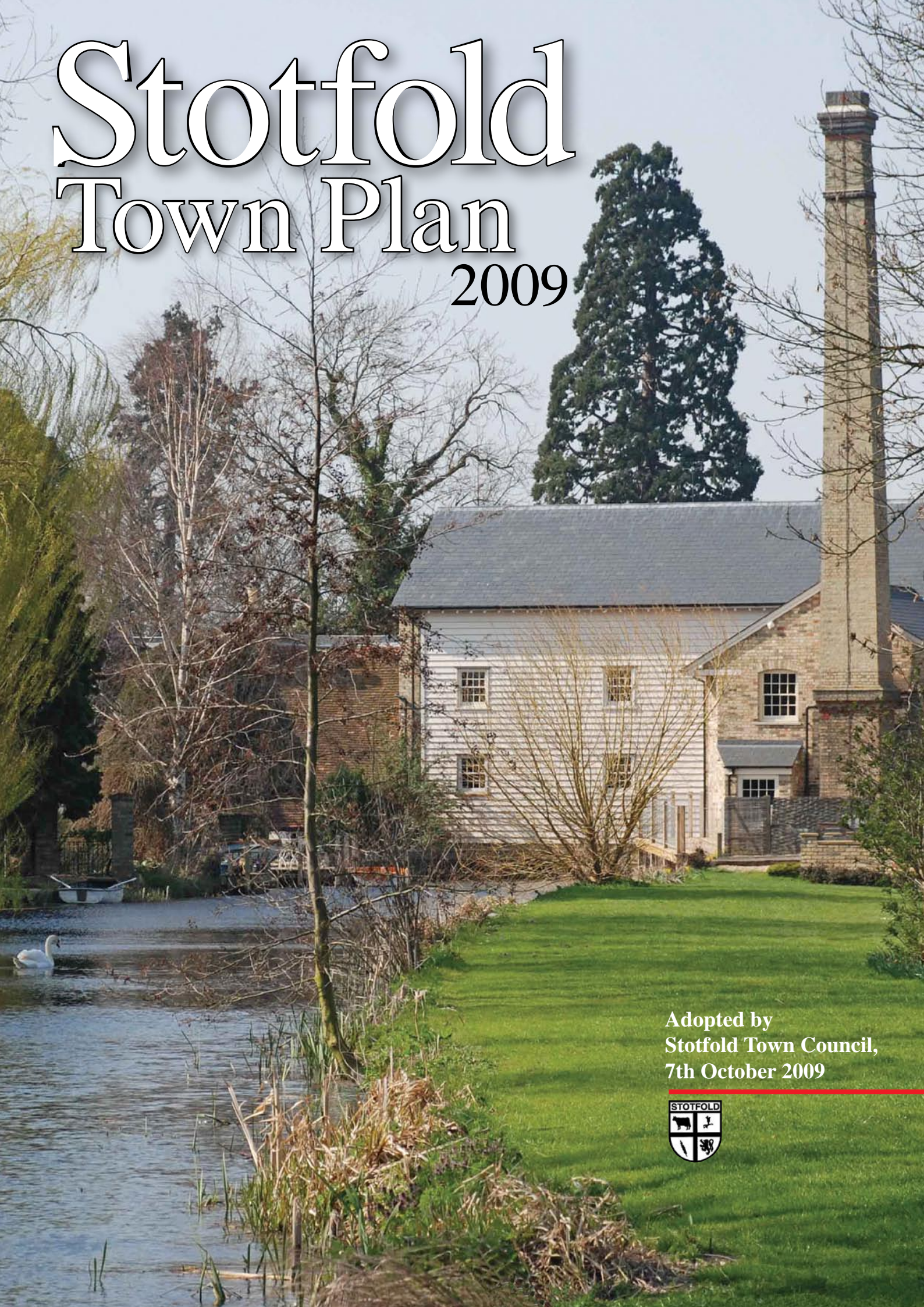


Stotfold Town Plan 2009



Adopted by
Stotfold Town Council,
7th October 2009



Stotfold Town Plan 2009

Produced with support and guidance from



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1 Introduction to the Stotfold Town Plan 2009

Stotfold's Town Plan represents several years of wide-ranging discussion and consultation amongst residents. The fact that 41% of households, with up to five respondents in some cases, took the time to complete the final detailed questionnaire is strong testimony to the pride we feel in the town and our concern for its future.

As residents of Stotfold, we trust that all decision-makers, whether at local, county or national level, will take this Plan into account before making decisions that will affect us and the surrounding countryside.

1.1 What is a Town Plan?

A Town Plan is produced after consultation with the entire community about how they would like their local area and services managed. A Rural White Paper in 2000 set out the Government's plans for the countryside. It was originally intended that only smaller parishes would have their opinions recognised; more recently towns have been encouraged to become involved in this process.

1.2 What are the advantages of Stotfold having a Town Plan?

- It gives the community a stronger voice and encourages involvement
- It will enable the Town Council to make decisions representing the community's wishes
- It provides evidence of need and will be used as a focus for influencing local authorities and service providers
- It can encourage community backing for specific projects
- The Action Plans focus on immediate needs, as well as projecting longer-term aims (up to 15 years ahead)

1.3 Who has led the Town Plan initiative?

In the initial stages the Steering Group comprised two Town Councillors and thirteen volunteer members of the general public. As time progressed,



Clockwise from top: The historic Ford Bridge on Malthouse Lane; children's playground at Fairfield Park; the restored Stotfold Mill on Mill Lane.

We trust that this Plan will be taken into account by those making decisions that will affect us

other residents joined to help create specific Focus Groups, plan and deliver the questionnaires and assist with analysis of the resulting data. (See Appendix for list of members etc.)

1.4 Where has the money come from?

The Steering Group secured funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and Mid Beds District Council (now Central Bedfordshire Council) to the sum of £3,500. Stotfold Town Council agreed funding to a minimum of 5%, with some 'in kind' contributions.

1.5 How will the Plan be actioned?

The Plan will be adopted by the Town Council and regular monitoring will take place. The Council may choose to form task groups that will involve residents in consultations aimed at implementing the Plan.

2 How Residents were Informed and Involved

The aim of the Steering Group was to carry out a series of consultations involving as wide a cross section of the community as possible. From the initial stages all residents have been given the opportunity to contribute ideas through their schools, organisations and in response to information announced in Stotfold News and the local press.

All Steering Group meetings have been open to the public and publicised in advance in the local press.

2.1 Town Plan events timetable

Key dates	Location	Activity
20.02.07	Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) Cardington	A group of Stotfold Town Councillors attend introductory session – Parish/Town Plans.
12.05.07 23.06.07	Mill Fair Festival Fete (Recreation Ground)	Displays showing the work of the Town Council; volunteers enlisted for Steering Group.
30.05.07	Simpson Centre	Town Council Enhancement Committee discussion (Minute 176) – "A Town Plan For Stotfold".
08.08.07	Simpson Centre	First meeting of Town Plan Steering Group – Terms of Reference agreed.
03.10.07		Application to DEFRA for funding.
16.10.07	Memorial Hall (rear hall)	Open meeting – invitations distributed to leaders of over 80 organisations (including schools and churches).
Oct 07- Jan 08	Stotfold News (Oct issue); Stotfold Mill 'threshing weekend'; Larksfield Surgery; Library; Simpson Centre	"Likes and Dislikes" – information gathering; Steering Group members also visit the following (as requested): Samuel Whitbread Community College, Etonbury School, St Mary's V.C. Lower School, Scout leaders, Salvation Army Women's Fellowship, Stotfold Women's Fellowship, Sunshine Group, Stotfold Chamber of Trade.
10.03.08	Simpson Centre	Setting up the Focus Groups – drafting questions as a result of data collected from "Likes and Dislikes". Focus Groups involved the following at meetings – Bedfordshire Police, Community Safety Group, Larksfield Surgery manager, TEASEL, local dentist, optician and pharmacy.
Mar 08- Jul 08	Mill Fair; Festival Week; Simpson Centre	"Planning for Real": information gathering; includes presence at Annual Town Meeting.
15.07.08		Application to Mid Beds District Council (MBDC) for funding.
04.09.08		Final questionnaire amended; business questionnaire posted online.
07.10.08	Simpson Centre	Bagging and distribution of questionnaires (70 residents volunteer).
08.01.09	Simpson Centre	Meeting of Town Plan Steering Group – emphasis on data analysis.
03.01.09- 19.02.09	Simpson Centre	First Meetings of Presentation/Publication Group: decision made to produce a Full Plan to be held at local/Central Bedfordshire level and a shorter version for residents.
4.03.09	Memorial Hall	Annual Town Meeting: the evening includes a presentation/update on Town Plan.
19.05.09	Memorial Hall	Steering Group: presentation of data analysis; re-forming the Focus Groups.
22.06.09- 23.07.09	Simpson Centre	Steering/Focus Groups: questionnaire analysis presented by Focus Groups with recommendations for actions.
11 & 24.08.09 7 & 22.09.09	Simpson Centre	Steering and Planning/Presentation Groups: finalising Full Town Plan – presentation of first draft to local Central Bedfordshire Councillors.
7.10.09	Simpson Centre	Monthly meeting of Stotfold Town Council: seek adoption of Full Town Plan. Plan adopted.



3 A Brief Look at the Changing Face of Stotfold

People have lived in Stotfold for almost five thousand years. The first written evidence is in the Domesday Book of 1086, which records a permanent settlement with four mills and “about 200 souls” farming the land.

The first census of 1851 recorded a small increase in population to 495 but in fifty years this more than trebled due to a building boom across the district. In 1860 the Three Counties Asylum was built at Fairfield Park; by 1893 this had 1,056 ‘inmates’ and a large staff. By 1951, the population of Stotfold had risen to almost 4,000 (not including the numbers of people at the renamed Fairfield Hospital) and the most recent census recorded 6,190 residents.

Significant expansion of housing is planned for the South of England and with further developments at Fairfield Park and the Land South of Stotfold already agreed, it is inevitable that the population will increase further. Information currently presented by Stotfold Town Council states that it now stands at some 7,600 people, of which 4,874 are of adult age.

Until the first quarter of the last

St Mary's Church, which dates back to the 12th century.

Despite the loss of some land to housing, Stotfold is surrounded by open countryside

century, this was mainly an agricultural area, but, as in the rest of the country, employment in farming has declined. Mechanisation has reduced the need for labour on the land and the growth of industry in nearby towns opened up other possibilities. Public transport and private car ownership mean people can travel further for shopping and services, leading to the closure of many local shops and businesses.

Despite the loss of some land to housing, Stotfold is fortunate in retaining much of its rural character, being surrounded by small woodlands and open countryside. The Kingfisher Way follows the River Ivel through the town, past Stotfold Mill and the historic Ford Bridge with its bat colony.

The town has a number of historically-interesting, listed buildings, including St Mary's Church with an excellent example of a 14th century stained glass window, Stotfold Bury and Fairfield Hall - an impressive piece of Victorian architecture. Stotfold Watermill, recently restored and producing flour once again, has become a major community project and is a building of special architectural and historical interest for the education and benefit of the public.

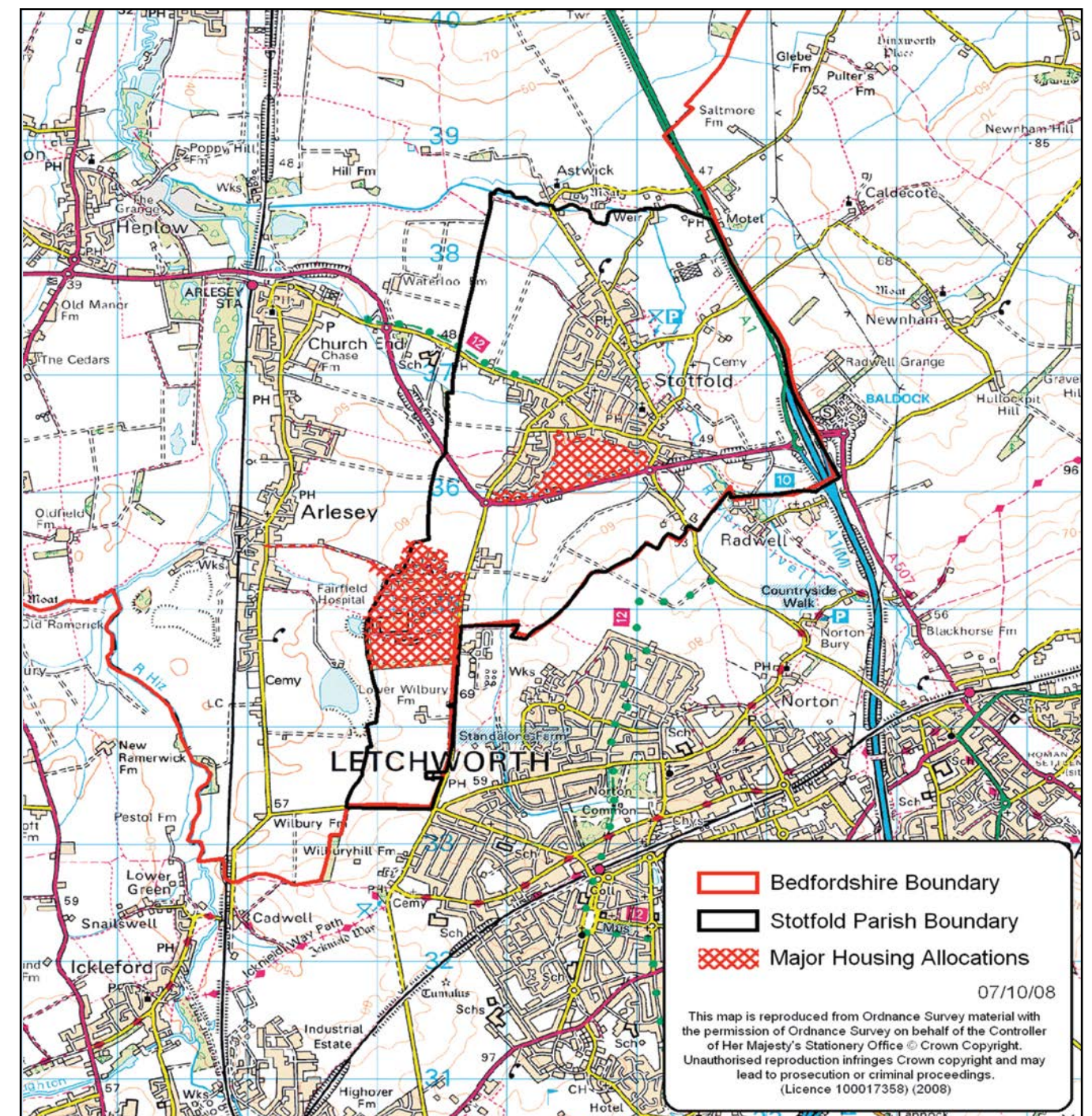
4 Location of Stotfold

The Bedfordshire town of Stotfold lies close to the Hertfordshire county border, within the former Mid Bedfordshire district, now identified as the Rural Area that forms the northern part of the Central Bedfordshire area. It covers an expanse of around 893 hectares (2207 acres), stretching from the A1/Great North Road on its eastern boundary towards Radwell and Letchworth to the south, Arlesey and Church End to the west and Astwick to the north.

This large parish includes the main town settlement, with the adjoining Fairfield Park development near its southernmost border. It is surrounded by a belt of open countryside that clearly separates it from the aforementioned other settlements.

Stotfold's most important geographical feature is the River Ivel, its valley running south to north through the open countryside east of the town. A smaller watercourse, the Pix Brook, flows through the western part of the town, south to northwest.

4.1 Map of Stotfold



5 Questionnaire Analysis and Recommendations for Action

The process began with a meeting to which all local groups and organisations were invited, and at which the importance of having a Town Plan was explained. Following the “Likes and Dislikes” and “Planning for Real” consultations, the Steering Group had collected sufficient evidence from a wide cross-section of the community to select the focus groups for the questionnaire.

The “Planning for Real” consultation event held during the Mill Fair weekend, May 2008



The formulation of questions took many hours of deliberation by the small groups which had opted to research topics of interest or concern. Further help and advice was sought from a variety of people with specialist knowledge or experience, including the local police officer and the Chair of the Community Safety Group who advised the Crime, Disorder and Policing Group. The local Scouts made a significant contribution, as did TEASEL, the local conservation group. Some of the research of the Environment Group has already been included in the Green Infrastructure Plan for Stotfold, produced by the BRCC and endorsed by Stotfold Town Council.

The Health and Social Care Group took advice from the practice manager at Larksfield Surgery, as well as the local dentist, pharmacist and optician. The Business and Employment and Town Centre and Shops Groups benefited from the involvement of the Chair of the Chamber of Trade and a local business management consultant.

All groups met regularly to ensure a consistent approach.

- Detailed data from each section is available as a separate document on request or can be downloaded from the Town Council website.

6 About Respondents’ Households

This section provided evidence of the demography of the 2,442 residents who completed the questionnaire, a significant return of 41%. The only recommended action for this section relates to the community’s sources of information.

6.1 Sources of Information – Recommendation Table

Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
To improve the Town Council’s own communication with residents.	i) Review the extent of use of Stotfold Town Council notice boards. ii) Provide notice board at Fairfield Park and at the Community Building on the Land South of Stotfold site. iii) Encourage use of new Town Council website including the News section. iv) Propose that younger residents have a section on the Town Council’s website.	High	1-2 years	Community; Stotfold Town Council; Fairfield Residents’ Association



7 The Environment

As in other sections, the responses reflected residents’ high valuation of the rural character of the town and its rivers, woodland and green spaces. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of retaining and enhancing these, with greater attention to tree planting, linked pathways and cycle ways. The areas of open countryside east of the town, alongside the River Ivel and its historic Ford Bridge, are particularly valued.

The proposed Local Nature Reserve at Mill Meadows will help to encourage knowledge and appreciation of local habitats, particularly amongst young people through the Education Programmes, based at Stotfold Mill and the new Wildlife Watch group, which will complement the Education Programmes already running.

It is to be hoped that planning officials at all levels will recognise the amenity value that the Stotfold community places on its rural environment for recreation and relaxation, taking this into consideration when making future planning decisions.

7.1 Future large-scale development

92.8% of respondents thought that future large-scale development in or

The open countryside surrounding the town is of great importance to its rural character.

around Stotfold should be restricted to brownfield sites.

7.2 Areas that residents visit

It is clear from analysis of residents’ responses that open spaces in and around Stotfold are greatly valued. The most visited area is The Green (47% of respondents), while 57.9% of respondents visit the green spaces and open countryside east of the town.

7.3 Areas to be preserved from development

Well over half of respondents stated that the River Ivel and its surrounding green spaces and open countryside, east of Stotfold, forms the area that is most important to conserve and protect from all kinds of future development.

Heavy traffic should be removed from our quiet lanes by placing a weight restriction on the roads connecting with the A1, and so protect the Ford Bridge, part of the acknowledged heritage of Stotfold.

7.4 Planning green areas

97.2% of respondents thought that attention should be given to the planning of new green areas and the planting of trees in new areas of development. ▶

The Stotfold community places great amenity value on its rural environment for recreation and relaxation

7.5 Linking footpaths, byways etc.

74.4% of respondents thought that the linking of footpaths, byways, bridleways and cycle paths into a Public Rights of Way network is very important in order to enjoy the local environment. Only 2.8% said it is not important.

7.6 Residents' use of footpaths, byways etc.

54.1% of respondents often use Stotfold's footpaths, byways, bridleways and cycle-paths. Only 4.8% never use them.

7.7 Encouraging use of Public Rights of Way

Well over half of respondents thought that the clearing and linking of footpaths would encourage greater use of Stotfold's Public Rights of Way network.

7.8 Environmental problems

67% of respondents suggested that dog fouling is the most significant environmental problem faced by the town, with litter a close second, registering 59%. Fears concerning the strain placed on local infrastructure (by existing pressures and further development) are also a major concern for 49% of those responding.



Stotfold's Rights of Way network is used regularly by most respondents.

The negative effects of cars on the environment are also noted, with some residents stating that the issue of climate change should be addressed.

7.9 Environmental initiatives to improve quality of life

Stotfold residents are broadly supportive of environmental initiatives to improve the quality of life in Stotfold, even at some financial cost to the community. However, it should be noted that there is no clear front runner in terms of the numbers of residents supporting particular initiatives, with "frequent litter collection and street cleaning" (53% of respondents) edging ahead of "encouragement for the agricultural sector" (49%) and "greater protection for wildlife and plant life" (44%).

7.10 The Environment – Recommendation Table

Ref:	Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
7.1	Ensure that the wishes of Stotfold residents, for large-scale development to be restricted to brownfield sites, are fully recognised relative to the formulation of all future planning policies, within the Site Allocations process and in the consideration of planning applications.	Deliver this Town Plan to Central Bedfordshire planning officers, and all other parties involved in the planning process, so that it may be referred to during formation of future planning policy, within the Site Allocations process and in the consideration of planning applications.	Immediate/high	Immediate/ongoing	Community; Central Bedfordshire Council planning officers and members; Stotfold Town Council
7.2	Ensure that the wishes of Stotfold residents, to conserve its green spaces and open countryside, are fully recognised relative to future planning initiatives (as above).	i) As above. ii) Refer the above parties to the Stotfold Green Infrastructure Plan.	Immediate/high	Immediate/ongoing	Community; Central Bedfordshire Council planning officers and members; Stotfold Town Council

Ref:	Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
7.3	Ensure that the wishes of Stotfold residents, to protect its green spaces and open countryside from all kinds of development – particularly those surrounding the River Ivel Valley, east of Stotfold – are fully recognised relative to future planning initiatives (as above). The existing roads, including Malthouse Lane and its historic Ford Bridge, must also remain as quiet lanes.	i) As above. ii) Refer the above parties to the Stotfold Green Infrastructure Plan.	Immediate/high	Immediate/ongoing	Community; Central Bedfordshire Council planning officers and members; Stotfold Town Council
7.4	Ensure that the wishes of Stotfold residents, to see new green spaces and the planting of trees in new areas of development, are fully recognised relative to future planning initiatives, as above.	Consult with all parties involved in the planning and development processes, ensuring that this Town Plan is referred to during the consideration of planning applications and the formation of 106 agreements and future planning policy.	Medium	Ongoing	Community; Central Bedfordshire Council planning officers and members; Stotfold Town Council; developers
7.5	Plan a works programme for the eventual linking of Stotfold's footpaths, byways, bridleways and cycle paths into a Public Rights of Way network.	i) Arrange meetings with all parties and stakeholders, to produce a map of the proposed new network, with due consideration of each activity (firstly researching existing, disused or historical Rights of Way, then considering proposals for the enhancement or extension of existing routes and the creation of new routes). ii) Refer the above parties to the Stotfold Green Infrastructure Plan.	Medium	Ongoing	Community; Central Bedfordshire planning officers and members; Stotfold Town Council; TEASEL; Countryside Access and Rights of Way officers; landowners
7.6	Ensure that the importance of the Public Rights of Way network in Stotfold is fully recognised by all planning officers/officials, environmental groups and landowners.	Draw this matter to the attention of all appropriate and interested bodies.	Immediate	Ongoing	Community; Central Bedfordshire Council planning officers and members; Stotfold Town Council; TEASEL; Countryside Access and Rights of Way officers; landowners

7.10 The Environment – Recommendation Table (continued)

Ref:	Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
7.7	Implement a works programme to include: clearing and linking of footpaths; creating safe access where Rights of Way cross or run alongside the A1 or A507; upgrading some footpaths into bridleways and cycle tracks; clearer signs indicating Rights of Way; greater availability of information leaflets and maps promoting Rights of Way; better access for those with mobility problems.	Arrange meetings with all parties and stakeholders involved in this process to produce a map of the proposed new network, with due consideration of each activity. Consider how proposals are to be implemented and relevant works carried out.	Medium	Ongoing	Community; Central Bedfordshire Council planning officers and members; Stotfold Town Council; Countryside Access and Rights of Way officers; landowners
7.8	Ensure that the views of Stotfold residents are fully recognised in all planning initiatives. Seek assurances from all parties involved that all relevant policies and laws will be applied and enforced.	Arrange meetings with relevant representatives of public or private sector organisations to seek the most positive outcome for the resolution of particular problems on a case-by-case basis.	Immediate	Ongoing	Community; Central Bedfordshire Council planning and highways officers and members; Stotfold Town Council; Environment Agency; Highways Agency; Internal Drainage Board; utility companies; Bedfordshire Police
7.9	i) Explore all funding opportunities for initiatives to improve the environment. ii) Promote environmental responsibility in schools. iii) Make more public information about environmental issues available locally, including in Stotfold News. iv) Resist over-development. Ensure implementation of existing policies and laws.	i) Arrange meetings with all parties and stakeholders involved in this process to seek the most positive outcome for the promotion of particular initiatives on a case-by-case basis. ii) Consider how proposals are to be implemented and relevant works carried out.	Immediate	Ongoing	Community; Central Bedfordshire Council planning and highways officers and members; Stotfold Town Council; Environment Agency; Highways Agency; Internal Drainage Board; utility companies

8 Business and Employment

Much of the population works outside the town and the majority of respondents would prefer this to continue if the alternative is further loss of green fields, especially the open countryside, including water meadows, along the Ivel Valley. In this century, home-working and the growth of small businesses is likely to increase and there may be a need to provide further small business units and services to facilitate this.



Stotfold linked to the establishment of more shops and small businesses. 32% want to see the encouragement of jobs in agriculture; slightly fewer (25%) want light industrial work to be available.

8.1 Increased employment opportunities in Stotfold

While 39% of respondents believe that there should be active strategies to encourage more employment opportunities in Stotfold, 61% stated it was better for people to work outside the town if it meant there would be less development.

8.2 Types of new business needed

Nearly half of respondents want to see more employment opportunities in

Most respondents would welcome new businesses concordant with Stotfold's rural environment.

More jobs in agriculture should be encouraged

8.3 Business facilities needed

Where people had commented on which facilities might be helpful to small businesses, computer/internet access, parking for a van or small lorry and office space are regarded as having most importance.

8.4 Where to locate businesses

The overwhelming response (93.5%) was that there should be no further development of any kind in the town, except on brownfield sites.

8.5 Business and Employment – Recommendation Table

Ref:	Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
8.1/ 8.2	Publicise small business units on Mill Lane and elsewhere locally.	Information to appear in Stotfold News and on the Stotfold Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council websites.	Medium	Ongoing	Community; Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council; Business Link; Stotfold News
8.3	Seek to provide facilities for small businesses; book-keeping; computer /internet access; parking for van/ small lorry.	i) Liaise with private service providers locally. ii) Develop promotional strategy to advertise services.	Medium	3-5 years	Community; private service providers; Stotfold Chamber of Commerce; Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council
8.4	No new developments except on brownfield sites.	Deliver this Town Plan to Central Bedfordshire Council, so that it may be recognised during formation of future planning policy, within the Site Allocations process and in the consideration of planning applications.	Immediate	Immediate	Community; Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council planning officers and members



9 Town Centre and Shops

Stotfold has grown up over the years without a clearly defined town centre and the current businesses and services are spread throughout the town. There would be significant benefit in the improvement of the area around the current Co-operative Store to create a more coherent shopping area. Many respondents would like to be able to purchase locally produced fruit and vegetables at a Farmers' Market.

9.1 Use of shops and services in Stotfold

The majority of respondents do not shop in, or obtain services in, Stotfold (67% and 73% respectively), though the percentage using local shops and services increases relative to age.

Commercial premises on the High Street and Hitchin Road.

Stotfold would benefit from having a clearly defined town centre

9.2 Factors to encourage shopping in Stotfold

More people would shop in Stotfold if there was a wider variety of shops and a bank located in the town. A more clearly defined town centre (near the existing Co-op), with an improved street scene, would also encourage local residents to shop here.

9.3 Additional shops and amenities desired

Over half the respondents would wish to see a greengrocer and/or a Farmers' Market in Stotfold.

9.4 Use of Stotfold Post Office

The majority of respondents use Stotfold Post Office, located in the Co-operative Store.

9.5 Town Centre and Shops – Recommendation Table

Ref:	Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
9.1	Improve area of shops near Co-op/High Street as follows: improve parking provision; landscape area; introduce traffic calming measures; provide a directory of businesses, displayed in suitable places, with map.	i) Discuss a co-ordinated plan for future of the area with local councillors and Central Bedfordshire planning and highways officers. ii) Draw up list and map using an artist and local expertise; also promote businesses on Town Council website and in Stotfold News.	Medium	3-5 years	Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council; local shops, including Co-op; Stotfold News
9.2	Monitor provision of a community building and new shop at north end of the Land South of Stotfold development.	Engage with developers, local councillors and Central Bedfordshire planning officers to consider how a more cohesive town centre might be delivered.	Immediate	Immediate	Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire; developers
9.3	i) Seek provision of a bank in Stotfold. ii) Establish Farmers' Market.	i) Approach banking companies, including the Co-op, regarding the provision of banking services, which would encourage greater footfall in this area. ii) Approach local Farmers' Markets organisation and investigate Farmers' Markets locally. Seek suitable site, consulting local councillors and Central Bedfordshire officers.	Medium Medium	3-5 years 3-5 years	Banks; Stotfold Town Council; Stotfold Chamber of Trade Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council; Farmers' Market network; Tastes of Bedfordshire; local farmers
9.4	Ensure retention of Stotfold Post Office.	Monitor any future change in relevant Government policy.	Immediate	Ongoing	Community; Post Office; Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council

10 Housing

A significant number of large developments for housing (Fairfield Park, Land South of Stotfold) have already been agreed by local planners and will place local infrastructure including schools, health services, drains and roads under even greater strain. The town lies along the River Ivel and there are worries about current and future developments on, or close to, flood plains and water meadows, as well as on open countryside valued by local residents for recreation and relaxation.

Recent developments have seen large numbers of houses crammed into small spaces, with poor provision of trees and green areas and lack of adequate parking, occasionally causing neighbourhood tension.

Planners should note that merely restricting road widths and parking spaces in new developments without efficient, local public transport only increases congestion on the roads.

10.1 Types of future housing development

There was a clear majority (64%) in favour of the conversion of redundant buildings to create further housing provision. Otherwise, the prevailing view is that any future development should be on a small scale. It is felt that large-scale development or edge-of-town expansion, which would significantly change Stotfold's character, should be avoided.

10.2 Types of housing that are appropriate

Many respondents (approximately 71%) thought that future housing provision for special groups and the elderly is as important as starter and family homes. Younger respondents showed a bias towards starter homes, whereas the over-60 age group showed a clear bias towards retirement homes.



Clockwise from top: recently constructed houses within the Fairfield Park development; an older thatched property in central Stotfold; Grade II listed Fairfield Hall, now converted into luxury apartments.

However 25% of responses stated that no more land should be developed.

10.3 Locations for development

Many more people are actively against development of specific areas of Stotfold, compared to the number who favour certain areas for future development. A clear majority of respondents of all ages consider that Malthouse Lane, and the surrounding open countryside, is not suitable for development, regardless of where they currently reside; the Fairfield area is considered the most acceptable place for future development.

10.4 Design of new buildings

90% of respondents stated that they are interested in the design of new housing and any future developments.

10.5 Restriction of development to brownfield sites

90.1% of respondents are in favour of development being restricted to brownfield sites.

Malthouse Lane, and the surrounding countryside, is not suitable for development

10.6 Housing – Recommendation Table

Ref:	Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
10.1	i) Attempt to limit further developments to a small scale to retain character of the town. ii) Seek to ease 'change of use' restrictions in order to promote the conversion of existing buildings.	Deliver this Town Plan to Central Bedfordshire planning officers, and all other parties involved in the planning process, so that it may be referred to during formation of future planning policy, within the Site Allocations process and in the consideration of planning applications.	High	Immediate	Community; Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council
10.2	i) Seek the provision of accommodation for the elderly – to replace Hallworth House – and more sheltered housing and starter homes in Stotfold. ii) Seek greater provision of affordable housing within any future developments.	Deliver this Town Plan to Central Bedfordshire Council and other parties involved in the planning process, including developers.	High	Ongoing	Community; Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council; Aragon Housing; developers
10.3	Investigate means to achieve protected status for Malthouse Lane area with the appropriate bodies.	i) Lobby actively against any development in Malthouse Lane area, seeking its designation as an area of local/conservation/scientific/natural/beauty/interest. ii) Seek advice from appropriate bodies to achieve protected status for it within existing planning laws.	High	Immediate	Community; TEASEL; Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council
10.4	Encourage greater community involvement with the existing and emerging planning process.	Promote public planning consultations and encourage residents to comment on specific planning applications.	High	Ongoing	Community; Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council
10.5	Ensure that the wishes of Stotfold residents, for large-scale development to be restricted to brownfield sites, are fully recognised by all parties involved in the planning process, and relative to all future planning initiatives.	Deliver this Town Plan to Central Bedfordshire planning officers, and all other parties involved in the planning process, so that it may be referred to during formation of future planning policy, within the Site Allocations process and in the consideration of planning applications.	High	Ongoing	Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council planning officers and members; Stotfold News

11 Recreation and Community

Exercise is increasingly linked to good health and it is notable that the countryside and green areas of the town provide the main location for sport or exercise for all ages. The construction of the new leisure centre should enable the provision of a number of the sports and activities currently unavailable in the town. While many residents advocated the provision of a swimming pool, this should be a future target if public use of the facilities suggests that it would be cost effective.

11.1 Sports and leisure

More than 58% of people walk for recreation within Stotfold, with 29% of respondents also participating in cycling. Approximately one and a half times as many people pursue sports activities in Stotfold rather than elsewhere. However, 12% of respondents were actively involved in swimming outside of the town and many highlighted a desire for swimming facilities here. A significant number of respondents were particularly interested in facilities for dance and outdoor and indoor bowls.

11.2 Why residents use facilities outside the town

The lack of certain sports facilities within Stotfold is the major reason why 71.7% of people go elsewhere with a further 17.5% of respondents stating that they participate in sport elsewhere to be with friends based outside the town. Many people (25% of those who made additional comments) take advantage of sports activities offered near their place of work or within their working day. More than 50% of the sporting activities engaged in outside of the town are those provided by leisure centres.

11.3 Facilities included at the leisure centre on Arlesey Road

The question of which facilities residents might use most received a high number of responses, indicating a significant level of interest. There is a real demand



The Memorial Hall, Hallworth Drive.

There is a real demand and enthusiasm for the range of services that will be offered at the leisure centre on Arlesey Road

and enthusiasm for the range of services that will be offered. Badminton courts and a fitness suite appeared to be the most popular facilities (23% and 29% respectively).

11.4 Other facilities for the Leisure Centre

The overwhelming response to the question of which other facilities respondents would like to see in the new leisure centre is for a swimming pool to be provided.

11.5 Children's play equipment

There appears to be little significant difference in levels of usage of the three play areas in central Stotfold. These play areas were used approximately twice as much as those located at Fairfield. Usage of the Fairfield facility may increase as the estate becomes mature.

11.6 Rating of play equipment

A clear majority, (more than three quarters) of people thought that the play equipment at Fairfield is both good and exciting. More than 60% of people thought that the play equipment in central Stotfold is good but unexciting. Though the Town Council has a regular programme of safety inspections and maintenance for the central Stotfold equipment, the difference in age of this and the new Fairfield Park equipment may give rise to differing perceptions of maintenance at the various sites.

11.7 Use of the MUGA

Very few respondents (148) currently use the Multi Use Games Area at the Riverside Recreation Ground, which represents just less than 50% of those



The Riverside Recreation Ground (incorporating Multi Use Games Area).

under the age of 25 who answered the questionnaire. Additionally, a further 456 respondents said they may use it in the future.

11.8 Reasons for not using the MUGA

Very few responses were received to this question. The main reason stated is that the MUGA is remote (116 respondents) or too far away (67 respondents). Many were unsure how to book the MUGA and some were dissatisfied with its condition.

11.9 Other facilities for young people

A little over half of respondents thought Stotfold's young people would benefit

from youth clubs, organised activities and an indoor youth meeting point, whereas 19% thought that an outdoor meeting point, or youth shelter, would be useful. A further 26% were in favour of a Youth Voice project. Over 24% of respondents of all ages thought evening transport would be desirable. However, it was very clear that this issue was much more important to young people and nearly 30% of the 18 to 25 year age group thought that the provision of transport would be of value.

11.10 Community facilities used by residents

Almost 50% of all respondents use the Stotfold library, and the Memorial Hall is also clearly well utilised (nearly 40%), possibly because of the wide range of activities it can cater for. The Simpson Centre is used less, but it is a smaller venue and clearly not such a wide range of activities can be held there. Church halls are widely used, as is the Roecroft Centre, and together they represent a very good addition to the range of venues available to local residents.

11.11 Recreation and Community – Recommendation Table

Ref:	Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
11.1	Promote full range of current sporting facilities and opportunities within the town.	Advertise locally – in Stotfold News, on the Stotfold Town Council website/notice boards and at Larksfield Surgery – to promote activities offered through SPARK (Bedfordshire Further Education).	High	Immediate/ongoing	Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council; SPARK; Stotfold News
11.2	Ensure targeted promotion – on completion of the leisure centre – to encourage maximum participation in sports and leisure activities within Stotfold.	Continue to advertise as above, also delivering promotional material to each household locally.	Medium	As soon as leisure centre is operational	Stotfold Town Council; leisure centre management company; local sports clubs
11.3	Confirm fitness suite and badminton court proposals for new leisure centre.	Liaise with Stotfold Town Council.	High	Immediate	Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council
11.4	Promote maximum use of leisure centre to encourage future swimming pool provision.	As above – 11.2 and 11.3.	Medium	3-5 years	Community; Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council

11.11 Recreation and Community – Recommendation Table (continued)

Ref:	Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
11.5/ 11.6	i) Consult on types of most popular equipment. ii) Upgrade all three central Stotfold play areas by provision of new more exciting equipment.	i) Distribute questionnaire and/or discuss with parent/child groups. ii) Look for other sources of funding to help ease the financial burden.	Medium	Ongoing – rolling programme	Community; Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council
11.7/ 11.8	i) Raise awareness of facilities and how to access them. ii) Publicise and promote MUGA location, facilities (pitches/courts), booking arrangements and costs and safety.	i) Advertise the MUGA provision. ii) Evaluate the impact of the promotion and adjust promotional methods to improve effectiveness.	High	Immediate	Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire youth services; Aragon Housing; Bedfordshire Police; local schools; youth organisations
11.9	i) Review current facilities with a view to increasing activities for young people.	i) Liaise with providers of youth activities from Central Bedfordshire and investigate funding sources e.g. Streetcred.	High	Immediate	Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire youth services; Aragon Housing; Bedfordshire Police; local schools; youth organisations
	ii) Conduct feasibility study for provision of youth club/ youth shelter/Youth Voice project.	ii) Survey all local youth organisations to determine what activities are already provided.	High	1 year	
	iii) Assess need of transport to approved venues within Stotfold and other localities outside the town.	iii) Arrange Forum for discussion of proposals with young people.	High	1 year	
		iv) Explore with Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) schemes for reduced rate minibuses for hire by groups.	High	1 year	
11.10	i) Review library opening hours in conjunction with information on usage.	i) Work with Central Bedfordshire and library staff to see if expansion of provision is appropriate. Assess whether the increased size of the town now requires additional opening hours and review the need for IT facilities.	High	1-2 years	Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council; Bedfordshire Library Service
	ii) Confirm the view of library staff that the availability of computers is insufficient to meet the need.				
	ii) Review range of activities currently available at all venues across Stotfold and seek to maximise the usage of existing venues.	ii) Examine the responses from 11.2: evaluate any activities that are undertaken elsewhere which could be delivered via existing facilities.	High	1 year	
	iv) Promote availability of a full range of facilities from the differing venues within Stotfold.	iii) Advertise and encourage use of events diary on Stotfold Town Council website.			



12 Health and Social Care

Stotfold is fortunate in having a dentist, optician, pharmacy and health centre. However, access to other services is often difficult for those without private cars, especially older people and young mothers, because of a lack of effective public transport. As the percentage of the population over 60 increases, this is likely to become a more significant problem.

12.1 Use of Larksfield Surgery and service provision

87% of respondents are registered with the Larksfield Surgery. Of these, 4% were concerned when they could not get an appointment with their preferred doctor. Difficulties in making appointments, by telephone, in the mornings were highlighted. Social care provided by the health centre could be improved with an expanded health visitor service to new mothers, babies and young children.

Larksfield Surgery
on Arlesey Road.

Travelling to health facilities can be difficult due to a lack of effective public transport

12.2 Accessing other health services

Travelling to health facilities (such as hospital/dentist/chiropractor) outside Stotfold by public transport is a cause for concern. This particularly affects the 26-44 age group (possibly young mothers with children) as well as the 60-74 year olds, who do not drive. “No problem whilst able to use own transport” sums up the response to this section.

12.3 Health service transport

Over 50% of respondents did not know of the shuttle service and the hospital volunteer service to local hospitals.

12.4 Social care support

Almost 59% of respondents express the need for more information on support services – both social and personal – that are available in the community.

12.5 Health and Social Care – Recommendation Table

Ref:	Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
12.1	Recommend an extension to the present surgery to meet the needs of a growing population.	Deliver this town Plan to Central Bedfordshire Council and Larksfield Surgery, encouraging dialogue between their representatives, monitored by local councillors.	Medium	Ongoing	Central Bedfordshire Council; Larksfield Surgery; NHS Bedfordshire; NHS Hertfordshire
12.2	i) Highlight the need for additional services provided by Larksfield Surgery for the community. ii) Seek provision of improved chiropody and speech therapy services and an expanded health visitor service to new mothers, babies and young children.	i) Consult with Larksfield Surgery doctors and managers to discuss the comments made in this Town Plan. ii) Promote local awareness of existing facilities in the surgery, Stotfold News, Stotfold Library and on the Town Council website.	Medium	Ongoing	Larksfield Surgery doctors and managers; NHS Bedfordshire; NHS Hertfordshire; Stotfold Town Council; Stotfold Library; Stotfold News
12.3	Highlight the present transport facilities for medical appointments outside Stotfold for those without access to a car and those who cannot drive.	Promote local awareness of existing facilities.	High	Ongoing	Larksfield Surgery; Stotfold Town Council; Stotfold Library; NHS Bedfordshire; NHS Hertfordshire; Stotfold News
12.4	Work towards reinstating an Action Point to give up-to-date community information. This could be a manned central point within the town where information on support services, both social and personal is available.	i) Discuss ways to meet the needs of the community with Central Bedfordshire Council and Stotfold Town Council, increasing awareness of existing means of accessing information. ii) Provide more information leaflets in Town Council offices and Stotfold Library, repeated on the council's website.	High	Ongoing	Central Bedfordshire Council; Stotfold Town Council; Larksfield Surgery; Stotfold Library



13 Crime, Disorder and Policing

Stotfold is generally a safe town in which to live and this is recognised by the majority of respondents. However, increased policing is seen as highly desirable to prevent small-scale, anti-social activity developing into more serious offences.

13.1 Public safety in town

The general view of residents is that the level of crime does not cause them to feel unsafe. Fewer than 3% feel fairly or very unsafe when walking alone during the day, although this rises to 28% at night.

13.2 Perception of crime in Stotfold

Over 50% of the respondents were able to compare their perception of crime in Stotfold with that of other (unspecified) towns in the area, and of these, around half felt that the level of crime was lower, whilst only 5% believed it was higher.

13.3 Awareness of crime reduction schemes

When considering local efforts to reduce crime only 56% of respondents were aware of the Neighbourhood Watch



Police enforcement at street-level is a significant concern for local residents.

scheme, whilst fewer than 20% were aware of actions against Cold Calling.

13.4 Experience of criminal activities

When asked whether and how they had been affected by crimes in the past two years, the majority of incidents referred to were those activities that affected the wider community. Reports recorded incidents involving anti-social behaviour (904 instances), vandalism (381), car vandalism (219), fly tipping (211) and graffiti (171). Drug and alcohol offences were also significant (180), whilst reports of burglary and car theft were 96 and 47 respectively.

13.5 Measures to reduce crime

Residents expressed a wish to see a reduction in crime, particularly that of a nature offensive to the community as a whole. Many of the additional comments referred specifically to young people in the context of such incidents. Recommendations for actions almost all related to increasing police presence in the town, particularly at weekends. Regular foot patrols were preferred to car patrols, but a number of respondents referred to the possibility of using bicycles. The suggestion of a police contact point was also supported.

Increased policing is seen as highly desirable

13.6 Crime, Disorder and Policing – Recommendation Table

Ref:	Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
13.1/ 13.2	Improve communication between police and members of the public, including prompt feedback on reported offences.	Maintain (in the continued absence of a police station) a dedicated police office within the town and the continuation of 'surgeries'.	High	Ongoing	Community; Bedfordshire Police; Stotfold Town Council; Stotfold Community Safety Group
13.3	Positive joint actions by police and community to prevent and solve crimes.	Promote and encourage membership of Neighbourhood Watch and Stotfold Community Safety Group.	Medium	1-5 years	Community; Bedfordshire Police; Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators; Stotfold Community Safety Group
13.4/ 13.5	<p>i) Obtain a higher level of policing in order to reduce drunkenness, drug use and youth-related vandalism.</p> <p>ii) Improve reporting of crimes and disorder.</p>	<p>i) Request more regular and visible police presence on the street.</p> <p>ii) Ensure residents are aware of the importance of reporting incidents, providing information on how to do this in Stotfold News and on the Stotfold Town Council website.</p>	High	Ongoing	<p>Community; Bedfordshire Police; Community Safety Group; Central Bedfordshire youth services; Homewatch; Stotfold Town Council</p> <p>Bedfordshire Police; Stotfold Town Council; Stotfold News; Community Safety Group</p>

14 Traffic

Despite the construction of the A507 bypass, the increased number of households has led to greater numbers of cars, which are already placing stress on existing roadways. Speeding traffic is also seen as a general problem. The streets are unsuited to heavy vehicles and there should be more emphasis on preventing these from accessing the A1 through the town, while promoting use of the bypass. Heavy traffic should be restricted from the rural lanes to the north and east, and especially from crossing the historic Ford Bridge. Existing industrial units to the east of the town are approved for light industrial use only and this should be noted relative to all planning applications.

14.1 Rat run – The Avenue

Whilst the largest single response was to make no changes to this road, an overall majority favoured some action to reduce its use as a rat run. Raised tables or width restrictions were the preferred actions. Other suggestions, including a one-way system, would require policing and enforcement measures.

14.2 Rat run – Brook Street

Most respondents considered a problem existed in Brook Street, and the favoured solution was for the introduction of a one-way system. There was also significant support for the use of raised tables, with less in favour of a midpoint block. Other suggestions relating to limiting speed or parking would require policing measures. The fact that a problem is perceived by a majority of people suggests that further investigation with the appropriate bodies is merited. The difficulty of policing and enforcement suggests that the access restriction currently in place should be lifted, preferably after an alternative solution is selected.

14.3 Rat run – Queen Street/ Rook Tree Lane

Most people felt there should be no change here, but the additional comments identified particular problems relating to



The escalating number of vehicles on local roads continues to cause major problems.

Heavy traffic should be restricted from accessing the A1 through the town, and via the rural lanes to the north and east

parking near St Mary's School at the start and end of the school day, and at the Queen Street/High Street junction.

In respect of the school, the most common suggestions were the introduction of raised tables or a 20mph speed limit (see also 14.6). There was also strong support for extending the parking restriction to a longer stretch of the road. Since the completion of the survey it has been reported that a national introduction of a 20mph limit near schools might be adopted.

Additional comments related to encouragement to walk to school. In the short term, discussions between appropriate officers or bodies and the school, its governors and School Association might be helpful.

Solutions suggested for the Queen Street/High Street junction include parking restrictions and double yellow lines. These might merit further discussion.

14.4 Other roads used as rat runs

Responses highlighted the general problem of parked cars in many parts of the town (see section 15 also). Most notable were references to Hitchin Road and Regent Street. In the latter case the effect is for vehicles to transfer to Vaughan Road where comments suggest speeding is a problem. This issue might merit further investigation.

14.5 Restriction of heavy vehicles

The response to this issue was overwhelmingly in favour of restricting the use of certain roads by heavy

vehicles (around 92%). Realistically, without a major change to the infrastructure, it is impractical to ban such transport from the major roads through the town. However there seems no reason why restrictions should not be introduced on the rural lanes to the north and east of the town that lead to Astwick and the A1. To this end, a weight restriction on the Ford Bridge should be introduced. Future developments should include the provision of access routes that do not bring heavy vehicles into central areas.

14.6 Speed limit outside schools

87% of respondents were in favour of the introduction of a 20mph speed limit near schools. Opinion was almost equally divided as to whether this should apply at all times or only for limited periods on school days. The issue is now a matter for national consideration, but if it does not enter legislation there is strong local support for its introduction in the town. Comments received indicate that the restrictions recently introduced near Etonbury School have not necessarily been complied with. Local police are taking action on these matters.

14.7 Problems with speeding vehicles in town

There was a large majority in favour of measures to reduce the amount of



A two kilometre stretch of cycle path links Stotfold and Arlesey.

It is felt that there is a need for greater provision of cycle paths

speeding traffic in the town. All three suggested sites were favoured – Arlesey Road (43%), Hitchin Road (32%) and Regent Street (25%). The most popular measure was the introduction of flashing signs. Since these have now been installed on both the Hitchin and Arlesey Roads, we need to monitor and estimate their effectiveness and consider whether a similar sign would be appropriate in Regent Street. Three quarters of residents did not wish the signs to be funded by an increased Council Tax.

14.8 Use of cycles and cycle paths

40% of respondents currently use bicycles and this figure would rise to 60% if there were greater provision of cycle paths. 83% of all respondents felt that there was a need for more cycle paths. Where it could be managed, 64% felt there might be shared pedestrian and cycle paths. Less than 10% thought cycle paths could be accommodated on existing roads. 26% found neither approach unacceptable.

14.9 Suitability of pavements

Whilst 55% of respondents said the pavements are satisfactory for pushchairs, wheelchairs and mobility vehicles, a significant 45% disagreed. This is an unsatisfactory result and investigation and action should be taken to gain improvements.

14.10 Traffic – Recommendation Table

Ref:	Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
14.1	Carry out a further review of the problems in The Avenue.	Discuss with the relevant agencies and consult with residents living in the vicinity and using the road.	Medium	3-5 years	Community; Bedfordshire Police; Central Bedfordshire Council highways department; Stotfold Town Council
14.2	The current access restriction to Brook Street should be lifted, as it is unenforceable. Serious further consideration should be given to the introduction of a one-way system.	As above.	High	1-2 years	As above

Ref:	Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
14.3	i) Introduce a speed restriction of 20mph near St Mary's School and Roecroft School.	i) Discuss with the school, its community and the relevant agencies.	High	1-2 year	Community; St Mary's and Roecroft Schools' governors and schools' associations; Central Bedfordshire Council education and highways departments; Bedfordshire Police; Stotfold Town Council; Community Safety Group
	ii) Encourage actions to reduce parking by parents, including the introduction of 'walking buses'.	ii) Discuss with the school, its community and the relevant agencies.	High	1-2 years	
	iii) Request appropriate agencies to conduct study of Queen Street/High Street junction.	iii) Discuss with the relevant agencies.	Medium	3-5 years	
14.4	Further investigation of traffic problems associated with Vaughan Road and Regent Street.	Discuss with appropriate bodies and link to future infrastructure.	Medium	3-5 years	Community; Bedfordshire Police, Stotfold Town Council, Central Bedfordshire Council
14.5	i) Pursue the introduction of a Quiet Lanes Initiative (Countryside Agency) to ban heavy vehicles from the lanes linking the north and east of the town to the A1.	i) Seek support of appropriate agencies.	High	Immediate	Community; Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council
	ii) Introduce weight restriction on Ford Bridge.	ii) Resist any attempt to alter the bridge's structure.	High	Ongoing	
	iii) Ensure that any future developments provide suitable access routes, preventing large vehicles from accessing the central area of the town.	iii) Make this a clear expectation relative to any future development.	Medium	3-5 years	
14.6	As 14.3	As 14.3	High	1-2 years	As 14.3
14.7	Monitor the effectiveness of the flashing signs on Arlesey Road and Hitchin Road.	Seek opinions of Community Safety Group and other interested parties.	High	1-2 years	Community; Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council
14.8	Seek priority for the provision of cycle paths across the town and linking to Arlesey, North Hertfordshire and beyond.	Use planned routes and investigate links, identifying parts of the town where joint pedestrian/cycle paths might be created to the minimum national recommendation. Bring this information to the attention of future infrastructure planners.	High/medium	2-5 years, then ongoing	Sustrans; cycle user groups; Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council
14.9	Improve quality of pavements for all users – including increasing pavement widths and dropped kerbs.	Encourage residents to identify and report problem areas.	High/medium	Ongoing	Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council highways department

15 Parking

On many of Stotfold's older streets, off-road parking is unavailable and this has led to a number of access problems. Parking outside schools at peak hours is also recognised as causing difficulties. Within new developments, the lack of sufficient parking spaces has led to access problems and conflicts between residents. Throughout the town parking on pavements causes significant problems.

15.1 Problem parking locations

The questionnaire highlighted the concerns over parking outside schools (see also 14.3 & 14.6). Whilst the issue occurs mainly at the start and end of the school

Parking has led to access problems on many roads

Off-road parking is highly sought after on older Stotfold streets.



day, the large number of vehicles involved causes significant safety problems for the children, passing motorists and the families who own the parked cars.

Brook Street, Regent Street and Hitchin Road were also identified as areas with significant problems. In many parts of the town properties do not have garages or off-road spaces.

15.2 Use of yellow lines

Given the opportunity to specify the locations where yellow lines should be used to control parking, residents were most strongly in favour of the areas outside schools (60%) and Regent Street (42%). There are already sections of zigzag markings outside schools, but as they are not enforceable, double yellow lines are required.

15.3 Parking reminder signs

63% of respondents were not in favour of funding signs to encourage considerate parking.

15.4 Hard surfacing verges for parking

62% of respondents were in favour of hard surfacing green verges to provide additional parking.

15.5 Parking – Recommendation Table

Ref:	Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
15.1/ 15.2	Control parking that annoys other road users and creates safety issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outside schools • Regent Street • Brook Street • Hitchin Road 	i) Consult with local councillors, Stotfold Community Safety Group and Central Bedfordshire highways department on options to improve safety and to plan strategy. ii) Review use of yellow lines at all road junctions.	Medium	2 years	Community; Stotfold Council; Central Bedfordshire Council highways department; Bedfordshire Police
15.3	Identify suitable methods to overcome cases of persistent parking offenders or where measures are ineffective.	Consult with Bedfordshire Police and Community Safety Group, informing/reminding residents of dangers caused in Stotfold News.	High/medium	1 year	Community; Stotfold Town Council; Stotfold Community Safety Group; Stotfold News
15.4	Carry out survey to identify locations where additional parking areas might be created by sensitively hard-surfacing some grass verges.	Consult with Stotfold Town Council and Central Bedfordshire highways department to produce a strategy relative to existing planning policy.	Medium	5 years	Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council highways department; Aragon Housing



16 Transport

The majority of respondents do not use local public transport, which is seen as inadequate, expensive and lacking in clear information. Planners should note that merely restricting parking spaces in new developments does not lead to less use of private cars where no suitable alternative public transport exists. The station at Arlesey would be used more if it had better parking facilities and improved public transport to and from the station.

16.1 Main means of transport

The majority of residents use a car/van, and there is some evidence of car sharing. Public buses are not widely used (though school buses take students to Samuel Whitbread Community College) and residents are critical of the service provided (see 16.3). Personal transport – car, van or bicycle – is more convenient.

16.2 Local towns visited

Stotfold residents visit other towns in North Hertfordshire rather than those in Bedfordshire. Letchworth is the most preferred destination, but Hitchin, Stevenage and Baldock are also popular.

Most residents use a privately owned car or van as their main means of transport.

16.3 Reasons stated for not using the bus service

Residents believe strongly that the bus service is not frequent enough and is too expensive. Potential passengers find there is insufficient accessible information about the times and services available. Older residents do use the buses with their passes, but with limited services find that some buses are crowded. Parts of the town (for example, Norton Road) no longer have a bus service. It is vital when services are extended to new housing areas that this should not reduce services to existing parts of the town.

16.4 Use of trains

A relatively small number of respondents use the train to get to work, either to local towns or London.

16.5 Railway stations used

The most popular stations to travel from are Arlesey and Letchworth. The main consideration for choice of station is the speed at which residents can access the station, either by car, cycling or walking. Some residents use buses, but these are not frequent enough and services do not link to train times. At present, lack of parking limits the use of Arlesey station, and inaccessibility by public transport limits its use.

Stotfold's bus service is not frequent enough and is too expensive

16.6 Transport – Recommendation Table

Ref:	Action	Method	Priority	Timescale	Partners
16.1	Promote car sharing and cycling locally.	i) Facilitate by setting up contact/message board on the Stotfold Town Council website and promotion in Stotfold News and local press. ii) Promote use of website: www.lifeshare.com	High	1 year	Community; Stotfold Town Council; Stotfold News; local press
16.3	Publicise existing bus company routes and timetables.	Use Stotfold News, local press, Stotfold Town Council offices/website and bus company displays at bus stops.	Medium	3 years	Stotfold Town Council; Central Bedfordshire Council; Stotfold News; local press; bus companies
16.3/ 16.4/ 16.5	Seek to influence service providers to extend hours and frequency of bus service to towns in both Bedfordshire and North Hertfordshire, and encourage special services for commuters in the early morning and evening.	i) Promote membership of BABUS (Bedfordshire Area Bus Users' Society) and use of website: www.babus.org.uk ii) Engage with Whitbread Wanderbus over potential service provision. iii) Review service provision by Taxibus 90 route to Arlesey station. iv) Review public transport infrastructure for expanded town, including bus route through Fairfield Park to Arlesey station in consultation with local councillors.	High	1 year	Bus companies, both national and local; Central Bedfordshire Council; Stotfold Town Council; developers

17 Main Conclusions: A Vision for the Future of Stotfold

• Future developments

Any future development must be small-scale, of low density, reflect the existing building styles, with adequate off-road parking and, preferably, on brownfield sites.

It should not intrude further on open countryside and should preserve the rural outskirts of the town and prevent Stotfold from merging into other communities. There should be no further development of any kind on Malthouse Lane, or in the open countryside east of the town that includes the Ivel Valley, or close to Stotfold Mill and the adjacent Nature Reserve.

• Preservation of the countryside

Mature trees should be preserved on any new development, together with the planting of new trees wherever possible. Existing green areas must be preserved and protected, with enhanced opportunities for all to access the countryside by maintaining existing footpaths and increasing linkages of routes. Heavy traffic should be removed from our quiet lanes by placing a weight restriction on the roads connecting with the A1, and so protect the Ford Bridge, part of the acknowledged heritage of Stotfold.

• Improved town centre

The High Street should be improved visually, with suitable landscaping to define it as the centre of Stotfold, traffic calming and improved parking to make use of existing shops more attractive. The Co-operative store should be encouraged to undertake measures that assist with this by presenting a visible and attractive face to the High Street.

• Provision for the older community

There must be provision of housing designed for the elderly members of the community, some of it sheltered, so that they can remain in Stotfold, close to their families and friends.



The rural area east of the town is much valued for recreation and relaxation.

• Provision for the younger community

More attention should be given to recognising the needs and aspirations of the young people in the community, providing facilities within the town and affording them accessibility to other facilities elsewhere.

• Health and social care provision

The health and wellbeing of residents should be enhanced by increasing local services and promoting the awareness of those already available.

• Improved public transport

Public transport services should be improved to reduce reliance on the car and, hence, congestion on local roads.

• Improved road safety

Road safety outside schools and at road junctions should be improved by traffic calming measures and enforcement of parking restrictions. Reducing parking on pavements and providing safe crossing points will benefit pedestrian safety.

• Public communication

Every effort should be made to improve and publicise the accessibility of information to residents on all facilities and opportunities available to them.

“Towards growth and unity in a rural community”

18 Appendix

Members of Stotfold Town Plan Steering Group and Working Groups

2007-2008 Pat Aldridge; Cllr. Sheila Bundock; Cllr. Anne Clarey (Chair); Pat Clarey; Lorraine Cooper; Jenny Fox; Andy Grudzinski; Brenda Haskell; Pam Manfield; Katrina O'Shaughnessy; Phillip Parkin; Glenn Rickwood; Andrew Rook; Clare Whitty

2008-2009 Pat Aldridge; Cllr. Sheila Bundock; Cllr. Anne Clarey (Chair); Pat Clarey; Lorraine Cooper; Cllr. Mary Cooper; Wendy Craig; Jenny Fox; Pam Manfield; Tim Naisbitt; Phillip Parkin, Glenn Rickwood, Andrew Rook, Brenda Saunders, Clare Whitty

In addition, the following have contributed time and effort to the plan:

Kate Elliott –Turner (Clerk to the Town Council); Cllr. Larry Stoter (Data analysis); Andrew Bourne; Olive Deaville; Cllr. Steve Hayes; Lynne Peck (Data input); Robert Smith (Photography)

Thanks also to: Jemma McLean (Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity) for her support and guidance; Sharon Martin (Assistant Town Clerk) and Julie Barrow (Town Council Admin. Assistant) for clerical support; Claire Chouffot (Stotfold News); Christine Webster (The Comet and Biggleswade Chronicle); Country Properties (Stotfold Post) for publicity; Kleeneze – donation of plastic bags/protection of questionnaire; other members of the Stotfold community who trialled the questionnaire, delivered and collected it; all the residents who took the time and trouble to complete the questionnaire and make their views known.

The following local groups and organisations contributed by taking an active part in consultations or helping in practical ways:

Beale Bros - Butchers	Stotfold Christian Choir
Bedfordshire Police – PC Paul Ryan	Stotfold Community Safety Group
Central Bedfordshire Councillors	Stotfold Conservative Association
Doug's Folly Barbers Shop	Stotfold Co-op
Etonbury Middle School	Stotfold Dental Practice
Fairfield Park Lower School	Stotfold Garden Club
Guide Association	Stotfold Library
Hope Strict Baptist Chapel	Stotfold Mill
Home League Fellowship	Stotfold Parents' Association
Larksfield Surgery	Stotfold Pharmacy
Neighbourhood Watch	Stotfold Town Council
Paul Adler – Optician	Stotfold Womens' Fellowship
Salvation Army	Stotfold Womens' Institute
Saunders Garage	Sunshine Club
Scout Association	Time Out
St Mary's Lower School	Samuel Whitbread Community College
Stotfold Art Group	TEASEL
Stotfold Chamber of Trade	(The Astwick and Stotfold Environmental Link)

Stotfold Town Plan 2009

