



Spatial Strategy

for the Village of

Bovingdon

June 2009

1.0 Bovingdon Spatial Strategy

1. Characteristics

1.1 Siting & size

Bovingdon is a compact village in the south of the Borough with a settlement population of 4,611. It lies approximately 25 miles (30km) north west of London, 3 miles south west of Hemel Hempstead and 3 miles north east of Chesham in Buckinghamshire. The village has links to Hemel Hempstead and Chesham via the B405 (Chesham Road/Hempstead Road/Box Lane) and to the surrounding countryside and villages to the south and east via local roads.

1.2 Landscape character

Bovingdon lies within the Bovingdon and Chipperfield Plateau, which comprises mainly farmland with some areas of semi natural woodland¹. The plateau is characterised by gently undulating land, networks of diverse old hedgerows and narrow country lanes, which engender a private and secluded feel. Bovingdon village is surrounded by Green Belt farmland and The Mount HMP and the disused airfield to the north west. The Chiltern Way footpath runs to the south east of the village from the south east to the north east.

1.3 History and Built character

Bovingdon originally developed as a small hamlet between farmsteads including Bury Farm, Newhall Farm and Rentstreet Farm (now Darley Ash Farm). Records from the village date back to the thirteenth century and show straw plaiting as an important industry; the parish church of St Lawrence dates back to 1235, but it is thought that the current building dates back to the mid nineteenth century. Bovingdon's best known landmark is the Ryder memorial well-like structure, built in 1881 and located at the south eastern end of the village at the cross-roads of the High Street, Green Lane and Church Street. There are a number of historic buildings in the core of Bovingdon village, mostly situated towards the south eastern end, most noticeably the old Wheatsheaf pub (now a dwelling), a heavily timbered building dating back to the 15th Century.

1.4 The residential parts of Bovingdon have developed around four principal roads – Chesham Road, High Street, Green Lane and Hyde Road. The different residential areas are characteristic of different architectural periods with much of it being fairly recent following significant expansion during the latter half of the twentieth century. Green Lane and Chesham Road/Hempstead Road and the Moody Estate offer clear boundaries to the village to the south east and north west and south west respectively. However, the village does have a rather sprawling character along roads to the east and south.

¹ The Landscape Character Assessment for Dacorum, Supplementary Planning Guidance (The Landscape Partnership Ltd, 2004) is an evaluation of the landscape and policy guidelines for the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011.

1.5 The Bovingdon Urban Design Assessment², January 2006, identifies four urban design zones within the village: the village centre zone; the inner zone; the closed route zone and the semi-rural zone. Table 1 shows the key principles established for each zone. The map showing the zones can be seen in the Urban Design Assessment for Bovingdon at page 8.

Table 1: Summary of Key Principles of Urban Design Zones

| Urban Design Zone | Area of village | Summary of Key Principles |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Village Centre Zone | Along the High Street from Hempstead Road to the well. | Protect historic character and develop strong civic space. |
| Inner Zone | The residential area around Old Dean and Hyde Meadows. | Provide low-rise medium density housing with strong links to village centre and maintain quality open space. |
| Closed Route Zone | This zone covers a few areas in the village: the Moody Estate, Rymill Close, Yew Tree Drive and Austins Mead, Lawrence Close and surrounding roads and the residential roads near the prison. | Provide low-rise, medium density housing that acts as a transition between the village and countryside. |
| Semi-rural Zone | The residential roads leading out of the village: Hempstead/ Chesham Road, Green Lane and Chipperfield Road. | Provide low-rise low to medium density housing which accentuates the through street structure characteristic of rural villages. |

1.6 Key views and Gateways

The key view within Bovingdon is of the Ryder Memorial (the well) at the southern end of the village from both directions along the High Street/Chipperfield. This view is particularly important when entering the village from Chipperfield Road, with its open verges, as the dip and slight curve of the road create a significant view into the historical centre of the village. This also marks the southern gateway to the village, while the junction of Hempstead Road and the High Street is the northern gateway to the village.

1.7 Leisure & sports facilities

Bovingdon has no indoor leisure facilities, and has an overall shortage of outdoor leisure space, although it does have a football club with 2 full size pitches, a bowling club with a bowling green and a tennis club with 4 hard courts. The bowling green is located to the rear of the northern side of High Street, while the football club and tennis club are located together off Green

² The Urban Design Assessment for Bovingdon (Urban Practitioners, 2006) provides baseline evidence, settlement principles and urban design guidelines for Bovingdon.

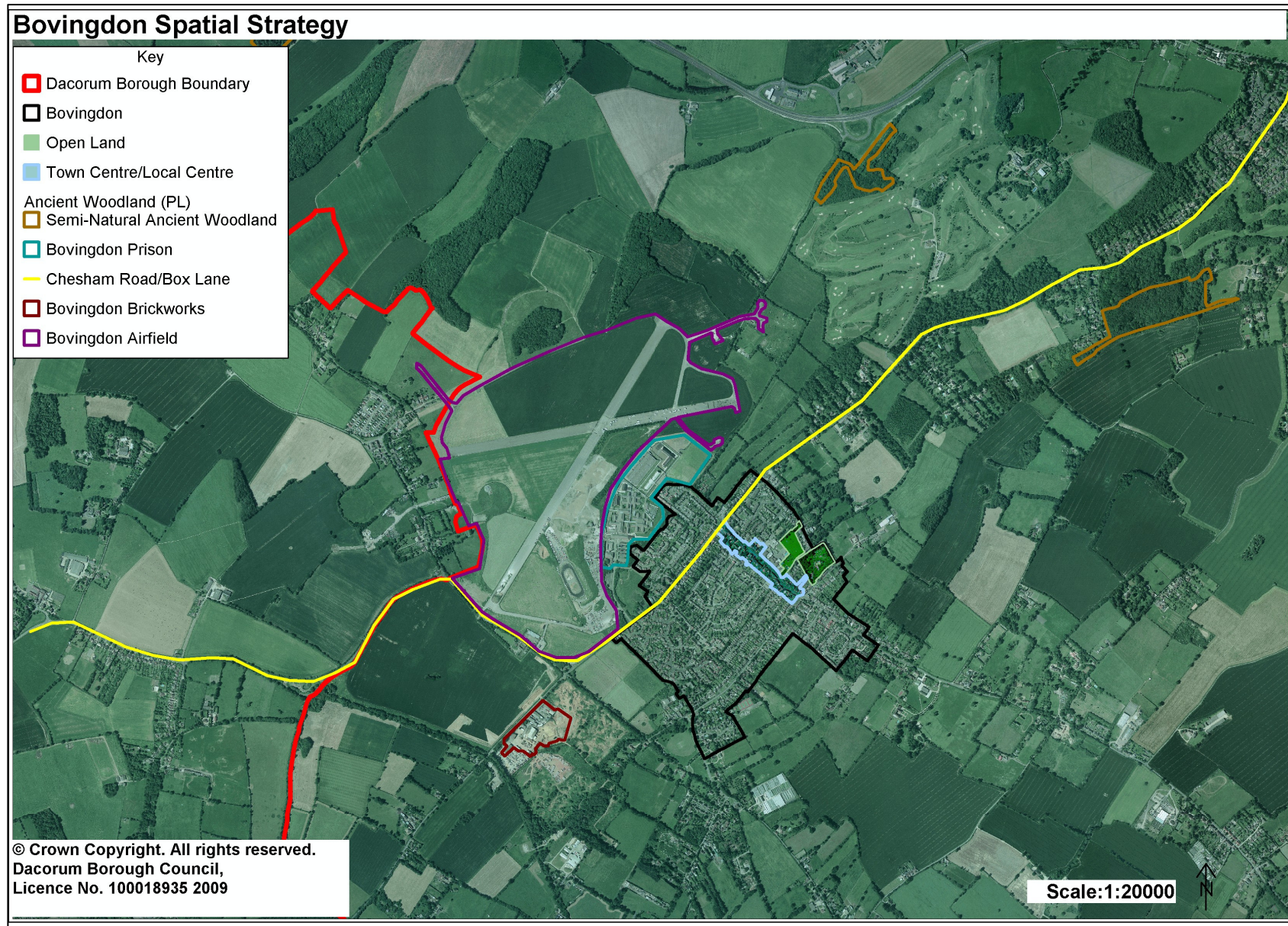
Lane. As well as sport, Bovington has a strong village community and a number of clubs and societies; the village also has a village hall which is well used.

1.8 Open Space and Wildlife sites

Bovington has a significant underprovision of open space: it lacks allotments, green corridors and parks and gardens. The village has a shortage of open space for children and young people, and there are generally poor pedestrian links to the open space. The village does not have any local nature reserves or wildlife sites, and large parts of it are deficient in terms of biodiversity. The Urban Nature and Conservation (UNCS)³ study points to some areas of high wildlife value around the village. These are the small parcels of grassland and woodlands that border the southern, eastern and northern edges of the village which contain a network of old hedgerows that are an important wildlife habitat. Box Moor Trust also manage an area of the former brickworks as a wildlife habitat.

³ Urban Nature Conservation Study for Bovington, 2006 – considers the wildlife resources within the six major settlements in the Borough of Dacorum.

Figure 1.1 – Bovingdon Context Map



1.9 Local business

Bovingdon has a vibrant village centre concentrated along the High Street with a number of shops and other services, as well as a few pubs and restaurants. There are a range of shops with some every day convenience shops alongside some more specialist shops such as the hardware shop. The village shops provide for most day to day needs and are well used by both the local residents and passers by. Tesco are proposing a new store on the former garage at the junction of the High Street with Hempstead Road.

1.10 Bovingdon does not have any designated employment sites, however the Bovingdon Brickworks is an important source of local employment, and is an important part of Bovingdon's heritage, having been on the site since 1920. The Brickworks site also houses two other local employers: EH Building Materials and Gilberts Motorcar showroom.

1.11 Bovingdon Airfield, The Mount HMP and The Market

Bovingdon Airfield, located on the north west edge of the village was built in 1942 as an RAF bomber station. It was used by the US Army Air Force (USAAF) from 1943 to 1947 when it was returned to RAF control until 1951 when it was returned to the USAAF. In 1962 it was returned to RAF use until it was shut down in 1972. In 1987 The Mount HMP opened on the site of a former RAF station connected to the airfield; the prison, which is a Category C prison houses up to 720 inmates. The airfield and the prison are important features of the village. Although the airfield is no longer in operational use, it is used for Bovingdon Market on Saturdays and Bank Holiday Mondays, which attracts customers from far afield. Up until September 2008 the airfield was also used for stock car racing, although this use has now stopped. There are also small satellite sites related to the airfield outside the village.

2.0 The vision for Bovingdon

Vision

Bovingdon will remain a vibrant compact village, delivering a high quality of life for local residents and businesses. Its long-term strategy to 2031 will emphasise the conservation of the natural, historic and built heritage of the village, particularly in the context of its setting within gently undulating open countryside and the village centre. Locally distinctive features of the village such as The Dock will be enhanced, and Bovingdon Brickworks will be protected. New housing development will be used to secure new open space for the village and a high level of affordable housing. The local centre will remain the heart of the village and continue to deliver a range of local shops, services and facilities. Congestion and on-street parking along the High Street will be tackled to promote a better environment for residents and businesses. Support will be given to local businesses, schools and community facilities, and the existing wildlife and biodiversity resources on the outskirts of the village will be protected.

Question 1 (Bovingdon)

Do you agree with the vision for Bovingdon?

Yes/No

If not, what should be different? (Please see questionnaire)

3.0 The Issues and Opportunities

3.1 The East of England Plan (EoEP) sets out key strategies for development that need to be addressed by the spatial strategy for Bovingdon. The Plan gives guidance for the approach to development in large villages; consideration must be given to the potential of the village to accommodate an appropriate scale of development in relation to local housing and employment needs. Development should be sympathetic to local character and provide an appropriate level of affordable housing. Public transport, cycling and walking should be promoted in order to improve accessibility to services. The natural, historic and built environment should be conserved and enhanced and all important aspects of the Countryside and the environment should be protected.

3.2 The options for development are limited by the character and capacity of the village, and therefore only a level of housing growth that maintains the current population is considered appropriate (Population: Background Note for the Core Strategy⁴). This would provide some opportunities for small-scale development, including the provision of local affordable housing.

3.3 The main issues identified for Bovingdon from technical studies and consultation are:

Key Issues

- Need for more affordable housing and a greater range of housing
- Capacity and threshold issues at Bovingdon Primary School
- Traffic congestion and parking shortages along the High Street
- Need to improve the frequency and routing of bus services
- Lack of open space, wildlife/biodiversity sites, outdoor leisure space and indoor sports facilities
- Retention of the character of the village, in particular the historic core and the protection of historic buildings
- Support for local businesses to maintain the vitality and vibrancy of the local centre
- Poor/shortage of access on foot and by bicycle around the village

⁴ Information on population assumptions and calculations is given in the Population Background Note for the Core Strategy.

Question 2 (Bovingdon)

Are there any additional major issues we should be considering?

Yes/No

If yes, please list. (Please see questionnaire)

3.4 The need to develop a spatial strategy for Bovingdon presents a chance to try to overcome some of the above issues, and creates a number of opportunities for the village.

3.5 We must consider what level of additional housing development should be accommodated in Bovingdon up to 2031. Additional housing development is key to maintaining a vibrant village; it helps attract new people into the village and also helps to accommodate the existing population in the context of the projected falling household size. Additional housing also provides an opportunity to address some of the issues identified above such as the delivery of affordable housing and open space.

3.6 A key constraint to housing growth in Bovingdon is the capacity of the existing infrastructure; in particular that of the Primary School. Evidence from Herts County Council suggests that the Primary School is currently operating around capacity, which implies that there is scope for some additional housing Bovingdon in the longer term.

3.7 We suggest Bovingdon should accommodate modest levels of new housing of around 150 dwellings in the village over the period 2006 to 2031. This will allow the population to remain approximately as it is now, as the average household size is projected to fall. Without additional housing, the population of the village may shrink over time, thus reducing its vitality and vibrancy.

Question 3 (Bovingdon)

Do you agree with this level of growth?

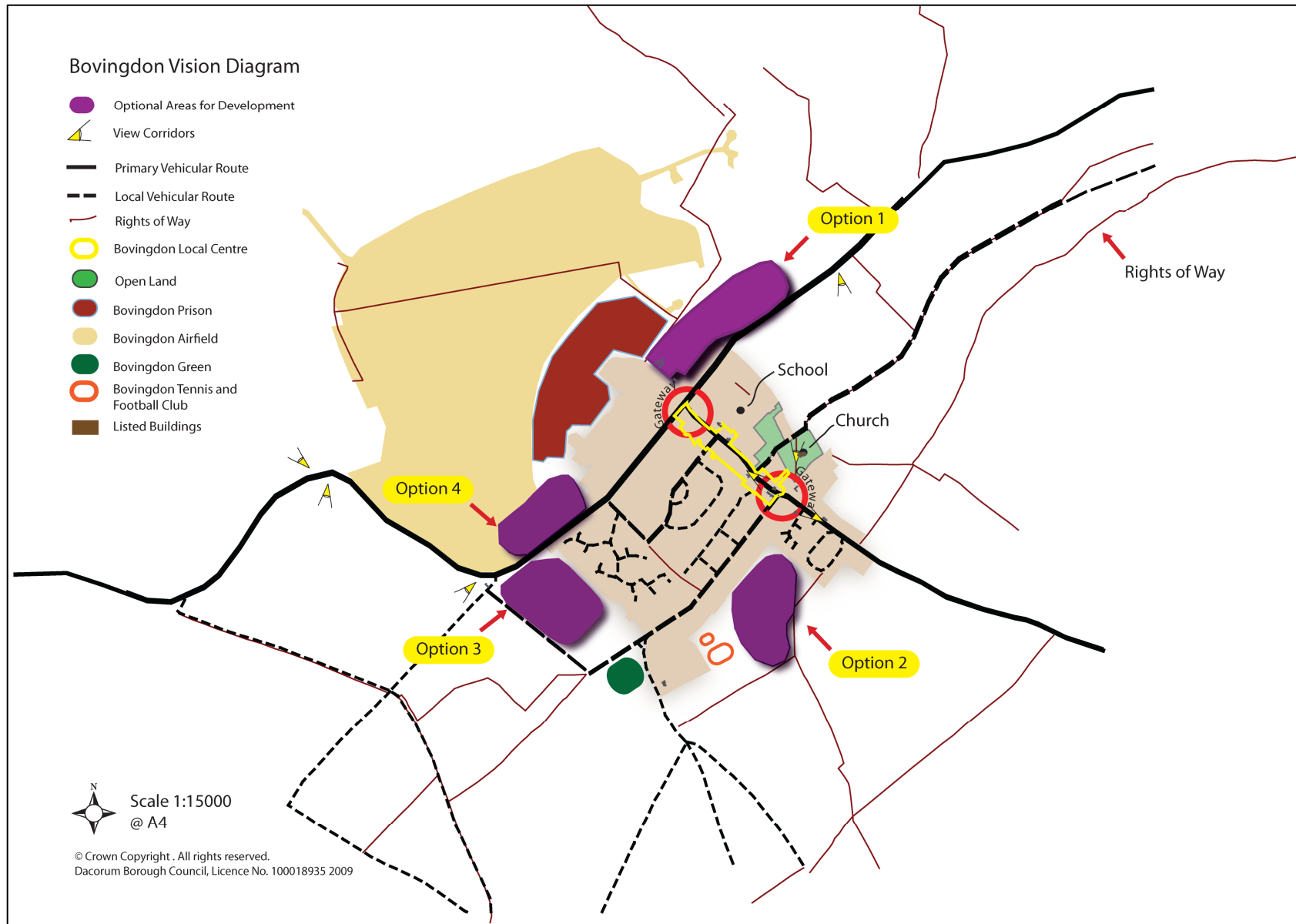
Yes/No

If not, what should it be? (Please see questionnaire)

3.8 Evidence from our housing studies suggests that around 80 dwellings can be accommodated in the urban area. However, this is not enough housing to address the shortfall in affordable housing in Bovingdon or to provide for additional open space and perhaps other facilities from developer contributions. One landowner suggested that a new health centre and

residential care home be delivered alongside residential development on their site; this is an example of the types of other facilities that could come forward with any of the options. The amount of additional housing required on greenfield land in Bovingdon to maintain a steady population is around 70 dwellings.

Figure 3.1 – Bovingdon Vision Diagram



4.0 Development Options

| Development Option | Pros | Cons |
|---|---|--|
| Option 1: Duckhall Farm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to secure a significant level of affordable housing; • Opportunity to provide additional open space; • Relatively accessible to village centre services and facilities; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separated from village centre by relatively busy road; • Depending on which part of the site is developed, it may increase the sprawl of the village; • Close to HMP The Mount; • The hedgerows and grasslands on the site are part of an area of high local value in terms of wildlife and biodiversity; • The site provides a local wildlife habitat and contains a wildlife corridor; • The site represents an important part of the countryside surrounding the village; • Honours Farm building and barn are grade II listed buildings; |
| Option 2: Rear of Green Lane | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to secure a significant level of affordable housing; • Opportunity to provide additional open space; • The site is within an area of biodiversity deficiency which would benefit from new habitat creation which could accompany new housing development; • Relatively accessible to village centre. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to the site via cul de sacs; • There are no frontages onto existing roads within the village; • Green Lane currently represents an important boundary to the village; • The site forms part of the countryside surrounding the village, and its development would constitute encroachment into the countryside; • The site may be an important wildlife space as it is at the junction of long back gardens and open countryside. It also contains part of a network of old hedgerows which are an important wildlife |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | habitat; |
| Option 3: Grange Farm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to secure a significant level of affordable housing; • Opportunity to provide additional open space; • The largest of the four options, so would be able to provide the most additional open space for the village; • Good road access. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further from the village centre; • The edge of the Moody estate represents an important boundary to the village; • The site represents a gap between housing and Bovingdon Brickworks; • A wildlife corridor runs through the site; • The site is prominent from existing roads, and represents an important part of the countryside surrounding the village; |
| Option 4: North of Chesham Road | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to secure a significant level of affordable housing; • Opportunity to provide additional open space; • Previously developed land; • Opportunity to secure environmental improvements to the airfield; • The site does not represent an important part of the countryside surrounding the village; • Good road access. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separated from village centre by relatively busy road; • Close to HMP The Mount – important not to affect its operation through undue traffic on Molyneux Avenue or activity on it boundary; • Further from the village centre; • The airfield site is prominent from Chesham Road; • A wildlife corridor runs through the site; • No known landowner/developer interest and split ownership. |

Question 4a (Bovingdon)

Do you prefer Option 1?

Yes/ No

If yes of the above, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 4b (Bovingdon)

Do you prefer Option 2?

Yes/ No

If yes of the above, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 4c (Bovingdon)

Do you prefer Option 3?

Yes/ No

If yes of the above, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 4d (Bovingdon)

Do you prefer Option 4?

Yes/ No

If yes of the above, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

5.0 Spatial strategy themes

5.1 The spatial strategy for Bovingdon and the other towns, large villages and the countryside in the Borough is presented around four themes:

- a) looking after the environment;
- b) social and personal welfare;
- c) economic prosperity; and
- d) location and access.

a) Looking after the Environment

(i) Small-scale growth at Bovingdon presents some challenges and provides us with the opportunity to conserve and enhance the environment of the village. The scale of growth will be such that the compactness of the village will be maintained. It is important that growth does not interfere with, and

where possible enhances, the landscape setting of Bovingdon and key views and gateways into and out of the village.

(ii) Bovingdon conservation area covers the southern end of the High Street, the Church and grounds, part of Bury Farm and part of Vicarage Lane and contains a number of listed buildings. The design of new development will respect and relate well to the conservation area and other parts of the village where it may be situated, particularly where listed buildings exist. A key priority of the spatial strategy is to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment of the village. New development should fit in with the key principles of the Urban Design Assessment, outlined in Table 1.

(iii) A site that requires attention is that at the junction of Hempstead Road and the High Street as it is identified as a key gateway to the village by the Urban Design Assessment. The building should have a strong front onto the High Street and its use should be well related to the function of the High Street.

(iv) Bovingdon is bounded by open countryside in a gently undulating landscape; this is one of its main attractions and makes it unique within the Borough as most of the other towns and villages are set around valleys. Whilst there are no sites of significant wildlife or biodiversity value within the village, some do exist on the outskirts of the village. The networks of old hedgerows and grasslands to the north of the village up to Little Hay Golf Club and to the south and east of the village are important local wildlife/biodiversity sites. Possibly, the most valuable local wildlife site is that of the old Bovingdon Brickworks which is now managed by Box Moor Trust. One of the aims of this spatial strategy is to maintain and enhance the countryside setting of the village, and the wildlife and biodiversity resources surrounding it.

Question 5 (Bovingdon)

Should a key emphasis of the Spatial Strategy be to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment of Bovingdon?

Yes/No

If not, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

(b) Social & personal welfare

(i) Bovingdon will deliver some small-scale additional housing. The amount it will deliver is based largely on its current character, size, setting and the capacity of its infrastructure. The level of housing to be delivered at Bovingdon is discussed above in paragraphs 1.17-1.20, and the locational options are discussed in paragraph 1.22 and in section 4.

(ii) Our technical studies and consultation with the local community identify a shortfall in the provision of affordable housing in the village and remedying

this is a key priority for the spatial strategy. Future housing developments, especially of large sites, will be expected to provide a significant proportion of affordable housing for local people.

(iii) The County Council is advising on the capacity of the primary school, and that of local roads. The primary school is the significant determinant of how much growth the village can accommodate.

(iv) In order to improve the quality of life for the residents of the village we will be seeking contributions towards additional open space with new housing development. This may take the form of facilities for young children, teenagers or be for more general use. We intend to progress the Open Land strategy⁵ in our current Local Plan which aims to protect open land within the urban area building and other inappropriate development.

Questions 6 (Bovingdon)

Do you agree that affordable housing should be provided with future housing developments?

Yes/No

If not, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 7 (Bovingdon)

Do you think additional open space should be sought for the village with new housing development?

Yes/No

If not, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

(c) Economic prosperity

(i) Whilst the village does not contain any designated employment sites, there are a number of local employers. Bovingdon Brickworks is an established local business on the outskirts of the village and is a Major Development Site (MDS) in the Green Belt which means that there is scope for limited infill development within the site.

(ii) The prison is another source of local employment and is also a MDS within the Green Belt. The local shops and services, and working farms around the edge of village are another source of local employment. We will endeavour to support local businesses where we can by retaining their designation as MDS

⁵ Local Plan Policy 116 Open Land in Towns and Large Villages.

within the Green Belt, where appropriate, and through promoting the shopping function of the local centre.

(iii) The mix of shops and services along the High Street is integral to the vibrancy of the village centre. Maintaining a vibrant village centre is a key priority. Tesco have acquired the ex-Jaguar garage at the top of the High Street and approached the Council about building an Express store there. We need to consider whether this is the best location for a small supermarket, or whether a location on the High Street would be more appropriate. In its proposed location the store may divert trade from the core of the village centre, and although there is plenty of space for car parking, pre-application information suggests that minimal spaces will be provided. A more central location may worsen congestion in the village, unless it can provide a significant amount of car parking (in which case it may contribute to option 1 below). However, a more central location may be beneficial for other local shops, which may gain from increased passing trade.

(iv) Bovingdon Market is a locally unique use that attracts a significant amount of people from across Dacorum and beyond. The attraction of the market has benefits and disadvantages for the village; it benefits local but also leads to high levels of congestion along Box Lane/Chesham Road.

Question 8a (Bovingdon)

Do you agree that the prison should remain as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt?

Yes/No

If not, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 8b (Bovingdon)

Do you agree that Bovingdon Brickworks should remain as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt?

Yes/No

If not, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 9a (Bovingdon)

Do you think a small supermarket would be better located in the centre of the village?

Yes/No

If not, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 9b (Bovingdon)

Do you think a small supermarket would be better located at the ex-Jaguar garage site?

Yes/No

If not, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 10 (Bovingdon)

Are there any other ways of improving the economic prosperity of Bovingdon?

Yes/No

If so, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

(d) Location & access

(i) Bovingdon High Street suffers from severe traffic congestion, which is partly due to the high level of on-street parking; this also discourages people from walking the full length of the High Street and makes cycling through the village unattractive. We have the opportunity to try and improve the situation by tackling the on-street parking. Two ideas are suggested. The first is the provision of two small car parks – one at either end of the village together with measures to prevent on-street parking. The second option is to create formal parking bays in front of the shops and to block on street parking elsewhere; this is likely to involve the redistribution of some forecourt parking.

(ii) For both options we would have to consider whether any extra land was available, and both would involve parking management. The two options would both inevitably cause some disruption during their implementation and would require co-operation from the relevant landowners and HCC Highways department. In fact, without their support no option is feasible. Both options

would be fairly costly and would need funding from somewhere; neither are likely to receive funding from HCC Highways department, nor from developer contributions.

(iii) A further option was considered, but was rejected as being highly impractical and expensive. It comprised expanding the shop fronts along the eastern side of the High Street to the street front, thus creating a clear building line and pedestrian path.

The pros and cons of each option are discussed in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Bovington High Street Parking Options

| Parking Option | Pros | Cons |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Option 1 – two small car parks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It should free up some of the on-street parking and thus reduce congestion; • Disruption to the village should not be too lengthy; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no obvious sites that could be used for car parking; • Small village car parks typically generate low levels of income for the landowner and may therefore require funding; |
| Option 2 – formal parking bays | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blocking the on-street parking should lead to less congestion throughout the High Street; • This option will lead to more organised parking and a tidier appearance of the High Street, which encourage pedestrians to walk the length of the High Street; • Disruption to the village should not be too lengthy; • This option would not be as costly as Option 1. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option does not create additional parking spaces so may lead to more on-street parking on roads off the High Street; • Formal parking bays in front of the shops may reduce activity along the High Street. |

Question 11a (Bovington)

Do you agree that we should try and tackle congestion on the High Street through Option 1?

Yes/No

If yes, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 11b (Bovingdon)

Do you agree that we should try and tackle congestion on the High Street through Option 2?

Yes/No

If yes, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 11c (Bovingdon)

Is there any other way of tackling congestion on the High Street?

Yes/No

If yes, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 12 (Bovingdon)

When future housing development comes forward we may have to choose between the delivery of affordable housing, additional open space or additional leisure space for the village. Should affordable housing be given greater priority over open space/leisure space?

Yes/No

If not, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 13 (Bovingdon)

The spatial strategy for Bovingdon to 2031 is presented in Section 5. Overall do you support the strategy?

Yes/No

If not, please give your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 14 (Bovingdon)

Do you have any other concerns or comments regarding the spatial strategy for Bovingdon?

Yes/No

If yes, please add them here. (Please see questionnaire)