



EMERGING CORE STRATEGY

June 2009

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اگر آپ یہ معلومات کسی اور شکل میں چاہتے ہیں، جیسے بڑی چھپائی یا آڈیو ٹیپ، تو برائے مہربانی اس نمبر پر فون کریں 01442 228660 یا 01442 867877 (صرف منی کام)۔

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જો તમને આ માહિતી જુદી રીતે દા: ત મોટા અક્ષરોમાં અથવા ઓડિયો ટેપમાં જોઈતી હોય તો મહેરબાની કરીને ટેલિફોન 01442 228660 અથવા 01442 867877 (ફક્ત મીનીકોમ) ઉપર કરો.

Contents

Page

PART ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

a) What is the Core Strategy?	5
b) I have commented on previous consultation. Do I need to comment again?	5
c) What can I comment on?	6
d) What about the current economic recession?	6
e) Structure of the Core Strategy	6
f) Additional information	8
g) How do I comment?	9
h) What happens next?	9
i) Any questions?	10

2. BOROUGH VISION

11

3. BOROUGH THEMES

13

Theme 1 – Sustainable Development

a) Location of Development and Change	15
b) Quality of Urban Design	17
c) Response to Climate Change	18
d) Accessibility of Facilities	20

Theme 2 – Social and Personal Welfare

a) Homes	22
b) Community and Leisure Facilities	27

Theme 3 – Economic Prosperity

a) Business	28
b) Retail	30
c) Tourism	32

Theme 4 – Looking After the Environment

a) Heritage, Biodiversity and Landscape Character	33
b) Natural Resources	34

PART TWO

Page

1. INTRODUCTION TO PLACES

37

2. PLACES

Berkhamsted	39
Bovingdon	60
Hemel Hempstead	80
Kings Langley	112
Markyate	128
Tring	143
Countryside	159

PART ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

a) What is the Core Strategy?

The Council is in the process of preparing a new 'Local Development Framework' (LDF) for Dacorum Borough. This will replace the existing Local Plan that was adopted in 2004.

The Core Strategy is the central document in this Local Development Framework. Its role is to establish the overall pattern of development within the Borough over the next 20+ years.

It will set out:

- The vision and objectives that will guide change in the Borough over the next 20 years.
- The strategy for key settlements, villages and the countryside, including decisions about where new development will go.
- Core policies that will help to achieve the vision and the overall strategy for Dacorum, and provide the context for more detailed development management policies.
- The locations where large-scale housing and employment developments can be best accommodated.

Policies and proposals in the Core Strategy are not just about delivering homes and jobs. They must also consider how we deliver key infrastructure like schools, health facilities and shops as well as setting out how we can promote high quality design and shape new developments to reduce the need to travel and improve public safety. Responding to climate change and the use of natural resources are also critical issues.

The Core Strategy is one of a number of separate documents that will make up the final Local Development Framework. This Core Strategy consultation does therefore not cover most site-specific issues or detailed development management policies, as these will be covered within other LDF documents.

For more information regarding the detailed structure and content of the Council's LDF, please refer to our project plan (known as the Local Development Scheme), which can be downloaded from www.dacorum.gov.uk/planning

b) I have commented on previous consultation, do I need to comment again?

Many people will have responded to previous consultations during 2006 on our Core Strategy. This included:

- Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper, May 2006
- Core Strategies Supplementary Issues and Options Paper – Growth at Hemel Hempstead, November 2006 (*produced jointly with St Albans City and District Council*).

These sought your views on the issues that are facing in the Borough and the options that we have for dealing with these issues. We have used the views expressed through this earlier consultation to help inform the content of this Emerging Core Strategy Paper, and to begin firming up our approach to future planning within the Borough.

It is however important that you continue to give us feedback to ensure that the final Core Strategy document (due for publication in mid 2011) continues to reflect your views and those of your local community.

c) What can I comment on?

We do not have a completely 'free hand' in terms of how we plan the future of our Borough. Key requirements regarding the overall level and broad location of development, together with other regional-wide policies are set out in the East of England Plan (also known as the Regional Spatial Strategy). We must follow the East of England Plan and also reflect national advice contained within Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs).

When answering the questions in this consultation paper, please bear in mind that there are certain things we are required to do by central Government. This includes providing a specific level of housing growth within the Borough. The issue is therefore not whether we want to accommodate new homes, but how and where we can best accommodate them. By answering the questions you will help influence these important planning decisions.

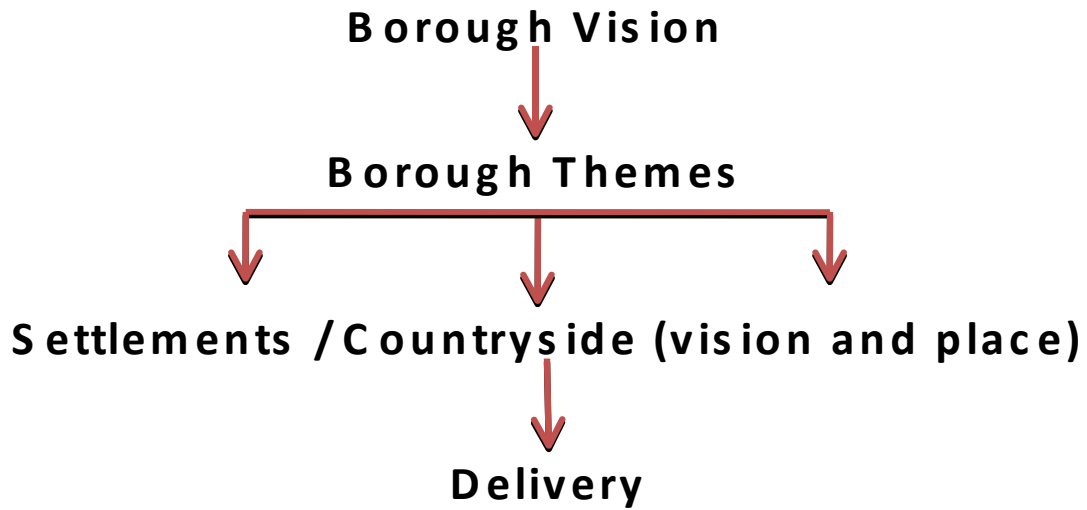
The housing figure contained in the East of England Plan has recently been challenged in the High Court. The full implications of this challenge are not yet clear, but it is expected that references to a major Green Belt review at Hemel Hempstead to accommodate new residential neighbourhoods will be deleted for the time being and that the Borough's overall housing target will be reduced as a result. It is important to note that there will be a period of uncertainty. The issue of growth may be reintroduced if the Government appeal the High Court's decision or when the East of England Plan is reviewed later this year.

d) What about the current economic recession?

We know that both the housing market and wider economy are suffering as a result of the current economic downturn and that fewer new homes are being built. However, we need to plan for the long term (to 2031) and make sure that whatever the current situation, our plans are in place for when the economy picks up again.

e) Structure of the Core Strategy

This consultation paper is set out under 3 main headings, which reflect the intended structure of our final Core Strategy document:



Borough Vision

The first part of this consultation paper sets out how the Core Strategy should support the vision for the Borough (which is set out in the Dacorum Sustainable Community Strategy).



We would like your feedback as to whether you support our planning objectives for the Borough.

Borough Themes

The second part of this consultation paper deals with the four key themes that the Core Strategy will cover. These themes are:-

1. Sustainable Development
2. Social and Personal Welfare
3. Economic Prosperity; and
4. Looking After the Environment

Under each theme we highlight the issues that we intend to cover, the approach we will take, any gaps in our current understanding and how we are seeking to fill these.



We have asked a series of questions to get your feedback on whether you agree with our approach to addressing key issues under each theme.

Places (Settlements and Countryside)

This section is the focus of our consultation.

Local Development Frameworks are required to put a far greater emphasis upon highlighting the unique characteristics of different parts of the Borough than was required under the old Local Plan system. We have therefore developed individual place strategies for each of the Borough's towns and large villages, plus a separate strategy for the wider countryside and the small villages within it.

These set out the characteristics of each place and the key issues faced, together with a draft vision of what the place will be like in 2031. We have identified a small number of development options for each place and outlined how the vision can be achieved.



We would like your feedback on a number of key questions relating to our suggested approach for each place.

Delivery

The Core Strategy will need to include a section setting out how our policies and proposals will be delivered. This chapter will be drafted once our broad approach to the location and scale of development within the Borough has been firmed up, and therefore does not form part of this consultation.

The chapter will cover issues such as how the Council will obtain developer contributions towards infrastructure delivery and the phasing of development. It will link the Core Strategy to other plans and strategies, such as the Dacorum Sustainable Community Strategy and other relevant strategies and funding programmes produced by partner organisations such as the County Council and Primary Care Trust. These strategies will help inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which will sit alongside the Local Development Framework. We will also need to set out how we will monitor delivery of the LDF and include indicators that will be used to assess progress towards achieving our targets.

There will be the opportunity to comment on our intended approach to delivery during the next round of consultation (scheduled for spring 2010).

f) Additional information

The information in this consultation paper is supported by a number of background documents and reports, which cannot be fully summarised here. Key documents are specifically referred to within the text. A separate sustainability report has also been prepared on an independent basis by consultants, C4S. This appraises the environmental, social and economic implications of our proposals and highlights if the consultants have concerns regarding either our coverage of topics or overall approach. Your comments on this report are welcomed.

The background information and the Sustainability Appraisal Report are available to download from our website free of charge from www.dacorum.gov.uk/planning and paper copies are held in the reference sections of libraries within Dacorum Borough. Copies are also available to purchase from Dacorum's Spatial Planning Team.

g) How do I comment?

Comments should be sent to the Spatial Planning Team at Dacorum Borough Council using the questionnaire that is available. Where possible we would appreciate comments being submitted online using Dacorum Council's specially designed web page, but questionnaires can also be posted, faxed or emailed.

The questionnaire is available from at the Civic Centre Hemel Hempstead and at libraries across the Borough.

Online: www.dacorum.gov.uk/planning

By post: Spatial Planning Team
Planning and Regeneration
Dacorum Borough Council
Civic Centre
Marlowes
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP1 1HH

By fax: 01442 228771

By email: spatial.planning@dacorum.gov.uk

Responses must be received no later than 4.45pm on 28th August 2009

All comments received will be publicly available.

h) What happens next?

The results of this consultation, together with the content of the independent sustainability appraisal and other technical work will assist the Council in preparing its full draft version of the Core Strategy (known as the Pre-Submission document) in Spring 2010.

This draft document will be subject to further public consultation and will also be assessed by an independent Planning Inspector, before it is finally agreed. This is expected to be in summer 2011.

i) Any questions?

If you have any questions regarding any of the issues raised in this document, please contact the Spatial Planning Team on 01442 228660 or email spatial.planning@dacorum.gov.uk

2. BOROUGH VISION

'Towards 2021, the Sustainable Community Strategy' (SCS) (January 2008), has the vision of:

“Working together to make Dacorum a happy, healthy, prosperous and safe place to live, work and visit”.

The strategic vision and aims have been translated into visions for each town, large village and the countryside (see Part Two: Places). The Local Development Framework will help achieve this strategic vision by:

- Establishing a planning framework that ensures a high quality of life and a sustainable future for the Borough.
- Delivering [the required level of] new homes in the Borough and meeting the mix of types, tenures and dwelling sizes that are needed.
- Creating opportunities for a vibrant and prosperous economy across the Borough, focussing on improvements to the Maylands area and re-establishing economic confidence in Hemel Hempstead,.
- Ensuring the provision of suitable infrastructure to enable the successful delivery of new neighbourhoods and other development.
- Promoting an integrated transport network, with an emphasis on encouraging the use of public transport, cycling and walking, and reducing the overall need to travel by private car.
- Ensuring that all forms of development address climate change through requiring sustainable methods of construction, energy efficient buildings and measures to protect from and reduce the risk of flooding.
- Promoting the sustainable use of natural resources.
- Enhancing Hemel Hempstead's role as the main centre within the Borough, with a thriving sub regional business and shopping hub.
- Protecting and strengthening the role of the Borough's two market towns and large villages as attractive local shopping, service and cultural centres.
- Conserving and enhancing the countryside, Green Belt and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the rivers and Grand Union Canal.
- Focusing on the re-use of urban sites, using high quality design, to create safe and attractive environments.
- Ensuring the efficient use of existing land, whilst maintaining the variety and character of the towns and villages.
- Supporting agriculture and other countryside-based enterprises.
- Conserving and enhancing the Borough's landscape character, open space, biological and geological diversity, heritage and cultural facilities.
- Making provision for a full range of social, leisure and community facilities.
- Promoting diversity, equality of opportunity and social inclusion in order to meet the different needs within the community.

Question 1 (Themes)

Do you agree with the aims listed, which will help achieve the Borough vision?

Yes/No

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

3. BOROUGH THEMES

THEME 1 - Sustainable Development

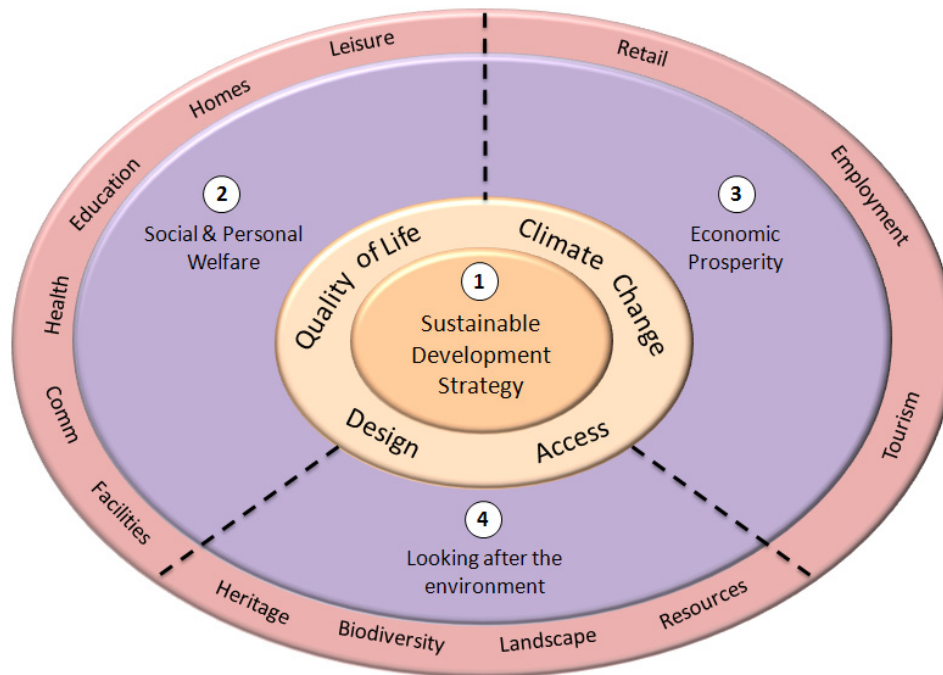
The continued growth of greenhouse gas emission is causing severe climatic changes resulting in global temperature increases, water shortages, melting ice caps, flooding, erratic seasons and extreme weather conditions. An urgent international response is required to decrease manmade greenhouse gas emissions before the ‘tipping point’¹ is reached and/or global temperatures increase further. Sustainable development is the only way forward in the response to climate change.

This is why sustainable development has been placed at the heart of the planning system, in **Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1)** and the **Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change - Supplement to PPS1** at the national level, and Policy SS1 of the East of England Plan, at the regional level. Our adopted Local Plan currently seeks sustainable development but because of changing national policy context, the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework (LDF) will place an even greater emphasis on achieving sustainable development, not simply over the plan period of 20 years, but well beyond.

With sustainable development at the heart of the Core Strategy, local planning policy will be capable of limiting the use of natural resources and ‘future proofing’ new development so that it will be adaptable to changing climatic conditions. This core theme cuts across the 3 principles that make up the Core Strategy: Social and Personal Welfare, Economic Prosperity and Looking after the Environment (Figure 1).

¹ Tipping point – the atmosphere contains 380 parts per million of carbon dioxide, the principal greenhouse gas, compared to pre-industrial revolution levels of 275ppm. By 2016, 400ppm will be reached if an urgent reduction in greenhouse gas emission has not been made. 450ppm is said to be the tipping point which will increase global temperatures with catastrophic consequences.

Figure 1 – Core Strategy Structure Diagram



Our approach embraces cross-cutting themes in the same way that there are cross-cutting themes in the Dacorum Sustainable Community Strategy. They are:

- a) the location of development and change;
- b) the quality of urban design;
- c) the response to climate change; and
- d) the accessibility of facilities.

We will plan the location, accessibility and design of development, so as to contribute to reduced carbon emissions, lower energy/natural resource consumption and reduced waste. For each theme we will seek ways to incentivise further reductions in carbon emissions both in new development and in the local area more generally by e.g. reductions in carbon output from existing buildings by retrofitting improvements in energy efficiency and fixing carbon through green infrastructure. Innovative approaches will be encouraged to incorporate suitable technologies at the master planning and design stages.

Question 2 (Themes)

Do you agree with the principle of placing sustainable development at the heart of the Core Strategy?

Yes/No

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

a) Location of Development and Change

No town or village can sustain itself unless there is investment and it can adapt and grow. New building for homes, jobs and services will continue to be needed. The issue is the scale of that change and how it relates to the character of the place and its surroundings. Even to maintain the population at its 2001 or 2006 level, homes would be required because of the trend towards smaller households. To achieve economic sustainability would require further investment for new businesses and/or new homes. And if we want economic growth to allow us to have higher prosperity, then homes and jobs (in the growth sectors of the economy) must follow.

The development strategy in the Local Plan has established the broad role of places – i.e. town and villages and the countryside. The strategy remains valid, although we can better recognise differences – i.e. between settlements and in different parts of the countryside – and local distinctiveness. What is different or special about a place will be brought out in the Core Strategy in the section on Places.

The thrust of the development strategy is reinforced by the East of England Plan. The main elements are as follows:

- Hemel Hempstead, as the New Town, is the location for housing and economic growth. This will affect parts of the town very significantly (especially the town centre and Maylands Business Park). It would also affect some areas around the town if extensions to the town are built
- The market towns and large villages will remain stable. Their size and character will be protected. Additional building areas will be restricted. Population growth may not occur (or if it does it will be marginal).
- The countryside is an area of restraint to be protected in its own right. Where small scale local housing or other development is needed, it would be directed to key villages, as now.

Question 3 (Themes)

Do you agree with the development strategy as described?

Yes/No

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

The countryside is not one homogenous area. Part is protected by Green Belt designation, the remainder is referred to as the Rural Area. It has been suggested during consultation that the Tring Rural Parish area should all be designated Green Belt. To do so would require us to demonstrate “exceptional circumstances” which regrettably we are unable to do.

A separate issue is the role on infilling within key villages. Some house owners in Green Belt villages want to be able to build in their gardens. They would like the policy to be the same as in the Rural Area (i.e. at Aldbury, Long Marston and Wilstone): there is no particular restriction on development within these villages, and new affordable housing would normally be located on specifically identified sites outside the villages.

Current policy for the Green Belt villages (Chipperfield, Flamstead, Potten End and Wigginton) is very strict and says no to infilling, unless there would be no more than two new dwellings built and each is reserved for local people (now and in the future).

Question 4 (Themes)

Should we keep the existing policy which strictly limits infilling in the Green Belt villages?

Yes/No

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

A swathe of countryside from Tring and Wigginton to Flamstead and Markyate has been designated by the Government as being part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is recognised by the Local Plan and development here is constrained. If you have any suggestions for changing our approach to the control of development here, please refer to Countryside in the section on Places.

The location of development, and particular types of development, relates not only to the role of different settlements but also to the roles of areas within those settlements. The Council intends to follow a sequential approach to the location of development (which you have previously told us you support): i.e.

- previously developed land will normally be used before greenfield land
- town centres and locations which are more accessible to all forms of transport will accommodate larger, more intensive developments, compared to out of centre and less accessible locations.

Question 5 (Themes)

Do you agree with the sequential approach to development that is outlined?

Yes/No

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

b) Quality of Urban Design

National policy set out in **Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1)** and **Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3)** puts good urban design at the centre of any strategy for delivering sustainable communities. This is reflected in the policies of the East of England Plan, which places great importance on the quality of the built environment. Both national and regional planning policies emphasise the importance of delivering new development in the most sustainable way possible and good design is essential to achieving this. At the heart of the approach is the need to respect and enhance local distinctiveness and character.

Design statements are required to accompany most planning applications for new building development (other than householder applications). The Council will expect all design statements to set out the analysis and reasoning behind the particular scheme being proposed. This should include an explanation of how the applicant has addressed a checklist used to assess sustainability. The checklist will incorporate urban design principles outlined below, the 'Building for Life'² criteria and CABI's 'By Design'³ qualities.

The Core Strategy will include a policy (or policies) on 'quality of urban design' and develop policy tools to provide clarity and certainty about design aspirations and objectives for particular sites. Our intention is that this will take forward the principles set out in Policy 11 of the current Local Plan and extend it to pick up current good practice (as mentioned above) and the key design considerations highlighted in the Borough-wide Urban Design Assessment⁴. These are set out in the box below.

The principles of sustainable design covered in the Hertfordshire-wide Building Futures Guides (see section on 'Response to Climate Change') would also be incorporated. We will also continue to apply the detailed principles set out in the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and associated Technical Notes to ensure that design is given especially high priority within the most sensitive parts of the countryside.

Dacorum Urban Design Assessment :

Key Urban Design Considerations

1. Site Context

- Urban design zone
- Site area
- Type of site

² Building for Life – see www.buildingforlife.org run by CABI and the Home Builders Federation

³ By Design - CABI (2000)

⁴ Dacorum Urban Design Assessment – Borough Assessment (January 2006) produced by Urban Practitioners.

- Location in respect of the strategy plan
- 2. Local Character**
 - Building types
 - Materials and architectural styles
 - Listed buildings and Conservation Areas
 - Building Heights
 - Density
 - Topography
- 3. Layout and Enclosure**
 - Morphology
 - Building lines
 - Building orientation
 - Pavements
 - Pattern of open space
- 4. Making Connections**
 - Circulation, demand and linkages
 - Parking
 - Land use
- 5. Quality of the Public Realm**
 - Streetscape elements
 - Quality of open space

Our aim is develop places with their own identity, where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished and incorporate attractive and successful outdoor areas. Places must also be easy to get to and move through and provide recognisable routes with a variety of uses and choice, which have the capability to adapt to change.

It is also our intention to bring forward the detailed Urban Design Assessments produced for each of the Borough's towns and large villages as Supplementary Planning Documents: this would be the subject of consultation later.

Question 6 (Themes)

Do you support the approach to achieving high quality urban design that is outlined?

Yes/No

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

c) Response to Climate Change

The Supplement to PPS1 reflects the need for new development to address the effects of climate change. The East of England Plan reinforces that response with policies on energy, the environment, renewable energy, water and minerals and waste management. The East of England Regional

Assembly's (EERA) Study (February 2008) 'Placing Renewables in the East of England' defines the resource potential of the region for electricity generation from renewables and identifies regional and sub-regional targets for renewable energy production. Our approach will be to support national and regional targets such as the Code for Sustainable Homes and the BREEAM standards for non-residential development providing opportunities for innovative mitigation and adaptation solutions to climate change.

A further technical study called 'Tackling Climate Change through the Hertfordshire Planning System' is to be undertaken at a County level. This will provide us with more detailed local knowledge, so we can better prepare policies on climate change for the Core Strategy.

Our intention is to develop policies based on best practice:

(a) pursuing the following objectives:

- to maintain and develop a prosperous countryside, encouraging rural regeneration and diversification;
- to manage the design, density and location of development;
- to reduce private car usage and encourage alternative forms of sustainable transport;
- to achieve development that is of high quality and is compatible with the sustainable management of land, soil, air and water;
- to achieve development that can adapt and respond to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions;
- to minimise waste; and
- to recycle construction materials.

(b) endorsing the principles of the Hertfordshire Building Futures Guide to new development:

- to minimise use and consumption of energy sources including fossil fuels,
- to minimise the use and consumption of water;
- to minimise the adverse effects on water quality;
- to seek design that promotes the most sustainable form of development;
- to seek design which utilises sustainable construction technologies;
- to incorporate facilities for recycling of water and waste.

Alongside criteria-based policies we will also consider identifying suitable areas for the generation of renewable and low carbon energy sources.

Question 7 (Themes)

Is there anything in addition to the items listed that we should be considering in our response to Climate Change?

Yes/No

If yes, please list. (Please see questionnaire)

d) Accessibility of Facilities

The Local Transport Plan aims to deliver transport improvements that offer value for money and achieve the key priorities of tackling congestion, delivering accessibility to services and facilities, safer roads, better air quality and other quality of life issues. These aims are consistent with our approach for sustainable development in the Borough and will be supported through our Core Strategy.

A clear road hierarchy will continue to be identified recognising the need for through movement and local access.

It is expected that only areas of new development will justify the need for additional roads in the Borough. The local highway authority will not be considering the provision of new roads simply to overcome traffic congestion issues. Instead the Local Transport Plan and transport modelling will be looking at different ways of tackling current congestion problems in different areas. There will be small-scale schemes and works referred to in the Urban Transport Plan which the local highway authority (the County Council) are preparing.

The thrust of transport policies will be to:

- manage existing road space;
- encourage less car usage; and
- promote sustainable modes of transport – i.e. transport other than the private motor car.

Examples include creating stronger and convenient public transport links and interchanges, providing better pedestrian links through places, and additional cycle lanes.

Parking policies will need to fit the highway movement strategy. Management of parking space needs to be carefully managed in more accessible locations. This applies both on and off the street. In separate supplementary planning guidance we have defined zones which have different levels of accessibility. . The Local Plan provides maximum car parking standards for different uses. These are normally applied at 100% for residential purposes. However for non-residential uses a sliding scale of percentage is applied, depending on the zone the use is located in. The guidance on Accessibility Zones identifies four zones across the Borough. Fewer parking spaces should be provided in Zone 1 (e.g. Hemel Hempstead town centre) compared to say Zone 3 (which includes some local centres). This approach is an important part of planning and strategic transport policy, and we intend to continue to apply it with the County Council.

Car parking standards in different locations in the Borough will ultimately need to be reviewed in line with other Hertfordshire authorities.

The location of development is a critical aspect of accessibility. Consequently:

- the location of new services and facilities, and development in the Borough will need to be close to areas which are accessible by car, public transport, cycling and walking (and therefore avoid inappropriate levels of additional car and lorry traffic on unsuitable roads); and
- neighbourhood service provision needs to be enhanced in local centres to reduce the need to travel.

The design of new developments should have the needs of people uppermost, particularly those who are disabled or on foot. New developments will therefore need to integrate with existing pedestrian and cycle routes, and road networks.

Question 8 (Themes)

Do you agree with the approach that is outlined to Accessibility of Facilities?

Yes/No

If not, please explain what should be different. (Please see questionnaire)

THEME 2 – Social and Personal Welfare

a) Homes

Having a decent home is a fundamental aim. Individual homes should be adaptable to different lifestyles and meet the needs of a wide variety of households. Carefully designed homes and neighbourhoods promote wellbeing and quality of life.

The Core Strategy should normally ensure sufficient housing to meet the Borough's target set out in the East of England Plan.

The published East of England Plan (2008) indicates 17,000 new dwellings between 2006 and 2031. This represents a minimum target to be provided and assumes strategic development at Hemel Hempstead, i.e. major review of the Green Belt and large urban extensions into the countryside. However, as a result of a judicial review in the High Court, this particular aspect of the East of England Plan may be deleted. Due to uncertainties about the growth at Hemel Hempstead we are assuming that the Core Strategy should provide a minimum level of dwellings in the Borough without any major incursion into the Green Belt there. We believe that this would imply a continuation of housing growth for the Borough of 360 dwellings per year i.e. the same rate as in the Dacorum Borough Local Plan. Over the period 2006 – 2031 this would equate to a minimum of 9,000 dwellings.

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment⁵ looked in detail at housing land in the Borough. We have used this and other information to assess housing land supply to 2031⁶. Our assessment sets out the level of capacity we have (Table 1).

Table 1 - Housing Programme 2006 – 2031

	Total
Completions 1.4.06 – 31.3.08	784
Committed Housing Capacity	
(a) Defined sites	6,550
(b) Defined locations in Hemel Hempstead	1,109
(c) Gypsy and traveller pitches	59
(d) Rural Exceptions	105
(e) Windfall	1,456
Sub total	9,279
Target	9,000

Note: (d) and (e) actually form part of defined locations, but have been separated to give a clearer indication as to the contribution from urban areas.

⁵ South West Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (October 2008)

⁶ DBC Core Strategy Housing Working Paper (April 2009)

Committed housing capacity is made up of identified sites, broad locations, and assumptions about undefined sites (i.e. small windfalls). For locations listed (b)-(d), we will put detailed policies in place so that the targets can be delivered. At this stage, we cannot be precise about individual sites that make up the targets for Hemel Hempstead town centre and the Maylands business area, Gypsies and Travellers and rural exceptions (i.e. small sites in or on the edge of villages specifically identified for affordable housing).

Government advice on housing land availability and delivery stresses the importance of a robust assessment of future supply and the flexibility that is needed to maintain that supply. We have considered whether there is the need for a contingency in the form of a greenfield land reserve. If such a contingency were introduced it could imply a need for 450 – 900 dwellings in the Green Belt in Dacorum (that is 5 – 10% of the assumed housing target).

The Core Strategy does look at the delivery of development in individual places, but it needs to focus on strategic rather than smaller, non-strategic sites. Government allows us to designate strategic housing in the Core Strategy if they are essential to early delivery of the strategy. We will not be considering the location of strategic growth around Hemel Hempstead at this stage. We may need to consider this in the near future, but this is being postponed for the time being. Some change is inevitable elsewhere and decisions will need to be made as to whether such sites are significant enough to be designated as strategic (i.e. following this consultation and the results of additional housing studies). The Emerging Strategy Paper does explore the amount and possible direction of growth in settlements through the settlement visioning strategy (refer to the section on Places). The actual location of non-strategic sites will be finalised through the Site Allocations Development Plans Document.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Development Economics Study (DES) are technical documents, which will inform our understanding of housing issues. They are not expected to be completed before August. The SHMA looks at the mix of housing in terms of size and tenure, and initial results suggest the need for higher levels of affordable housing (i.e. 39% of total dwellings). The Core Strategy will need to take its findings into account and include relevant policies. We believe the work supports valid arguments for a higher percentage of affordable housing, particularly if there are local greenfield releases. The DES will test the impact of a higher percentage target for affordable housing on the viability of development (and may cause us to qualify conclusions from the SHMA).

Question 9(Themes)

Do you have any observations on the housing programme and future housing policy that is outlined?

Yes/No

If yes, please list them. (Please see questionnaire)

We must address the housing needs of all of the community, including Gypsies and Travellers. The Council expects to provide around 59 residential pitches to 2031. A set of principles is proposed to guide the location of future provision, assist in site planning, and promote longer-term integration of sites and community harmony. The draft policy below supports a sequential approach to the location of sites based firstly on pitches being accommodated and planned for as part of new large-scale (strategic and non-strategic) housing developments, followed by other options if needed. The Council has concluded this approach in the light of consultation on a Supplementary Issues and Options Paper connected with the Site Allocations and issued in November 2008⁷.

⁷ Cabinet 31st March 2009

DRAFT POLICY: ACCOMMODATION FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

Overall Approach

The Council intends to:

- (a) deliver the number of pitches needed in the borough in a co-ordinated way, which allows for natural growth.
- (b) locate, design and secure the management of all Gypsy and Traveller sites in accordance with the following key principles:
 - (i) equity – i.e. fairness to both the Gypsy and Traveller community and the settled community;
 - (ii) integration of the two communities – i.e. acceptance, social cohesion and a wider, shared sense of place and community;
 - (iii) sustainability – i.e. proximity to services, social inclusion, protection of heritage and important environmental features and conservation of natural resources.
- (c) collaborate with other agencies, such as the County Council, Police and community support groups, and site owners/managers to assist the assimilation of residents on new sites with the settled community nearby.
- (d) seek Government funding to support the provision of new sites.
- (e) give priority to the provision of pitches on sites which are defined as strategic housing sites or are defined in the Site Allocations DPD - while it is possible for other proposals to come forward, they will be judged on the basis of the need for that additional provision and the other principles in this policy.

The planning of new pitches

New sites will be:

- (a) distributed in a dispersed pattern around settlements in the Borough;
- (b) located close to facilities and with landscaping or physical features incorporated to provide an appropriate setting and relationship to existing residential areas (as defined in the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011);
- (c) of varying sizes, not normally exceeding a site capacity of 15 pitches;
- (d) planned to allow for part occupation initially, allowing subsequent growth to full site capacity;
- (e) designed with an open frontage similar to other forms of housing and to high standards using Government advice in “Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites – Good Practice Guide (May 2008)”.

For any new transit pitches, the key considerations will, in addition, be

- achieving good access to the M1 or A41 main roads: and
- minimising potential disturbance to adjoining occupiers.

Question 10 (Themes)

Do you agree with the draft policy on Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers set out?

Yes/No

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

Please note:

The Council has a duty under the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended by the Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000) to actively seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations. The duty prohibits racial discrimination by local planning authorities in carrying out their planning functions. This applies to consultation, consideration of comments received on consultation and site planning itself. We respectfully remind you that comments should not apply pressure to discriminate against any racial group: they should also be directed to valid planning issues. Further advice on these matters is available at www.dacorum.gov.uk/planning.

b) Community and Leisure Facilities

In the communities in which we live, there should be a variety of facilities supporting our needs, from healthcare to education and community facilities to leisure. Our broad approach will be to support the key agencies which can deliver them.

You have told us in previous consultations that you hold the provision of health and education as key priorities. We will strive to reduce both healthcare and educational inequalities across the Borough by making sure these facilities are located in the most accessible places. Schools and medical facilities should be located in areas that are very accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. We understand that policy also needs to address future provision of adult care services, and in particular the issue of day care facilities.

Leisure and health are linked, and we will continue to locate facilities that are easily accessible by walking and cycling, ensuring that the potential for physical activity is maximised.

Opportunities for increasing participation in leisure and recreation will be maximised by making sure that there is good provision and easy access, particularly to open space. A broad range of leisure uses will be supported.

Existing open spaces will be protected and opportunities to enhance them will be sought.

These matters are central to the planning of future development anywhere in the Borough. Development which does not give sufficient consideration to these matters cannot be supported.

Particular local needs are highlighted for relevant places (see questions on Places). For example, reference to the future of the hospital is referred to under Hemel Hempstead.

Question 11 (Themes)

Do you agree with the general approach outlined for community and leisure facilities?

Yes/No

If there are any particular Borough wide issues you wish us to consider, please list them. (Please see questionnaire)

THEME 3 – Economic Prosperity

Dacorum's economy is based around a range of different sectors - with offices, light industry, storage and distribution, retail and the health and service sectors dominating.

a) Business

The key strengths of Dacorum's economy are its location in relation to London and the M1, good skills levels, high number of businesses, and the relatively high proportion of people who both live and work within the Borough. As well as these strengths, the Council's Economic Development Strategy 2009-2012 identifies a number of challenges and threats facing the local economy and highlights a series of objectives to help overcome these.

Economic Development Strategy – Key Priorities

Objective 1 - *The regeneration of Maylands*

Work with the Council's Hemel 2020 Team and the Maylands Partnership to deliver the outcomes from the Hemel 2020 Vision including the Maylands Master Plan.

Objective 2 - *Supporting the business community*

Work with partners to provide a business support framework, which will encourage competitiveness and growth

Objective 3 - *Promoting green and sustainable growth*

Meet the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy and work to facilitate a sustainable and prosperous economy and growth

Objective 4 - *Attracting and retaining business*

Ensure that Dacorum has a buoyant economy by attracting and retaining a diverse range of local employers and encouraging enterprise and business start up activity

Objective 5 - *Developing our skills base*

Developing skills to meet business needs now and into the future.

The Core Strategy will support the delivery of these objectives by providing a framework to protect and enhance existing employment areas and support appropriate new employment land.

General Employment Areas (GEAs) will continue to be the main focus for local employment, along with town and local centres. Dacorum has 20 GEAs located mainly at Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring, most of which we aim to protect for employment uses (see sections on 'Places'). We will consider allowing the redevelopment of a GEA for housing or other uses if it is considered to be poorly located in terms of meeting local employment needs and if compensatory employment space is provided elsewhere in the Borough. It is important that we continue to have a wide distribution of GEAs, both across the Borough and within individual towns, to encourage sustainable forms of travel. GEAs have a complementary role with town and local centres, Employment space in all of these areas should be encouraged to ensure that a wide choice of employment opportunities is maintained.

Dacorum, along with other Hertfordshire Councils has recently published the Hertfordshire London Arc Jobs Growth and Employment Land Study, which advises on the future provision of employment land over the next 20+ years. The study predicts that there will be an increase of around 18,000 jobs in Borough up to 2031. It is anticipated that many of these will be office-based, although other sectors expected to experience significant increases are construction, hotels and catering, business services, health and education. We will support this anticipated increase in jobs through the allocation of new employment land, predominantly at Hemel Hempstead, which remains the focus of new housing. See sections on 'Places.'

A study of the Borough's employment land was carried out in 2005⁸. This provided a detailed assessment of the quality of employment land within the Borough. This study will be updated, with an additional focus on whether any redistribution of employment land is required in particular locations.

We will continue to encourage the sustainable location of employment development, which means that it will be mostly concentrated around the three towns, or other smaller settlements. We will not encourage employment locations in stand alone rural locations unless the business supports the rural economy, or there are special circumstances that means the business needs to be in a particular location (see section on 'Places' regarding the countryside).

Policy 30 of our current Local Plan sets a ceiling on the amount of office floorspace permissible within the Borough up to 2011. Given the anticipated level of growth and associated rise in demand for office space we no longer consider this policy to be appropriate, and do not propose to include it within the Core Strategy.

Question 12 (Themes)

Do you agree with the approach to employment provision that is outlined?

⁸ South West Hertfordshire Employment Space Study January 2005. Roger Tym & Partners

Yes/No

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

Question 13 (Themes)

Do you agree with the removal of the ceiling on the amount of office floorspace that can be provided in the Borough?

Yes/No

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

b) Retail

Hemel Hempstead is the largest town in the Borough and as such is at the top of the retail hierarchy in Dacorum, followed by the other towns of Berkhamsted and Tring, the large villages of Bovington, Kings Langley and Markyate and the Local Centres. We will maintain this retail hierarchy throughout the life of the LDF, which will see major regeneration in Hemel Hempstead town centre (see section on 'Places' regarding Hemel Hempstead).

The other towns, large villages and local centres will be protected and enhanced through policies that encourage appropriate uses and protect the retail function of the centres. The approach of concentrating retail development according to the current hierarchy and discouraging it at out-of-centre locations has been strongly supported during previous consultations and will therefore be continued.

The Dacorum Retail Study Update 2009 and the Dacorum Retail and Leisure Study 2006 provide us with recommendations relating to future retail capacity in the three towns, retail frontages, Jarman Fields and shopping provision for potential new neighbourhoods. Most of these recommendations will be incorporated into our Core Strategy as outlined below.

Future retail capacity

The retail study update identifies a need for a significant amount of food (convenience) retail floorspace in Hemel Hempstead up to 2016. Berkhamsted and Tring are fairly well served in terms of food shops, and there is no requirement for additional convenience floorspace up to 2016 in Berkhamsted, and only a small amount in Tring. We will support these recommendations through our planning policies.

The study identifies the need for a significant amount of non-food (comparison) retail floorspace in Hemel Hempstead up to 2016, some of which will be met through the Waterhouse Square development. We will encourage new comparison floorspace in Hemel Hempstead in line with the retail hierarchy; the study concludes that there is no future capacity for non-food floorspace outside of the town centre in Hemel Hempstead. In Berkhamsted and Tring there is an identified need for a limited amount of comparison retail floorspace up to 2016, which will be met through incremental development such as shop extensions, changes of use and infill development.

We intend to carry forward retail proposals within the Local Plan and existing supplementary planning guidance and documents (refer to sections on 'Places.')

Should the proposal for major housing growth at Hemel Hempstead be reinstated, we would anticipate some additional retail provision to serve local walk-in shopping needs.

Retail frontages

Maintaining the right mix and location of different uses is important for maintaining town centre vitality and viability. We can control the types of use allowed in different parts of the town centres by designating areas as main shopping frontages and mixed frontages. The retail study update recommends that in Hemel Hempstead town centre the current designations be retained, with the exception of strengthening the whole of the pedestrianised part of the Marlowes to main shopping frontage. It also recommends that the frontages on both side of Riverside, and the frontages of the Debenhams and Peacocks stores in Riverside Centre are designated as main shopping frontage and that in these areas, loss of shops should be resisted.

Advice regarding retail frontages in Berkhamsted and Tring is given in the 2006 study, which advocates a generally flexible approach in both town centres with the aim of maintaining a healthy retail core.

Jarman Fields

We propose to redesignate Jarman Fields as an out of centre retail and leisure location, rather than continue its existing local centre designation (see section on 'Places' regarding Hemel Hempstead).

New local centre for Maylands

We will support proposals for the regeneration of the Maylands Business Park, which includes a new local centre at the 'Heart of Maylands' to serve the business community.

Question 14 (Themes)

Do you support the approach to retail development that is outlined?

Yes/No

If not, please explain. (Please see questionnaire)

c) Tourism

Tourism makes an important contribution to the economic prosperity of the Borough; it generates local revenue, provides jobs and supports more vibrant communities and local environmental assets.

Business tourism is an important element and there is demand from local businesses for a high quality hotel and conference venue in the Maylands area. Other tourism in the Borough is related to enjoyment of the countryside, and includes visitors to the Chiltern hills, as well as the Grand Union Canal, Ashridge and Tring reservoirs.

Tourism attractions such as the Natural History Museum at Tring, Tring reservoirs, Ashridge, the new Snow Centre and potentially the proposed Town Stadium attract mainly day visitors, although there may still be demand for overnight visits to the Borough.

We will support and encourage sustainable tourism through maintaining economic prosperity, providing appropriate leisure facilities, protecting the environment and encouraging the provision of visitor accommodation where demand exists.

Question 15 (Themes)

Do you agree with the approach that is outlined?

Yes/No

If not, please explain why. (Please see questionnaire)

THEME 4 – Looking after the Environment

a) Heritage, Biodiversity and Landscape Character

We aim to protect and enhance the Borough's rich, diverse and high quality built heritage, biodiversity and landscape character, and thereby to help maintain Dacorum's strong sense of place and high quality environment. Development is inevitable, but where it occurs we will seek to avoid or mitigate its impact on the environment.

The landscape will continue to experience pressure for change in the form of new building, changes of use and different management regimes. Our aim is to protect and enhance the distinctive landscape character of the Borough, particularly the high quality landscape of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. All development proposals will need to be assessed in terms of their impact on landscape features and should respect the prevailing landscape quality, character and sensitivity of each area. This will be guided by our Landscape Character Assessment⁹. We will also support the activities of organisations such as the Chilterns Conservation Board, Countryside Management Service and nature conservation bodies, whose role is to promote attractive, diverse and valued countryside. We also need to be sensitive to the fact that the character of some areas includes its relative tranquillity or quietness.

Conservation and careful management of the Borough's varied wildlife habitats is a fundamental objective that underpins the area's natural beauty, quality and character. We support a hierarchy approach to biodiversity that promotes the creation of a network of green spaces and green infrastructure (e.g. from town parks down to communal "doorstep" spaces)¹⁰. In all cases where development involves key habitats, it must result in no net loss of, or fragmentation of, sites of biodiversity value and the developer will be required to carry out and maintain appropriate mitigation measures.

The Urban Nature Conservation Study¹¹ focuses on the role of biodiversity in urban areas, but recognises the essential links from urban area to countryside and through the countryside. It recommends a network approach within settlements and in the countryside. The approach has been strongly endorsed in previous consultation and we intend to take it forward in the Core Strategy.

We will protect and enhance the historic environment, including the many listed buildings, conservation areas and varied archaeological remains. This built heritage makes a significant contribution to the character of the towns and villages, and to the wider countryside. There are also parks and gardens, the Grand Union Canal with its environment and associated buildings, and buildings of local interest (with no formal designation), all of which you have

⁹ Hertfordshire Landscape Strategy: Landscape Character Assessment, Evaluation and Guidelines for Dacorum Borough (May 2004)

¹⁰ Town and Country Planning Association: Biodiversity by Design – A guide for sustainable communities

¹¹ DBC Urban Nature Conservation Study (March 2006)

said should be conserved as part of our historic environment and built heritage. We are working separately on more detailed policies for all the Conservation Areas.

b) Natural Resources

We will continue with policies that aim to safeguard natural resources, including high quality agricultural land, mineral reserves and water supplies. This will involve minimising the emission of pollutants (including waste products, light and noise) on the environment - i.e. the ground, the atmosphere and water. Directing new development to appropriate and accessible locations, maximising opportunities for the use of recycled materials, and encouraging on-site recycling are important approaches we will follow. The County Council is responsible for minerals and waste planning policies.: The approach in our Core Strategy will therefore be to complement their research.

There are few examples of contaminated land in the Borough (e.g. landfill sites and gas holders), but it is still important that we control their impact on the environment, for example, on water supplies, new residents and wildlife. This would involve the need for site investigation, assessing the extent of pollutants and level of risk, remediation measures, and where appropriate encouraging suitable alternative uses. We will operate strict controls over hazardous substances, working closely with appropriate authorities (such as the Health and Safety Executive¹² and Environment Agency).

Water is an important natural resource that needs to be used efficiently. To help inform the Core Strategy we will be assessing water quality, use and demand through a water cycle study. We will promote the efficient use of water in new development through water conservation measures (e.g. dual flush toilets), the effective management of grey water, and the use of sustainable drainage systems in the management of run-off. We will follow the recommendations in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment¹³ to locate development away from floodplains and to manage run-off.

The generation of energy from renewable resources will be encouraged for its contribution to achieving sustainable development, reducing the use of fossil fuels and carbon emissions. Such measures could include, where appropriate, promoting opportunities for the production of biomass and the provision of other forms of renewable energy (e.g. solar power).

Policies relating to water and energy consumption (and efficiency of their use) are critical to our response to climate change.

¹² Issues relating to Buncefield Oil Depot are covered in the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan – Issues and Options Paper (June 2009) (DBC and SADC)

¹³ Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (August 2007) and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (June 2008)

Question 16 (Themes)

Do you agree with the policy approach for "Looking after the Environment" which is outlined?

Yes/No

If not, please explain what should be different. (Please see questionnaire)