GUIDE TO PART 1

Part 1 of the Plan will be particularly useful for people who are looking to find the Council's broad approach to development issues. It provides a context for decision making, for example in terms of the investment decisions and corporate strategies of both public and private agencies. It will also inform the Council's decisions on development control matters where it will complement the more detailed guidance to be found in Part 2 of the Plan.

Part 1 of the Plan comprises the following sections:

- Housing
- Employment and Economic Development
- Environmental Improvement and Protection
- Major Urban Renewal Areas
- Shopping
- Leisure and Recreation
- Transport

Each section starts with an introduction setting the strategic context and summarising the Part 1 topic policies. The policies are grouped under strategic objectives.

The "reasons" for the policies explain the background to the proposals and will aid implementation.
HOUSING

INTRODUCTION
The Council has two broad aims in relation to housing. The first is to maintain and, where necessary, improve the quality of existing homes and residential areas. The second is to make use of the many opportunities to provide new housing in order to meet the needs of people who wish to live in the City and extend the range of housing available. These aims are tied in very closely with making the City a better place in which to live.

Much has been done to improve housing over recent years but much remains to be done. The slum clearance programmes of the 1960s and early 70s removed over 70,000 of the City's worst dwellings. Redevelopment took place at lower densities with the construction of 44,000 dwellings between 1961 and 1980 in the City and a further 16,800 in overspill estates. By the mid 70s the programme of large scale redevelopment was nearing its end and the emphasis turned to the improvement of the remaining substandard dwellings and of the older housing areas in general. Since 1976 some 40,000 dwellings have been improved.

Despite all of this over one quarter of the City's homes are in need of major treatment. The bulk of the problems are in Council owned properties many of which were built rapidly in the 1960s and 70s using non-traditional methods and have not stood the test of time. In the worst cases, such as Hulme, the demolition of properties and rebuilding using traditional methods and layouts is considered to be the best solution. In other cases it is possible to adapt and improve existing properties, for example the decapitation of 3 and 4 storey maisonettes to form 2 storey houses. The Council will seek appropriate Levels of resources to enable it to maintain on a regular basis the publicly owned housing stock, to avoid deterioration of dwellings to the point where demolition is the only viable option. Resources are similarly necessary to improve many remaining older privately owned homes.

There is continuing demand for new houses. Recent rates of construction have averaged 1400 dwellings a year. The contribution of housing associations and private housebuilders has become increasingly important as tight controls have prevented the Council from building as many new homes as it would wish. The plan allows for a further 16,000 dwellings in the City between 1991 and 2001 which reflects the amount of land available for housing both in terms of sites currently identified and sites coming forward over the plan period for redevelopment. Thus the approach can be said to be based on capacity and opportunity rather than meeting a projected population level. The future population level will in fact be very much a function of the extent to which the opportunities for new housebuilding are taken up.

The Council wishes to see new housing schemes of a high quality. It will expect all schemes to be designed so that they provide safe and attractive places for people to Live. Where major opportunities arise to create large, new residential areas, such as in Hulme, the emphasis will be on creating "traditional" neighbourhoods with a full range of housing types, low rise buildings fronting onto the street and the convenient provision of the necessary community facilities. The Council will also wish to see a balanced relationship between schools and housing development in order to avoid causing problems in the provision of education services.

The opportunities for new housing will enable many vacant sites and buildings to be brought back into use and this will make a positive contribution towards improving the environment. They will also enable the range of housing to be extended so that people will not have to move out of the City to find suitable accommodation and so that any existing shortages can be met, for example sheltered housing for the elderly. If these opportunities are taken up this will relieve pressure on greenfield sites elsewhere in the conurbation which is consistent with the urban regeneration strategy supported by all Councils in the region.
An important issue is the quality of housing areas. Here the Council wishes to ensure that development does not have an adverse affect on these areas. It will also promote a wide range of measures which will result in better conditions. Both of these matters are dealt with not only in the Housing section but in other parts of the Plan. The Council will control carefully the conversion of existing larger dwellings into smaller housing units so that high standards of accommodation are provided and the local environment is not spoilt.

The Housing policies come under two broad headings:-

(1) accommodating the needs and aspirations of those people who want to live in Manchester;
(2) maintaining and where necessary improving the quality of homes and residential areas.

The policies are summarised below:

(1) NEW HOUSING
In terms of new housing the approach will be:-

• providing for 16,000 new dwellings on currently vacant sites and those coming forward for redevelopment including Hulme and Fort Ardwick
• ensuring that homes are available to meet the wide range of needs of people who want to Live in Manchester including disabled people
• requiring new housing where practicable to be accessible to disabled people (see City Wide Development Control Policy DC7.1)
• providing more student housing
• supporting the use of vacant upper floors of shops and offices for housing
• requiring new housing schemes containing family homes to be designed so as to provide for children’s play (see City Wide Development Control Policy DC7.1).

(2) IMPROVEMENTS
Improving homes and residential areas will involve:-

• making residential areas safer and more attractive
• reducing the impact of traffic in housing areas especially where the risk of accidents to children is high
• dealing with poor quality open space, particularly on council estates, to improve the appearance of areas, make them safer and reduce maintenance costs
• carefully controlling the conversion of larger homes to flats and other uses such as nursing homes and offices
• preventing new development which would have an unacceptable affect on residential areas (references to this can also be found in the other sections of the Plan)
• ensuring that new housing is of a high standard and represents an improvement to the local environment.
OBJECTIVE

H1 To accommodate the needs and aspirations of people who want to live in Manchester.

H1.2 The Council wishes to ensure that the housing stock contains a wide enough range of housing types to meet the needs of people who want to live in Manchester. In particular it will encourage the further provision of:

a) accommodation for 1 & 2 person households including units suitable for elderly people;
b) accommodation for larger households (6+) including units suitable to meet the needs of ethnic minorities with extended families;
c) low cost housing for sale or rent;
d) properties for sale in the higher price range;
e) accommodation specifically designed for disabled people.

Whilst Manchester contains a wide variety of different types of housing many of its residents live in accommodation which is not well suited to their needs and there are many people who would like to live in Manchester but are unable to find housing which matches their requirements. The Council wants to encourage change within the housing stock to increase the range of housing types available to meet the needs of people who want to live in Manchester. This means:

i. Widening the range of affordability. Many people in Manchester have low incomes but they should not be excluded from a good choice of housing to meet their needs. There are also people on higher incomes who would like to live in the city but currently buy homes elsewhere;

ii. Widening the range of property sizes and types to cater for the needs of people at different stages in their life or with different housing requirements. There are many different needs which the housing stock of the City should be capable of meeting. These include the needs of disabled people; young families; older single people; students; and ethnic minorities with extended families. Overall, the stock needs to adapt to meet changing demographic trends and in particular the trend towards smaller households;

iii. Widening the range of property types within local areas. For example if people want to move from a family house into smaller accommodation at a later stage in their life, they should be able to do so within their local area. This in turn should lead to better use of the existing housing stock by freeing family housing for larger households.

H1.3 The Council wishes to see further student accommodation provided, including some specifically designed for disabled students, on sites which are well related to Higher Education establishments. The Council will particularly welcome further student housing which is easily accessible from the Higher Educational Precinct.

There is a shortage of suitable and convenient student accommodation in the City. The Council wishes to see further student housing provided which is conveniently located in terms of access to the major educational establishments.

Opportunities in the City Centre are particularly convenient in this respect. A major opportunity has already been identified by the City Council and the Central Manchester Development Corporation. This is the Piccadilly Harbour area in the City Centre where such a development would be the key to the regeneration of this part of the City. This proposal is consistent with the City Centre Local Plan proposals which have been incorporated unchanged into the Unitary Development Plan.

H1.4 The Council will, where suitable, allow the use of vacant upper floors of retail and commercial buildings for residential uses.

To encourage investment in and maintenance of properties, sustain activity, improve security and provide a supply of accommodation for smaller households. In permitting such uses, the Council
will have regard to both the physical fabric of the potential premises as well as to the impact on the local environment.

H1.5 The Council wishes to ensure that the City's various communities remain, or become more, sustainable in economic and social terms. In this respect, whilst generally welcoming housing developments which will provide accommodation for people with special needs in appropriate locations, the Council will seek to avoid an over-concentration of such provision in any one area. The criteria which the Council will apply in assessing applications for special needs housing are set out in Development Control Policies below.

Objective: Ensure that the various communities which go to make up the City remain, or become more, self-sustaining in economic and social terms.

Reason: People with special needs may include the single homeless, the elderly, those with mental health problems, women who have experienced domestic violence, people with a long term debilitating illness, people who suffer drug or alcohol addiction, young people with specific support needs, and travellers and people with learning or sensory disabilities. The Council is aware of the special housing needs of these groups and is concerned that they should be adequately provided for in appropriate locations.

The Council welcomes the development of appropriately designed accommodation which enables people with special needs to maintain an independent lifestyle, and supports the work of housing associations and other agencies in this respect.

However, the Council wishes to maintain an appropriate balance between different kinds of residential uses within local areas and will seek to use its powers as local planning authority to assist in achieving the corporate objective of ensuring that the various communities which go to make up the City remain, or become more, sustainable in economic and social terms. The concept of a "sustainable community" is not a simple one, and will vary over time and from one area to another. Nonetheless, the Council has a general objective of seeking to ensure that the physical renewal and improvement of the City goes hand in hand with social regeneration. There is therefore a need to ensure that individual communities are in a position to meet most of their day to day needs locally - for example, in relation to housing, shopping, recreation, education and primary health care. The Council recognises that, at least in part, the social and economic balance of a community is achieved by avoiding an over concentration of special housing provision in any one area because, for example, of changes in spending power or in the general mix population so that local facilities such as shops and services may suffer from reduced demand from certain groups. It also recognises that in some cases there are strong arguments for not locating accommodation for vulnerable people in areas which are highly unsustainable.

The Council will keep under review the question of which areas of the City might give rise for concern in this respect and will from time to time issue Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in order to give detailed effect to this policy. An SPG providing further guidance is available, entitled "Special Needs And Supported Housing".

OBJECTIVE

H2 To maintain and where necessary improve the quality of the housing stock and residential environments.

H2.1 The Council will encourage environmental improvements to make residential areas safer and more attractive.
Objective: To maintain and where necessary improve the quality of the housing stock and residential environments.

Reason: This policy complements the Council's corporate objective of improving the City's housing stock. The Council wishes to see the widespread environmental improvements in residential areas to tackle a range of problems so that all housing areas are safe and attractive places to live.

H2.2 The Council will not allow development which will have an unacceptable impact on residential areas. The matters which the Council will consider in coming to such decisions will include the scale and appearance of the development and its impact in terms of noise, vibration, traffic generation, road safety and air pollution.

Objective: To maintain and where necessary improve the quality of the housing stock and residential environments.

Reason: To protect residential areas from inappropriate development so as to ensure that the quality of these areas is maintained.

H2.3 Traffic calming measures will be introduced in order to reduce the intrusion of traffic in residential areas. Priority will be given to areas of older terraced housing, which often lack private gardens, and to other areas where the risks of accidents to children and elderly people are high. The Council will require new housing schemes involving the construction of new roads to incorporate appropriate traffic calming measures.

Objective: To maintain and where necessary improve the quality of the housing stock and residential environments.

Reason: To help to reduce the number of accidents, particularly to children and elderly people caused by traffic in residential areas and to reduce the levels of associated noise and pollution. The Council will negotiate with developers of new housing schemes which involve the construction of new roads, with a view to the incorporation of traffic calming measures appropriate to the development.

H2.4 In consultation with local people, areas of low quality incidental open space will be eliminated and the land allocated for more productive use. This may involve its incorporation into private gardens; using it for development; or creating car parking spaces for existing houses. Priority will be given to Council Estates built during the 1960s and 1970s. In implementing this policy the Council will have regard to the need to safeguard important wildlife habitats.

Objective: To maintain and where necessary improve the quality of the housing stock and residential environments.

Reason: To eliminate poor quality, difficult to maintain and unsightly public open spaces which serve little useful purpose and cause residential disamenity. These measures will encourage pride in local areas and improve community safety. Problems of low quality "incidental" open space are most pronounced in Council estates built during the 1960s and 1970s. This policy does not apply to areas which serve a useful purpose as public open space, or which can readily be made to do so as part of an overall approach to the planning of a particular local area.

H2.5 Conversion of houses into flats and residential institutions such as nursing homes will only be allowed when it can be demonstrated that:-

a) either off-street car parking can be provided without undue loss of amenity space around the house or it can be demonstrated that on-street parking is unlikely to create significant problems;
b) the conversion will not detract from the character of the area by, for example, the removal of trees, hedges or garden walls which are important elements in the street scene.

Objective: To maintain and where necessary improve the quality of the housing stock and residential environments.

Reason: To maintain the quality of the residential environment by limiting the loss of gardens, the increase in noise and parking problems which can be caused by the conversion of houses into flats.

H2.6 Conversion of residential property to commercial uses will not normally be permitted in predominantly residential areas.

Objective: To maintain and where necessary improve the quality of the housing stock and residential environments.

Reason: To maintain the residential character of housing areas. This policy does not preclude people working at home where the dominant use remains residential unless the affects of the activity cause a nuisance to neighbours.

H2.7 New housing schemes will be expected to be of a high standard of design and make a positive contribution towards improving the City's environment. They should not create areas of incidental open space outside the curtilage of dwellings unless there are proper and enduring arrangements for its maintenance.

Objective: To maintain and where necessary improve the quality of the housing stock and residential environments.

Reason: The development of unused land in the City for housing can make a major impact on improving the appearance of an area. The creation of incidental open space which will be poorly maintained needs to be prevented.