

# Stotfold Town Plan

**The summary version** 2009

Adopted by  
Stotfold Town Council,  
7th October 2009





## What is the Stotfold Town Plan?

The full version of the Town Plan, with all charts and statistics, is available to read at the Town Council offices in the Simpson Centre or at Stotfold Library. It is also available on the Town Council website ([www.stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk)). The following is a summary of the main conclusions reached.

The Town Plan is the result of wide-ranging discussion and consultation amongst residents of Stotfold, since Autumn 2007. The fact that 41% of households, with up to five people in each home, 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.

The Town Council has shown its support for the Plan by formally adopting it in October 2009, but this is the residents' plan - and this is just the start. It is now up to all of us to help in some way to achieve the vision that we want for the future of Stotfold. Details of how we can all help will be publicised on the Town Council website and in future editions of Stotfold News.

## Residents' Households

2,442 residents of all ages completed the questionnaire, representing a significant 41% of the population.

Recommended action for this section is for the Town Council to improve its communication with residents by:

- **Reviewing the use of Town Council notice boards**
- **Providing a board at Fairfield Park and the new community building on the Land South of Stotfold site**



*Stotfold as viewed from the open countryside south of the town.*

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

- **Encouraging greater use of the Town Council website**

- **Having a young people's section of the website**

## The Environment

92.8% of residents who responded felt new large-scale developments should be restricted to brownfield sites and it was clear that the rural character of the town and the green areas and open countryside in and around Stotfold are greatly valued.

Priority actions for this section are to ensure that all planning officers and members of Central Bedfordshire Council, as well as the Town Council and all other bodies involved in the planning process, are aware of residents' overwhelming support for the following issues, so that they can all work with the community to see these aspirations put into operation:

- **Avoiding more large-scale developments**
- **New developments to be restricted to brownfield sites**





- New green spaces to be created in the town and more trees to be planted in new developments
- Current green spaces and open countryside to be preserved, especially the area surrounding the River Ivel Valley
- Rural roads to the north and east of the town, including Malthouse Lane with its Ford Bridge, to remain as quiet lanes
- Seeking funding opportunities for improving the environment
- Promoting environmental responsibility in schools
- Making more public information on environmental issues available locally, including in Stotfold News

In the longer term, residents would wish to see:

- Footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths linked into a Public Rights of Way network and all footpaths to be cleared

*Most respondents would welcome new businesses that do not harm Stotfold's rural environment.*



- Safe access to be created where Rights of Way cross or run alongside the A1 and A507
- Clearer signs to be set up, indicating Rights of Way and greater availability of leaflets and maps showing this network

### 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. Nearly 50% would like to see more employment opportunities in Stotfold, in shops, small businesses and agriculture.

Recommended actions include:

- Publicising the small business units on Mill Lane and elsewhere
- Providing facilities for small businesses (including book-keeping, computer/Internet access and parking for small vans or lorries) by liaising with local providers and developing strategies to promote all services that are available
- Consulting with local councils, Business Link, Stotfold Chamber of Trade and local private service providers





## 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.

Residents believed there would be significant benefit in improving the area around the current Co-op to create a more coherent shopping area. This would include:

- Better parking provision
- Landscaping
- Traffic-calming measures
- Producing a directory of businesses to be displayed on boards around the town and on the Town Council website

These actions, would need 3-5 years to put into operation with support from the Town Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and local business people.

More immediate concerns were to ensure that the community building and new shop planned for the Land South of Stotfold should be at the northern end, so they can link with the current shopping area. It was also considered vital to ensure that a Post Office remains in Stotfold.



*Above: familiar signs on the High Street.*

*Below: new homes at Fairfield Park.*

There was considerable support for a regular Farmers' Market and the attempt to locate a bank in the town once again.

## Housing

There was great concern that a significant number of large developments for housing have already been agreed by local planners and that these will place infrastructure including schools, health services, drains and roads under even greater strain. Residents were worried about current and future developments on, or close to, flood plains and water meadows, as well as on open countryside used by the community for recreation and relaxation. There was especially strong support for the protection of the Malthouse Lane area from development.







*Above left: the Memorial Hall, Hallworth Drive.*

*Above right: play facilities at the Riverside Recreation Ground.*



Some recent developments have seen large numbers of houses built in small spaces, with poor provision of trees and green areas and lack of adequate parking, occasionally causing neighbourhood tension. It was clear that most residents do not wish to see further large-scale developments or edge-of-town expansion and that this should be made clear to all involved in planning processes.

64% of respondents felt that redundant buildings should be converted to create further housing, and there was equal support for housing for special groups and elderly people, as well as for starter and family homes.

## Recreation and Community

The countryside and green areas of the town provide the main location for sport or exercise for all ages, primarily through walking or cycling. The construction of the new leisure centre should enable the provision of many of the sports and activities currently unavailable within Stotfold. While many residents would like a swimming pool to be provided, the high cost of provision and upkeep makes this unlikely, unless public use of the leisure centre proves it could be cost-effective.

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

The children's play equipment in Fairfield Park was regarded as both good and exciting, while that in central Stotfold was good but unexciting. Many residents felt that the latter should be upgraded by the provision of new equipment.

Priorities in this section are:

- **Advertising the full range of activities already available in the town, via Stotfold News, the Town Council website and notice boards and at Larksfield Surgery**
- **Raising awareness of facilities, especially the Multi Use Games Area and how pitches/courts are booked**
- **Reviewing current facilities to increase activities for young people, including the provision of a youth club, youth shelter or Youth Voice project**
- **Confirming that a fitness suite and badminton court will be part of the new leisure centre**

It was felt that it is important to review the library's opening hours and the availability of its computers.

In the longer term, once the leisure centre is completed, there should be targeted promotion to ensure maximum participation in sports and leisure activities.



## Health and Social Care

Stotfold is fortunate in having a dentist, optician, pharmacy and health centre. However, access to 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 population over 60 increases, this is likely to be a greater problem.

Priority actions are as follows:

- **Promoting awareness of transport facilities to medical appointments outside Stotfold for residents without cars or those who cannot drive**
- **Identifying a central point in the town where trained staff can provide residents with information on support services**

It is also recommended that discussions should be held with the local surgery and NHS managers to consider how services provided at the Larksfield Surgery might be extended to meet the needs of a growing population, to improve chiropody and speech therapy services, and to expand health visitor services to new mothers, babies and young children.



*Above: Larksfield Surgery is central to medical care in Stotfold.*

*Below: increased police presence on the streets is of major concern to local residents.*



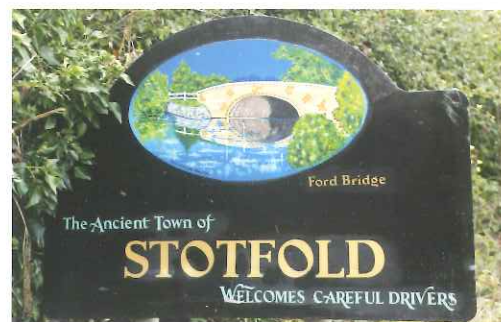
## Crime, Disorder and Policing

Stotfold is generally regarded as a safe town in which to live, but many residents do see increased policing as being highly desirable so as to prevent small-scale, anti-social activity developing into more serious offences.

It was noticeable that only half of respondents were aware of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme and only 20% knew of actions against Cold Calling. These initiatives need to be promoted more effectively. Recommended priority actions are:

- **Improving communication between police and residents through the continued use of a dedicated office within the town and regular surgeries**





Recommendations for priority action in this section are:

- **Lifting the current access restrictions to Brook Street and consider the introduction of a one-way system**
- **Introducing a 20 mph limit outside St Mary's and Roecroft Schools and encouraging 'walking buses' for school children**
- **Introducing a Quiet Lanes initiative to ban heavy vehicles from lanes linking the north and east of town to the A1**
- **Ensuring a weight restriction is placed on the historic Ford Bridge**
- **Monitoring the effectiveness of flashing signs on Arlesey Road and Hitchin Road**
- **Seeking urgently to provide cycle paths across town with links to Arlesey and North Hertfordshire**
- **Improving the quality of pavements for all users**
- **Increasing the provision of local cycle paths**



- **More regular and visible police presence on the streets**
- **Ensuring residents are aware of the importance of reporting incidents of crime and disorder**

### Traffic

Despite the construction of the A507 bypass, increased housing provision has led to a greater number of cars in Stotfold, which has created further pressures on existing roads. Speeding traffic continues to be a general problem.

There is particular concern about heavy vehicles using local roads that are clearly unsuitable for them, especially the rural lanes to the north and east of the town. Such vehicles should be restricted to the bypass whenever possible.

*Above right: one of three signs along the main routes into central Stotfold.*

*Below right: a two kilometre stretch of cycle path links Stotfold and Arlesey.*

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





*Above: the bus stop on the north-western side of The Green.*

*Below: off-road parking is highly sought after on older Stotfold streets.*

## Parking

In the older streets, off-road parking is often unavailable and this has led to access difficulties on many roads, with parking on pavements evident in many areas. Parking outside schools at peak hours is a problem and in new developments there is also a lack of sufficient parking.

Recommendations include:

- **Carrying out a survey to identify locations where additional parking might be created by sensitively landscaping some grass verges**



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

- **Identifying, with the police and Community Safety Group, suitable methods to overcome cases of persistent bad parking**

- **Ensuring planners take the need for sufficient parking into account in new developments**

## Transport

Local public transport is seen as inadequate, expensive and lacking clear information, so it is not used by the majority of people. Arlesey Station would be used more with better parking facilities and improved public transport to and from it. Priority recommendations include:

- **Promoting car sharing and cycling**
- **Working to protect local bus services, with extended hours and increased frequency, especially for commuter services**
- **Encouraging the formation of a public transport users' group**