, advice, support and expertise,
- the core of experience, knowledge and expertise that exists within the project team

18.50 The project team has a number of important roles to play, namely to:

- implement the Forest Plan through five year action programmes,
- promote the community forest vision with a wide range of organisations in the public. private and voluntary sectors,
- seek the cooperation, involvement and partnership of private landowners and landowning and tenant farmers in the development of the community forest,
- provide a wide range of advice, expertise and access to grant aid,
- secure adequate resources for the community forest in a variety of ways including raising private sector funding and sponsorship and by targeting grant aid from agencies into the area,
- involve and work with the local community in the creation and management of the community forest,
- ensure that the community forest is effectively established and managed.

Marketing and Promotion

Marketing Strategy

19.1 To stimulate more interest in and understanding of Watling Chase Community Forest, it will be necessary to raise awareness of the project team and what it is aiming to achieve. A marketing strategy will be produced and incorporated into the business plan, which will guide the implementation of the Watling Chase Forest Plan, once it has been approved and adopted.

Corporate image and the Countryside Commission

19.2 The Countryside Commission is now developing its marketing strategy for the community forests nationally. The Watling Chase steering group will endorse this and work within it (eg the community forest logo and the strapline 'Forests For The Community' will be used on all Watling Chase stationery)

19.3 Watling Chase will seek to establish its image and identity by branding items such as goods for sale, woodland signs, stationery and publications with its own logo

A Forest Centre

19.4 A key factor in promoting the Watling Chase vision and identity will be the establishment of a Forest Centre, where branded interpretative literature and goods will further reinforce the image.

19.5 A Forest resource centre would include a building for exhibitions, study and activities, together with land to demonstrate multipurpose forestry. It will be important to assess the site requirements and financial implications of this



*Rowley Green common
Local Nature Reserve*

as soon as possible in order to plan the next step and consider any suitable opportunities.

19.6 This is quite separate from the Environmental Foundation Centre proposed by Hertfordshire County Council.

Publicity

19.7 All Watling Chase activities and events will need maximum media coverage, building on the awareness raised by the launch of the draft Forest Plan and the subsequent public consultation period. This will require contacts with local radio and television journalists, regular press releases, and the help of celebrities.

A regular newsletter, including an events diary, may be useful for communicating with interested parties and supporters

Other ideas to be considered in the marketing strategy include:

- travelling exhibition,
- permanent exhibitions/displays at Forest Gateway sites (eg Monken Hadley, Scratchwood, Stanmore Country Park, Bricket Wood Common, Bowmansgreen Farm, South Mimms),
- road signs -you are now entering Watling Chase Community Forest

Progress and Monitoring

20.1 Here are some examples of progress towards a Watling Chase Community Forest

- Hertfordshire County Council creates the first community woodland at Bullens Green,
- St. Albans Community Forest Association, the first Watling Chase support group, helps to restore an old copse in Napsbury Wood,
- the London Borough of Barnet plants trees to enhance the urban Edgwarebury Park, increasing its wildlife and recreational value,
- work at Knights Wood includes restoring a footpath that links into a longer Community Forest walk and re-excavating a pond and coppicing the trees that shade the water,
- St. Albans Sand and Gravel Company plants trees on a restored landfill site,
- Redland Aggregates plants reclaimed mineral land to enhance a footpath route,
- Greenwood Park, Chiswell Green, receives Forestry Authority funding through the Woodland Grant Scheme,
- tree planting at, for example, Sunny Bank Junior and Infant School, creates a richer environment for learning and play,
- the Watling Chase team involves children in a 'Name the Forest' competition,



Groundwork's South Mimms gateway project: Wash Lane

- Hertfordshire County Council landscapes Bromet Junior School, South Oxhey,
- college students from the School of Art and Design, University of Hertfordshire, design decorations for Tree Dressing Day,
- Capel Manor students plant hedges in Aldenham,
- Sports Council funds essential sports and recreation research,
- Countryside Management Service promotes community action, providing on-the-ground expertise,
- project team liaises with local landowners,
- McDonalds supports Halloween event in Watling Chase,
- Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust supports community action in Watling Chase,
- Aldenham Parish Council enhances local recreation ground by planting trees,
- St Stephen Parish Council creates a new woodland close to local recreation facilities,
- Colney Heath Parish Council supports woodland creation at Bullens Green and management of the Common,
- Woodland Trust and Welwyn Hatfield Council, helped by local residents, create a new woodland at Angerland Common, linking into Bullens Green Community Woodland,
- Colney Heath and London Colney Parish Councils plant, in partnership, at Whitehorse Lane,
- woodland management carried out in Barnet,
- London Borough of Barnet enhances an urban parkland by planting a small area of woodland,

- Hertsmere Borough Council works with the Watling Chase team to develop new projects across the borough,
- St Albans City and District Council supports the Watling Chase team to turn the vision into reality,
- Denis Bland Environmental Education Centre, Barnet, increases children's awareness of the natural environment and creates a tree trail within the grounds,
- Mill Hill Preservation Society and London Borough of Barnet create a nature reserve,
- 'Trees Set the Scene' photographic exhibition, hosted by Hertfordshire County Council, promotes the Community Forest vision to local business, landowners, voluntary interest groups, schools and colleges,
- events programme run jointly with the Countryside Management Service and Barnet rangers,
- nature trail for able-bodied and disabled people developed in association with the Countryside Management Service and Mike Heaffey Centre,
- tree trail designed with the University of Hertfordshire at Wall Hall Campus,
- Forte works with the Groundwork Hertfordshire, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and Watling Chase to restore land at South Mimms as 'The Gateway to Hertfordshire',
- Countryside Management Service and Watling Chase develop a children's environmental play to promote understanding of changes in land use,
- London Borough of Barnet, BTCV, Countryside Management Service and Watling Chase team carry out a joint project at Barnet Gate Wood,
- St Albans Community Forest Association receives a Barclays Community Forest award for their continuing

contribution to the development of Watling Chase,

- Friends of Moat Mount Campsite receive a Barclays Community Forest award for their ambitious outdoor activity centre project,
- Countryside Stewardship agreements on several local authority-owned sites,
- Christmas card recycling scheme run very successfully with local schools and Boots stores,
- over 50 schools plant trees and shrubs with money raised from Christmas card recycling,
- London Borough of Harrow plants large new woodland south of M1 motorway,
- Forest Education Initiative is launched in Watling Chase schools

Monitoring and evaluation

20.2 Because of the long-term nature of the Plan it will need to be reviewed by the sponsors within three years to re-assess its content and direction in the light of changing circumstances.

Measurement of the success of each policy objective will use performance indicators (eg area of trees planted, uptake of grants available). Details of this monitoring and evaluation will be included in the business plan.

Long-term future

Organisation

21.1 Decisions will have to be made about the long-term management structure needed to take the Forest project forward. In the short term, the project team could continue for a further three years after 1995, when the present partnership agreement ends and a new memorandum of agreement is negotiated.

After 1998, options could include:

- the Forest team ceases to operate once the Plan has been endorsed by central and local government. A new agreement between local authority partners is based on a loosely constituted joint committee which is solely responsible for implementing the Forest Plan,
- the partners enter into a new agreement and sustain a project team to coordinate implementation of the Plan. The project continues to be part of the local government system, probably with a streamlined management structure,
- the partners enter into a new agreement to establish a more autonomous Watling Chase charitable trust, or company with charitable status. Partners could nominate trustees or directors to sit on the management board. There would also be the opportunity to nominate representatives of local landowners, industry and commerce. Essential core funding for the enterprise would still be from the public purse,
- the Watling Chase partnership is absorbed into an existing environmental organisation, probably one



*Bowmansgreen Open farm
farm diversification*

which is already a charitable trust and company limited by guarantee. It then operates as a branch of that trust and fulfils its objectives within the umbrella organisation. This would have economies of scale and time and would prevent unnecessary competition for scarce resources and duplication of effort from yet another organisation in an already overcrowded Hertfordshire environmental scene. However, it might be difficult to retain the distinctive focus of the community forest.

Funding

21.2 Assuming that the community forest has some sort of charitable status, fundraising will become increasingly important and a strategy within the business action plan will need to be devised. It will need to consider:

- membership by subscription,
- issue of forest bonds,
- business sponsorship and corporate membership,
- flag days and specific appeals,
- retail shop at the Forest Centre,
- legacy campaign,
- annual events and a Watling Chase presence at shows supported by local volunteer groups,
- support from charitable trusts and other grant giving bodies

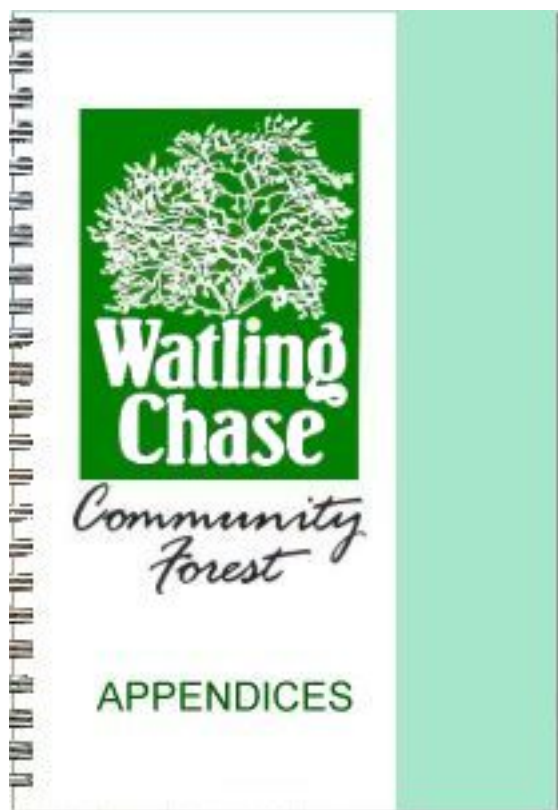
Possible long-term functions of the team

21.3 Once the future organisation of the Watling Chase team is decided, its long-term functions could include

- providing specialist advice and services,
- advising on grants,
- marketing and communications,
- managing property and contracts,
- attracting outside funding, including business sponsorship,
- coordinating partners, maintaining momentum,
- encouraging others, leading by example,
- owning land,
- managing sites.

Summary

21.4 During 1995, the partner local authorities will need to discuss and agree the most appropriate arrangements for achieving the Forest's objectives.



Appendices

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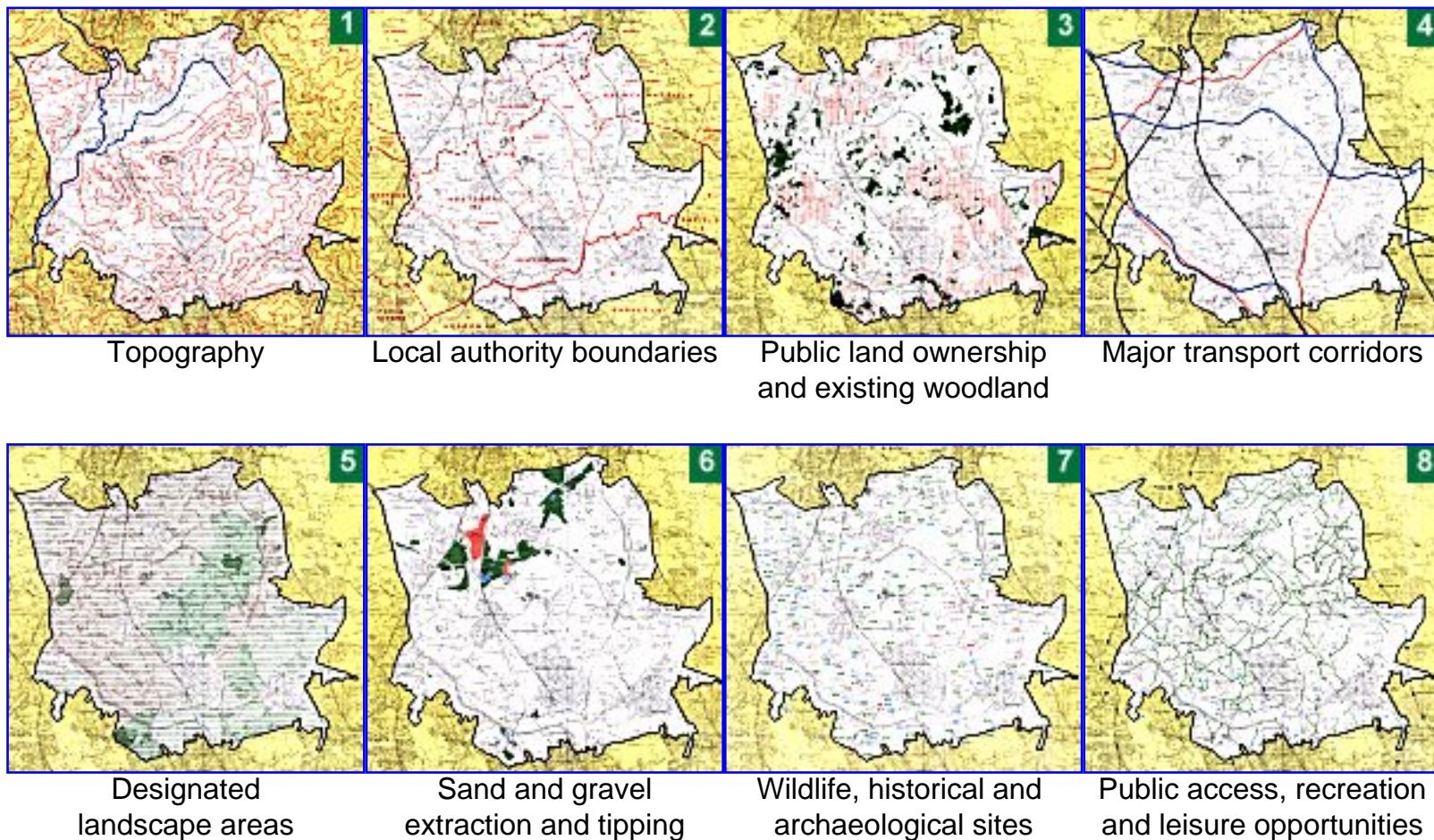
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Abbreviations used in these plans

BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
ECSR	Eastern Council for Sport and Recreation
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
HMWT LNR	Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust Local Nature Reserve
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
NRA	National Rivers Authority
RSNC	Royal Society for Nature Conservation
SERPLAN	South East Regional Planning conference
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest



Maps update

Maps 1-8 are unchanged from the draft Forest Plan. Four requests for very minor amendments were received during the consultation process. The steering group decided that the high cost of incorporating these changes was not justified; so, outlined below are the alterations, expressed in writing rather than cartographically

Map 3: Public land ownership and existing woodland

- Land owned by public bodies other than the local authorities to be added, eg Department of Transport, Health Authority and University of Hertfordshire land.
- Land north of Sopwell owned by St Albans' Council
- East of London Colney, boundary needs adjusting.

Map 5: Designated landscape areas

- Local Nature Reserves to be added All non-urban land in the Borough of Barnet to be shown as heritage land

Map 7: Wildlife, historical and archaeological sites

- New conservation areas at Sleapshyde, Park Street and Frogmore to be added.
- W138 at Sleapshyde to be removed from map.

Map 8: Public access, recreation and leisure opportunities

- River corridors to be identified as providing recreational opportunities.
- Cycle routes to be added

In addition, the steering group agreed to a minor extension to the Community Forest boundary in the Smallford area, east of St. Albans The boundary now includes the Glinwall Nurseries and adjoining sites between the Alban Way and the AJO57

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Credits

Acknowledgements

The Watling Chase Team (November 1994)

The Steering Group (November 1994)

Production Credits

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- Herts Association for the Disabled
- Herts Building Preservation Trust
- Herts Community Trust
- Herts Footpath Society
- Herts and Middlesex Ramblers
- Herts Natural History Society
- Herts Society for the Blind
- Herts Training and Enterprise Council
- London Borough of Enfield
- London National History Society
- London Wildlife Trust
- RSPB
- Watford Borough Council

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Artwork and Printing:	Jameson Press
Reference Maps:	Planning and Environment Information Unit
Landscape Visions:	CRC Cobham Resource Consultants
Photography:	Watling Chase, unless specified otherwise