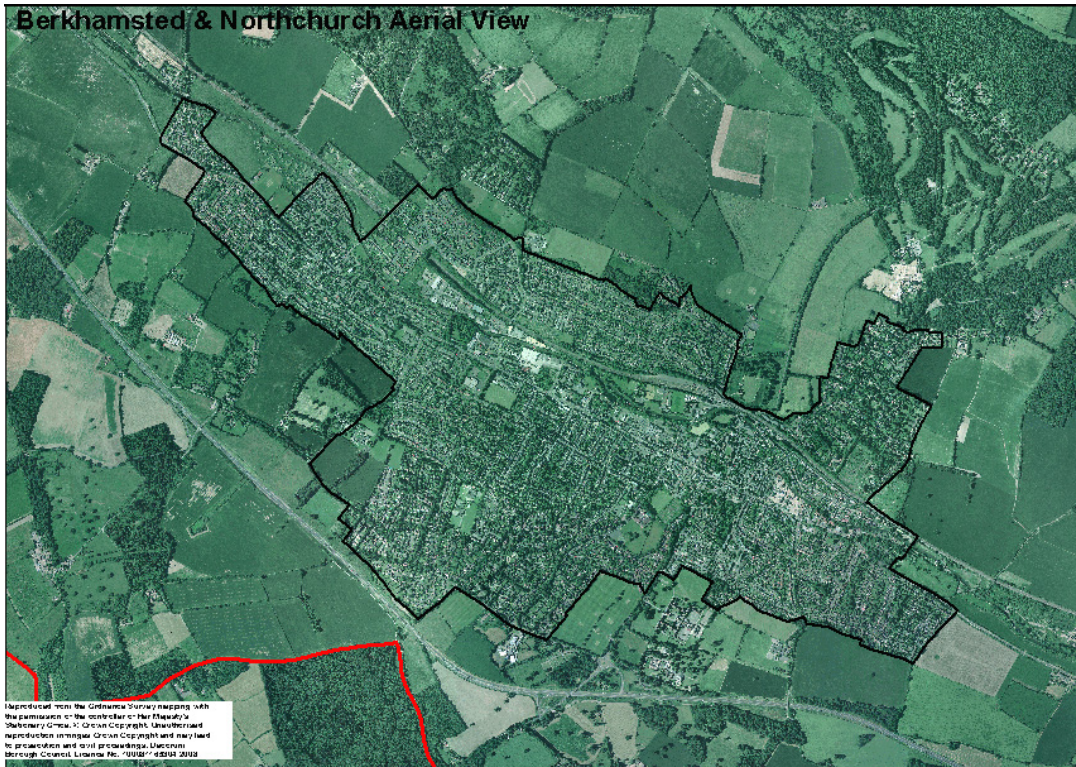


Berkhamsted Place Workshop Report



October 2008

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The Workshop

There was an initial presentation setting the context, which was followed by 2 group sessions covering the topics 'Your People' and 'Your Place'. Each of these group sessions covered a range of questions. In order that all of the questions were discussed within an allotted time the participants were split into 4 groups answering relevant topics. The first group session was split as follows: Group 1 covered Questions 1 and 4; Group 2 covered Questions 2, 3, and 8; and Groups 3 and 4 covered Questions 5, 6, and 7. The second session was split into a similar format: Group 1 answered Questions 1, 2 and 4; Group 2 and 4 answered Questions 3, and Group 3 answered Questions 5 and 6.

Answers that were given by the workshop participants can be found underneath the questions for each of the group sessions below. The # highlights an important issue.

The comments given for the top five priorities for Berkhamsted are identified under 'Visioning Priorities'.

Any other additional comments made during the event or listed on the 'Park It' can be found under 'Other Comments'.

A list of attendees can be found at the end of this feedback report.

Group Session 1 - *Your People*

1. (a) What problems do you think your town has with crime or anti-social behaviour?
- (b) How could these problems be reduced?

Answers

(a)

- No problems walking around the town for me.
- Tesco's is a gathering point for youths (Wilderness), this affects some people. #
- We have alcohol free zones but areas (Butts Meadow, Canal Fields) are used by young people who drink.
- Concern over perception! (need to report crime).
- Not many children appear to walk to school – perhaps due to fears of crime (traffic, paedophiles).
- Douglas Gardens – Escape Routes.
- Butts meadow – dark in evening.
- Lack of police in evening – manpower in area reduced.
- Small amount of petty crime.

(b)

- Is there a lot for young people to do? #
- Swan Youth Project.
- Sports clubs.
- Extended schools
- Teenagers do like hanging around – it's social.
- Youth Centre not used (near Sports Centre) – should be! #
- PCSO's have played good role linking with young people. #

2. Are the needs of children and young people being met? If not, how can we better accommodate their needs?

Answers

- No statutory provision – all charity (although not all statutory = good!)
- Swan Youth centre = only 'generic' youth club
 - Building limits capacity
 - Funding needed #
 - Would like to extend hours
 - Staffing
 - 35-60 kids per after school club rarely open at weekends due to staff etc.

- drama and different activities
- Teenagers are the neglected group – hang out at Castle and Tescos. #
- Skate Park – popular – needs enlarging, few problems with it. #
- Little else for teens, Hemel caters better for teenagers.
- Need inside venues – hanging around outside leads to “bad image”.
- Need free facilities – i.e. kick football around, BMX facility?
- Cycling – very good trails, but safety concerns – need better off road links. – town = safety concerns. #
- State school facilities poor – old pool, lots of land but poor facilities due to lack of money. Private school facilities – excellent. Potential for sharing facilities with the public?
- 3 tier schooling, school places a problem – travel to schools, lack of choice.
- HCC will seek funding from new developments to improve schools.
- Insufficient primary school places. #

3. Is there a shortage of any key facilities and/or services in the town? If so, what are these and where?

Answers

- Car Parking #
 - not enough spaces
 - resident areas not designed for on-street parking
 - congestion leads to safety issues and looks bad
 - enforcement issue.
- Encourage more cycling – Cycle lanes? Need to be maintained. Links to Ashridge are dangerous. Bike lock up space. #
- Elderly Provision is poor. No day centre have to go elsewhere, but need local provision for “community spirit”. #
- Denists – no NHS? Very few
- Quite well served by facilities for meetings. These are key benefit of living in town.
- Transport is a problem due to 2historic core2. Links out of Berkhamsted limited on bus.
- Need a “Cultural Centre”.
- Collegiate school has high demand on its facilities i.e. Dacorum Symphony, Pepper Fund.
- Link/dual use of school facilities needs to be explored. #

4. What problems do local businesses and services face in your town? How can they be tackled?

Answers

- Parking – lack of parking (GP Surgery losing car park). #
- Take an interest in cost of station parking – leads to parking spreading

over. (Saturday expensive, Sunday's not free).

- Film Archives – expansion of storage issues (it's not easy). #
- Planning restrictions.
- Increase number of cycle lanes and pedestrian ways. #
- Expansion of large supermarkets.

5. Is there a need for any more open space within the town? If so, how and where should it be provided?

Answers

- Short of green space, linear town
- Visual green space – fronts and backs of houses #
- Keep sports facilities central
- Preserve existing green space, not develop private green space – need more public land #
- Maintain green corridor along canal
- Stag Lane – new developments (150 units) have no green play areas, must be integral #
- Should gardens be designated as brown sites? – NO
- Retain “envelope views” around the town
- Stress local priorities rather than national targets.
- Preserve sense of space surrounding dwellings #
- Low level dwellings to preserve view!
- Need space for outdoor sports. #
- Shortage/young people – balance development with provision of these facilities
- Allotment demand – none south side of town, don't overlook future need, not much current provision
- Towards Hemel section of town not much current provision
- Access to canal side is still important
- BFI sites – open spaces (George Street, New Lodge)
- Cemeteries provision sufficient except perhaps a green cemetery. Before others fill extend existing ones. #
- Town – so that access is provided.
- Not green belt – green green belt #
- Any development should make provisions for open spaces within them #

6. How can your village help us respond to the issues of climate change?

Answers

- Transition group looking at part of national campaign
- Provision in flats of energy efficiencies e.g. outdoor drying areas, ventilation in bathrooms
- Older housing – energy efficiency ratings
- New developments – compulsory energy efficiency #

7. What key features do you think should be enhanced or retained within your town?

Answers

- Promote community ownership by careful balance of amenities
- Canal #
- Enhance entrances to town #
- Enhance highways
- Preserve and protect historic buildings (via planning regulations?) #
- Market Place #
- Extend conservation area encompassing different eras of building. #
- Traditional High Street
- Extend conservation area?
- Street furniture clutter
- In character development – business & residential
- Trees in public places
- The “look of the place” #
- Canal Fields
- Canal and Canal walk
- Extend canalside improvements to Northchurch e.g canal bridge signs and interpretation boards.
- Castle Street bridge
- Town Hall/civic centre – character buildings
- Open spaces
- 392 High Street (House)

8. What other changes would you make elsewhere in your town to make it more attractive place to live?

Answers

- “Old” signage is good. Finger post signs to key locations #
- Toilets – existing ones are revolting! #
- Canal is very important to town character. #
- Town centre redevelopment at old Tesco's needs to be very high quality and not led by supermarkets.
- Historic buildings need looking after.
- 60's infill does not match in. #
- Seating/picnic areas in parks.

Group Session 2 - *Your Place*

1. Should young people be given the opportunity to stay in their town / village?

Answers

2. (a) If **NO**, what are your reasons?
(b) If **YES**, How much of this population growth should the town accommodate?

Answers

- (a) Yes
 - (b)
 - Proportionate growth for town – school roll issues – build another school #
 - Yes! I want a balanced community but will require affordable housing. Not keen on in-filling though. #
 - Should have a choice
 - More sustainable as family visits easier.
 - Need employment to stay here #
 - If in shared ownership, then could never afford to move.
3. Which of the housing sites shown on the map provided do you think are the best sites for new housing and why?

Answers

Figure 1 highlights areas shaded in blue as suitable sites. There are two further sites also shown, one has a question mark in the box as the ownership of the land is not known - school? The other site to the west is a school site that will come forward when the school moves.

Concerns

- Consider social affordable housing
- Careful of segregation
- Too simplistic – need to consider infrastructure of individual sites
- Town overdeveloped
- Preserve character of town by protecting growth rate
- Brickhill green has been designated a nature reserve.
- BFI – potential site, however sports fields on boundaries, neighbouring land owned by L & G, parking concerns, heavily used area.
- Durrants Lane – Ear marked as an amenity sports area
- Greenfield Site – Ashlyns school has more land than it needs
- Allotments – have been put forward in the past.
- Focus on East & West – no sites proposed in North/central

- Affordable Housing not peppered properly (Durrants Lane) – should be included in smaller sites. #
- Tackle housing waiting list
- Issue of housing sites vs traveller sites in south east Berkhamsted.
- Consider land gradients
- Manor Street – elderly not provided for – site ideal traveller site
- BE/H1 and BE/H17 – poor road access/dangerous junction (allotments/Ivy House Lane). #
- Conservation area – consider this when looking at development.
- Too many flats – lack of employment locally, should start at 2 bedrooms
- Quality of architecture – 77 houses Ravens Lane a good example
- Need to consider employment opportunities nearby, including small businesses (not clone town)
- Flats & community amenity space vs private gardens. Gardens and traditional houses more private.
- Recycling issues with flats – lack of facilities
- Schools/hospitals and other facilities should be considered along with new housing.
- Sports facility
- Considered back garden development
- Ivy House Lane - visibility

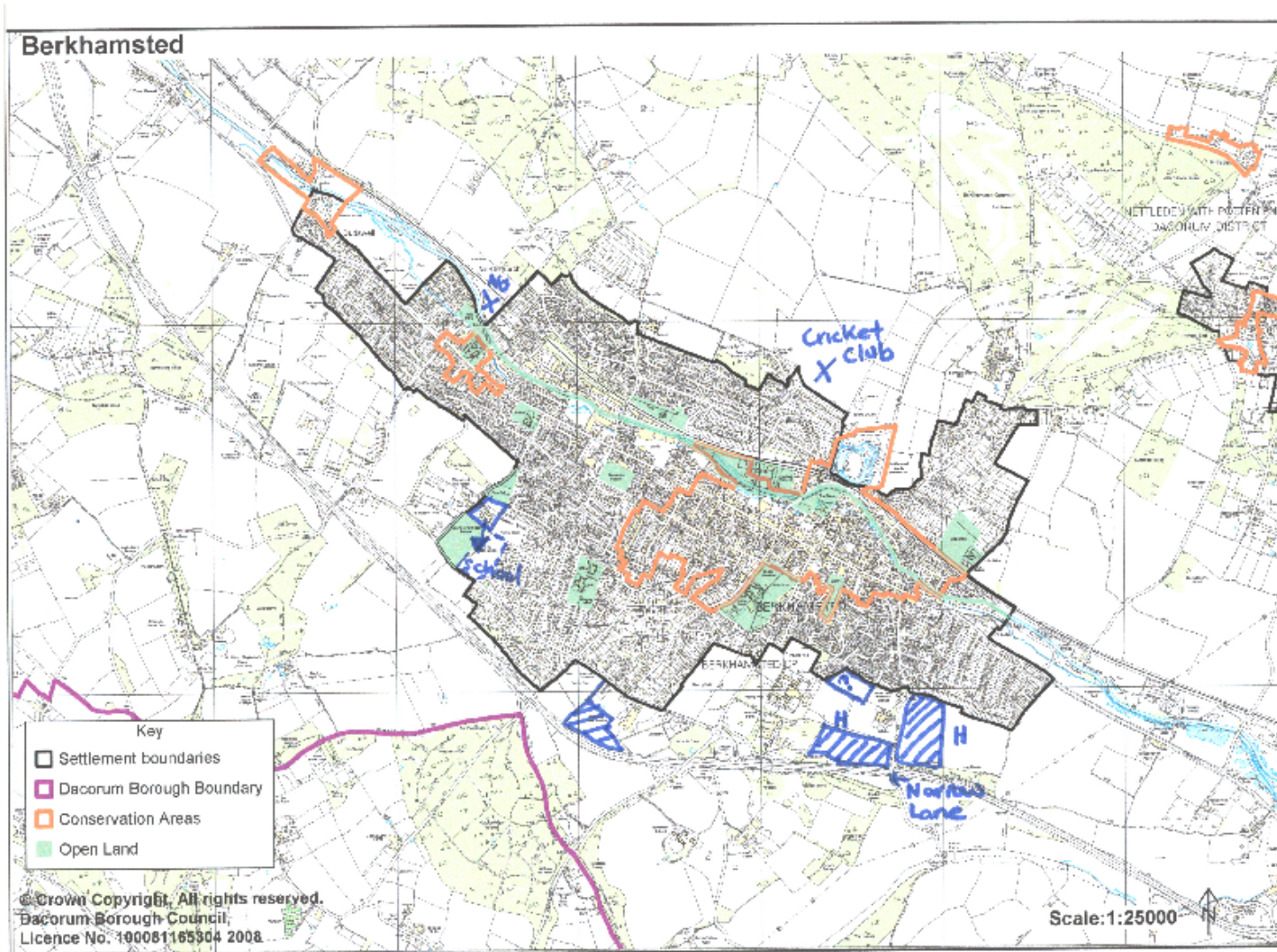


Figure 1: Housing Sites relating to Question 3

4. Do you think there is a particular need for any specific types of accommodation within the town / village?

Answers

- Need more LA housing with a good mix within the same area. #
- This is an expensive area, so rents high. #
- We need more affordable housing, but would this attract incomers?
- Reasonable provision for elderly, but what lies ahead?
- Current balance is about right.

5. We are required by Government to provide sites for gypsies and travellers within the area. Some possible locations for sites have been put forward by consultants. These were all considered to meet a set of key criteria.

(a) Which of these options do you prefer?

(b) Are there any other sites either within or on the edge of the town that we should consider instead?

Answers

Please see Figure 2, which identifies the Gypsy and traveller sites being debated.

(a)

- D6 – by canal, which has been identified as essential green belt. Waterways Tomorrow against development. Linear green park. – preserve “envelope view” of AONB.
- D3 – too close to the school – dangerous when moving caravans
- D3,4,5 – Access from Swingate Lane – narrow road
- D6/D3 – next to public facilities/housing which could degrade in quality.
- D4 & 5 – isolated from community
- Sites in Hemel (existing) is under utilised, do we need another site?
- Consider planned housing when looking at sites
- D6 – access is privately owned.

(b)

- D5 – access narrow
- D4/5/6 – view on valley side
- Smaller sites in varied locations

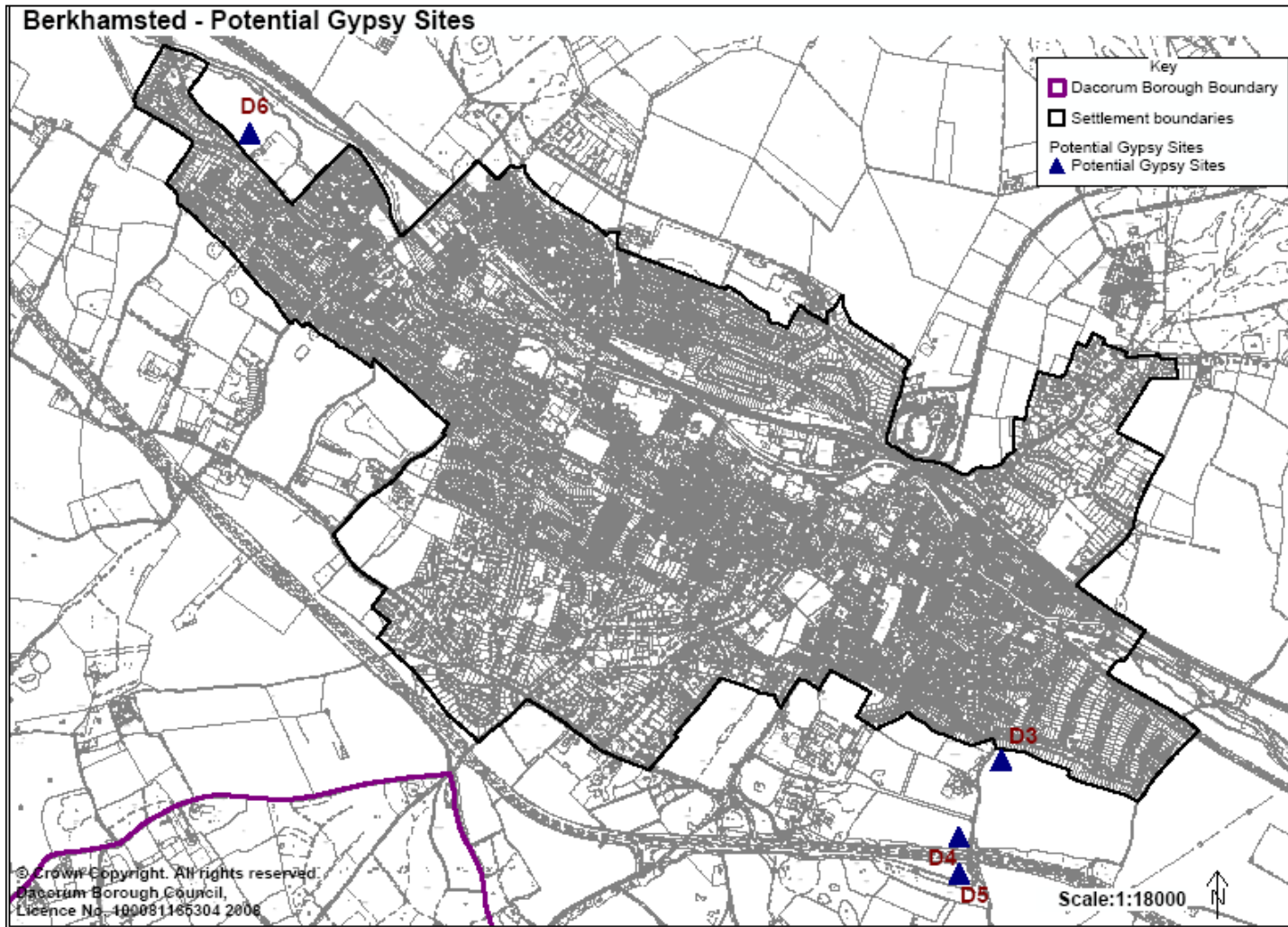


Figure 2: Gypsy and Traveller Sites near Berkhamsted and Northchurch

6. (a) How could your High Street be improved over the next 20 years?

Answers

- traffic restrictions in centre
- more parking
- reassessment of town centre
- previous improvements ineffective
- create a “home zone”
- mini roundabout instead of traffic lights
- increase parking in new development
- tax big stores on car parking space – ring fenced for public use
- divert traffic away from town centre

(b) How can these improvements be achieved?

Answers

-

Visioning Priorities

Priority 1

- Advance renewal of Infrastructure in the area – not reacting to the failures of the systems
- Through the planning process try and improve designs of new build to reflect the areas in which the new development is to be placed
- The town must provide for youth/teenagers, not just home owners
- Keep the infrastructure and community feel
- Slow down garden in-filling
- Infrastructure must be considered & enhanced before any new development
- Sort infrastructure first (roads, schools, free sports facilities, hospital, parking), before any more housing
- Make it more obvious that the High Street from Castle Street to St Johns Well Lane is the town centre. Tring has block paving – could have coloured tarmac, which needs less maintenance.
- No housing development on Manor Street site except Elderly Care Home, Elderly Day centre.
- Parking in conservation area – particularly Station Road
- Opportunity for ongoing public involvement via DBC website
- When the town grows we must provide public sports facilities and space as well as schools/doctors etc.
- Pepper affordable housing
- Balance facilities/services with any increase in population/housing
- Distinctiveness of place – character development in/near conservation area e.g. Prague, Warsaw post WW2.
- Promote market town image with rebuild of ancient market hall
- Parking – providing infrastructure for all development
- Preserving & Providing more green spaces
- Community centre provision
- Remember that Berkhamsted/Northchurch is a linear town and cannot be sensibly developed until it has a real “centre”
- Significant open space to be delivered through new housing development to offset deficit.
- Rather than taking possible areas shown for housing, use for lack of open spaces.
- Create open spaces from green belt
- Cooperative planning is key to sustaining our waterways

Priority 2

- We need at least one more unlimited height/weight road over railway and canal. The town is very dependent on Billet Lane. See what happens when the (low) station bridge is flooded due to heavy rain.
- Stop in-filling on already scarce green space. The By-pass is becoming the town boundary.
- Facilities for young people (youth club, football, motor cycling training, BMX)

- Elderly services with equal measure with the young.
- Increase demands on developers through the S106 process and ensure monies raised benefit the local community.
- Planning permission must demand open spaces as part of the development
- Ensure any housing, services, recreational opportunities are developed and do not increase problems of congestion/parking
- Provide more affordable/rental housing in the town
- Keep housing in keeping with the local area
- New developments should allow for adequate parking
- Development of open spaces within the town for leisure and recreation
- Traffic reduction in town centre
- Cycling lanes from housing areas to school – cycling provision
- Increase car parking in the town to enable small businesses to survive
- Plan for a greener town – cycle lanes, use of canal, park area, water park for children
- Improve links to open space and the countryside

Priority 3

- Adequate provision of school places to meet future demand
- Maintain and improve built environment by ensuring development is ‘in-keeping’ with the Victorian/Edwardian infrastructure
- Access to sports centre from the main road
- Quiet lanes (20mph)
- If the PO site becomes available use it to build new GP surgery, it would be on the flat, close to town and provide extra parking
- Re-open the purpose built youth club on Lagley Meadow
- Public footpaths within and between settlements & surrounding countryside are not one, maintained but improve and extend
- Affordable housing to give our younger generation a choice to stay
- Build GP surgeries for sale to GP’s and site them on the level and equally distributed in Berkhamsted/Northchurch
- Parking difficulties/access to GP surgeries getting more and more difficult, sites needed on the flat and in centre of town.
- Improve and increase activities for young people
- We must include greater use of school facilities for the community

Priority 4

- Don’t develop wildlife sites for housing
- Reserved parking for Doctors, Dentists
- Residents parking

Priority 5

- More emphasis on the use of buses/cycling etc.
- Use of canal for transportation
- Swimming pool in central plot

Priority Summary Table

Issue	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5	Total Score
Improve infrastructure before additional development	3x5	-	-	-	-	15
Design and develop with local distinctiveness	2x5	1x4	-	1x2	-	16
Provide facilities for youth and teenagers	1x5	2x4	2x3	-	-	19
Retain infrastructure and community feel	1x5	-	-	-	-	5
Slow down garden infilling	1x5	-	-	-	-	5
Enhance and identify gateways to the town centre	1x5	-	-	-	-	5
No housing on Manor Street only elderly care facilities	1x5	-	-	-	-	5
Parking (either more provision or better enforcement)	2x5	3x4	1x3	2x2	-	29
Opportunity for more public involvement online	1x5	-	-	-	-	5
Provide further community facilities and open space	6x5	5x4	1x3	-	-	53
Provision and peppering of affordable housing	1x5	1x4	1x3	-	-	12
Balance facilities/services with any increase in housing/population	1x5	-	-	-	-	5
Promote market town image with rebuild of ancient market hall	1x5	-	-	-	-	5
Berkhamsted/ Northchurch is a linear town and requires a real centre	1x5	-	-	-	-	5
Sustain and improve use of waterways	1x5	-	-	-	1x1	6
Require additional unlimited loaded bridge over the canal to reduce heavy use on Billet Lane	-	2x4	-	-	-	8
Increase s106 demands to raise funds for local community	-	1x4	-	-	-	4
Traffic reduction in town	-	1x4	-	-	-	4
Increase cycle lane provision, buses	-	2x4	-	-	1x1	9
Improve links to countryside and improve and extend provision of more footpaths	-	1x4	1x3	-	-	7
Provide sufficient school places	-	-	1x3	-	-	3
Access to sports centre from High Street	-	-	1x3	-	-	3
Provide quiet lanes at 20mph	-	-	1x3	-	-	3
New GP surgery on flat surface near town centre	-	-	2x3	-	-	6

Don't develop wildlife sites for housing	-	-	-	1x2	-	2
Swimming pool in central plot	-	-	-	-	1x1	1

*Total score is calculated by giving an issue points for each time it was mentioned on a priority board. 5 points are given for each time it appeared on Priority board 1, 4 points for each time it was on Priority board 2, 3 points for each time it was on Priority board 3, 2 points for each time it was on Priority board 4 and 1 point for each time it was on Priority board 5.

The priority summary table groups the key priorities according to what was written on the Priority boards. The number of times an issue was raised on each priority board is shown in the table above and each issue is then given a total score.

The table highlights that the majority of people thought that further community facilities and open space should be provided for. This included the provision of a community centre, public sports facilities and planned open spaces with future residential development. It was also suggested that greater use could be made of school facilities for the community.

The provision of additional parking was also sought after by a large number of participants, particular to ensure that new residential, service and recreational development delivered sufficient parking.

Additional facilities for children and teenagers were also identified as a leading priority.

PARK IT

- Swimming pool of Olympic size could be built at Berkhamsted cricket club
- Re-designate Chilterns young riders Motocross bike track at Dickshill Woods. Shootersway, Berkhamsted to leisure use from agriculture – has been leisure use for 14 years.
- Reinforce “character areas” and possibly review existing areas that are being eroded.
- Transport/Communication in town – There is only 1 crossing route in Berkhamsted across the railway and canal that is not restricted by width, height or weight, i.e. Billet Lane. Station (Brownlow Rd) = height, New Road = height, Gravel path = weight, Ivy House lane = width, New Road Northchurch = to Dunstable only (no local connection).
- Separate policies for garden in-filling, removing criteria for maximising use of land etc.
- High Street – length of A4251 from Castle Street to PO needs to be emphasised as town centre. Could use coloured tarmac to emphasise – existing block paved bumps only have short life due to lorry traffic
- Save the employment at BFI, allow the expansion
- Give more weight to Biodiversity corridors in planning decisions – protection etc.
- Outward development of town – A41 bypass forms a new ‘natural’ Southern boundary for town. Area between Kingshill Way/Shootersway therefore presents itself as an easy place for development, due to fields, copses and general areas being “trapped” by the bypass and other boundaries.
- Ensure the Collegiate school is required to share facilities with town more and at a lower cost to community groups
- Small developments could include affordable housing e.g. 4 for sale = 1 affordable.
- The Greenbelt needs to be shared! (shouldn’t need to be affluent to see it)
- More provision for live work units
- More policies to protect the green linear park of canal
- Manor Street – please return the building for the use of Berkhamsted/Northchurch elderly
- Affordable housing – no more flats for families, no children in flats, small children need gardens.
- Accommodation – developers will want to build more expensive properties not affordable or sheltered housing.
- Ashlyns area – stop the ‘rat-run’ through this area and complement ‘residents parking’ in car parks within the area.
- Manor Street social services site. No housing or flats – area already too dense – should be care home for the elderly – something for the community.
- Ensure outdoor sports facilities and fields are designated in the space allocation process – already in short supply. Any further population explosion will exacerbate.
- Garden in-fill – do not complain if you have done it!

- Ensure facilities at Berkhamsted Sportspace are not changed from ‘sport’ to ‘leisure’ as is currently under review.
- Give more weight to supplementary guidelines in planning policies
- North Central Berkhamsted redevelopment to include affordable housing.
- Old Berkhamsted laundry if redeveloped as housing, approximately 50 jobs gone.
- Keep BFI
- Lifts in flats – with an ageing population, lifts are essential.
- These Ordnance Survey maps are out of date, e.g. the Cricket Club (20 years old) is not shown!
- Be courageous in making development decisions, i.e. local policies are important and should not be given second order to national density guidelines.
- Review the conservation area as a matter of urgency
- Manor Street future must still include elderly day care centre facility
- Build a swimming pool centrally. Return Lagley Meadow to green space – see covenant.

Other Comments

- Need to consult with travellers/commuters using Berkhamsted railway station

List of Attendees

Kevin Gladwell
Denise Delderfield
Clair Muir
Dean Simpson
Tracey Evans
Caroline Bailey
Dr Theresa Finn
Lesley MacDonald
Graham Cox
Ron Turner
Patrick Lepper
Tony Statham
Gordon Bluck
Richard Sears
Simon Newell
Cherry Martin
John Bowcock
Colin Ivey
Mr G Lanchin
Cllr Nick Tiley
Cllr Ken Coleman
Cllr Lindy Foster
Dr Laurence Handy
Paul Beard
Julian Dent
Cllr Giles Batchelor
Geraldine Corry
Ted Dyer
Patsy Blackmore
Mick Thompson
Ashley Clancy
Cllr Jonathon Mole
Cllr Ian Reay
Cllr Julie Laws
Bob Chapman
Russell James
Karl Stonebank
Martin Hicks
Emma Adams