

Land Use



There are conflicting pressures on land in Hertfordshire, reflecting the need to preserve natural habitats whilst meeting the accommodation and transport needs of the human population. Government targets call for a substantial increase in housing in the county, which raises the question of how best to meet the targets in a way which minimises negative impacts on the county's green space, and its existing infrastructure.

Hertfordshire is the fifth smallest shire in England, but now has the ninth largest population due to substantial urbanisation over the last century. Achieving sustainable development in a densely populated county such as Hertfordshire will depend crucially on what happens in the towns, where most people live and most development and activity takes place.



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INDICATOR LUI - Land Used for Urban Activities

This map shows the land use change to urban activities in the county between April 2000 and the end of March 2001. The urban areas shown are towns with a population of over 7,000. Land use change is recorded when development is started, in this case prior to 1st April 2001.

The 12 month period since April 2000 has seen a total of 38.43 hectares change to urban activities in Hertfordshire. This is a lower amount than that for the previous 2 years.

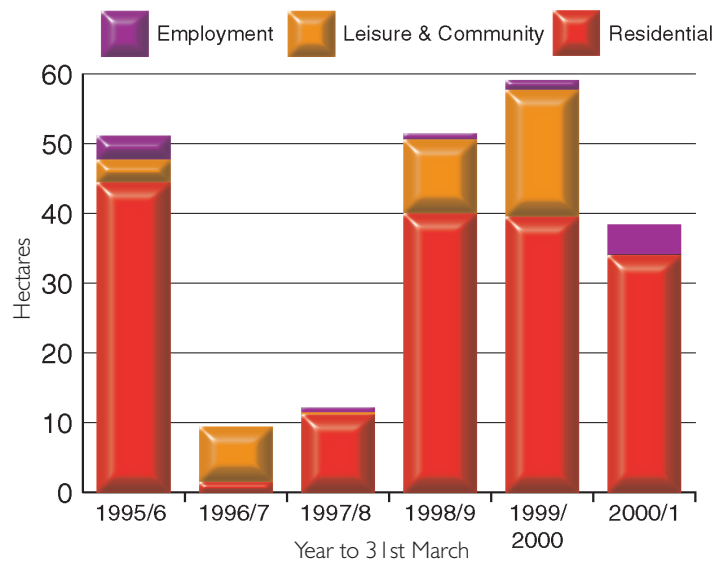
This year, as previously, the changes are due mainly to the development of agricultural land to provide housing on the edges of towns. Royston (4 ha.), North East Stevenage (22 ha.), West Cheshunt (3 ha.) and Cock Lane (3.8 ha.), both in the Borough of Broxbourne.

Industrial development at Hemel Hempstead continues (3.9 ha.), together with a small industrial area extension

at Letchworth. There are no primarily leisure or community uses included in this year's totals. There have been developments at Leavesden, Hatfield Aerodrome and the Wellcome research facility in Berkhamsted, all of which are on the edge of existing urban areas.

The monitoring of Land Used for Urban Activities provides a yearly indicator of the growth of Hertfordshire's development into the countryside, and has been carried out consistently since 1995/6. Land use monitoring has been fundamental to information at the county level since the early 1970's and enables Hertfordshire to co-ordinate with the emerging DTLR National Land Use Database. Data is available for the last six years from 1995/6. The table illustrates the area developed for urban activities over this period, in which 222 hectares of land has been recorded as becoming used for urban activities.

Annual Increase in Land Used for Urban Activities



INDICATOR LU2 - Number of Households

The number of households is reported each year but the source information relies on estimates and forecasts from outside HCC and not all are updated annually. Therefore the information included here is the same as last year.

The 1991 Census showed that there were 380,900 households in Hertfordshire. By 1997 this had increased by 8.3% to 412,400 households according to the Hertfordshire Mid Term Population Survey. Over the same period Hertfordshire's population had grown by 2.5% from 988,700 in 1991 to 1,024,800 in 1997, coinciding with the continuing reduction in average household size.

The Government's (DTLR) latest trend based household projections suggest that between 1996 and 2021 there will be a growth of 89,000 in the number of households in Hertfordshire of which 70% are expected to be single person households. Subsequent population estimates suggest that these projections may be low, at least in the short term.

Although this indicator hasn't changed over the last year, it is estimated that the number of households has been increasing by approximately 1% per annum, and this trend is projected to continue. The analysis of the 2001 census will provide data to adjust the estimates and projections used between each census.

INDICATOR LU3 - Residential Development on Previously Developed Land

The Government is committed to maximising the re-use of previously developed land in order to promote urban regeneration and to minimise the amount of land being taken for development. The national target requires that by 2008, 60% of additional housing should

be provided on previously developed land and through the conversion of existing buildings. Redevelopment of existing urban areas can contribute to the revitalisation of communities and has the benefit of reducing the need to travel long distances to work or shops. It also reduces the pressures to develop rurally, and so protects the countryside, wildlife and habitats.

Residential development on Previously Developed Land (PDL) has been monitored since the concept of PDL emerged 2 or 3 years ago. PDL forms an important monitor in all national best practice guidelines.

When this indicator was first reported in 2000, it measured residential commitments during 1991-2000, giving a figure of 78%. Since that report, we have moved to an annual measure of outstanding commitments for new homes as at 1st April. The completions indicator remains unchanged and both indicators will be monitored against Government targets.

- Outstanding commitments for new homes in Hertfordshire on PDL in 2001 are 58% of the total.
- A total of 64% of the completions in 2000/1 were on previously developed land.

STRUCTURE PLAN

The current Hertfordshire Structure Plan was adopted in April 1998 and covers the period 1991-2011. The county council has commenced technical work on the reviewing the Plan for the period to 2016, and the first public consultation is due to be published in 2002.

The pressure on land use in the county, particularly for housing, looks set to continue for as long as population increases and we continue to live in smaller households of one or two people. Demand for development will continue, but it is important that sustainable development principles, such as energy efficiency, renewable materials and habitat protection are considered along with the infrastructure requirements, such as increased traffic in towns, to ensure that Hertfordshire retains its green areas and does not destroy the character of its towns.

Further information sources:

For Structure Plan enquiries:

Contact: Morag Saunders, Forward Planning Team, Hertfordshire County Council

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www.hertsdirect.org/structureplan

For general planning enquiries:

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