



Spatial Strategy for the Town of

Tring

June 2009

1.0 Spatial Strategy for Tring

1.1 Characteristics

1.2 Siting & size

Tring is a small compact town in the northwest of the Borough with a population of 11,635. It lies 30 miles (50km) north west of London, 5 miles from Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire and 8 miles from Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire. The town has links to London and the north via the A41 road and a railway station on the outskirts of the town to the east.

1.3 Landscape character

The Open Space Study¹, the Landscape Character Assessment for Dacorum² (LCA) and the Urban Nature Conservation Study for Tring (UNC)³, as well as Policy 116 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (1991-2011), highlight the most important features of the open space, landscape character and wildlife resources in Tring.

1.4 Tring lies within Tring Gap Foothills between the low-lying Aylesbury Vale and the Chilterns. Land to the northwest drops markedly from Icknield Way onto the low-lying Aylesbury Vale and it rises steeply again to the south forming the northwest face of the Chiltern escarpment. The town itself is gently undulating with low-lying areas from the town centre to Brook Street. The land surrounding Tring is countryside and includes Green Belt and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Grand Union Canal (GUC) summit is in Tring cutting and Tring Reservoirs (a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) serves the GUC. Tring Park SSSI (300 acres), Oddy Hill SSSI and Tring Woodlands SSSI and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), lie to the south. The Wendover Arm of the GUC (to the north-west of Tring) is only partially in water and is being restored by the Wendover Arm Trust. The Ridgeway National Trail runs around the outer edge of Tring, from Tring Station to Tring Park in the south.

1.5 Dundale Wildlife Site is an important wildlife space to the northwest of Tring. Tring town also has important green corridors, such as Streamside Walk along Brook Street and Open Land, which consists of playing fields, school grounds, and amenity land. Tring Mansion grounds represent the most significant ecological resource close to the town centre.

1.6 Built character

Tring is a market town, which has a historic backdrop of architecturally rich buildings typical of the characteristics of the Rothschild period (half-timber with stucco and red brick) and the Tudor revival period e.g. Lionel Walter

¹ Open Space Study, 2008 – provides a quantitative and qualitative audit of the supply of open space in the Borough of Dacorum.

² 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.

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

Rothschild Zoological (Natural History) Museum and the Rothschild Cottages. The historic core of Tring is a designated conservation area and is situated in the town centre and 'Tring triangle' area. The residential urban area of Tring is compact but the town does appear to sprawl away from the town centre to New Mill in the northeast. The Urban Design Assessment for Tring⁴ (2006) subdivides the town into four character zones: town centre zone, inner zone, semi-rural zone and peripheral 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 Tring at page 7. It also suggests that residential development around the periphery of the town should be a lower density to aid transition into the countryside.

Table 1: Summary of Key Principles of Urban Design Zones

Urban Design Zone	Area of Town	Key Principles
Town Centre Zone	Along the High Street from Brook Street to Christchurch Road.	Protect the historic character and maintain a mix of uses that encourages activity, promotes accessibility and provides high density residential units above shops.
Inner Zone	The residential area to the east and west off Brook Street including New Mill area and south of High Street between London Road and Akeman Street.	Provide quality medium to high density housing with potential for three storey very high-density units, with strong links to the town centre and the train station.
Semi-rural Zone	The residential area to the west of Akeman Street and Nathaniel walk/Eight Acres.	Provide quality medium to high density housing which attempts to introduce through routes.
Peripheral Zone	To the north of New Mill area and houses off Icknield Way. To the east from Grove Park, Harcourt Road and Hazely and to the south of Tring it includes Woodland Close.	Provide low-rise low to medium density housing that acts as a transition between the town and the countryside.

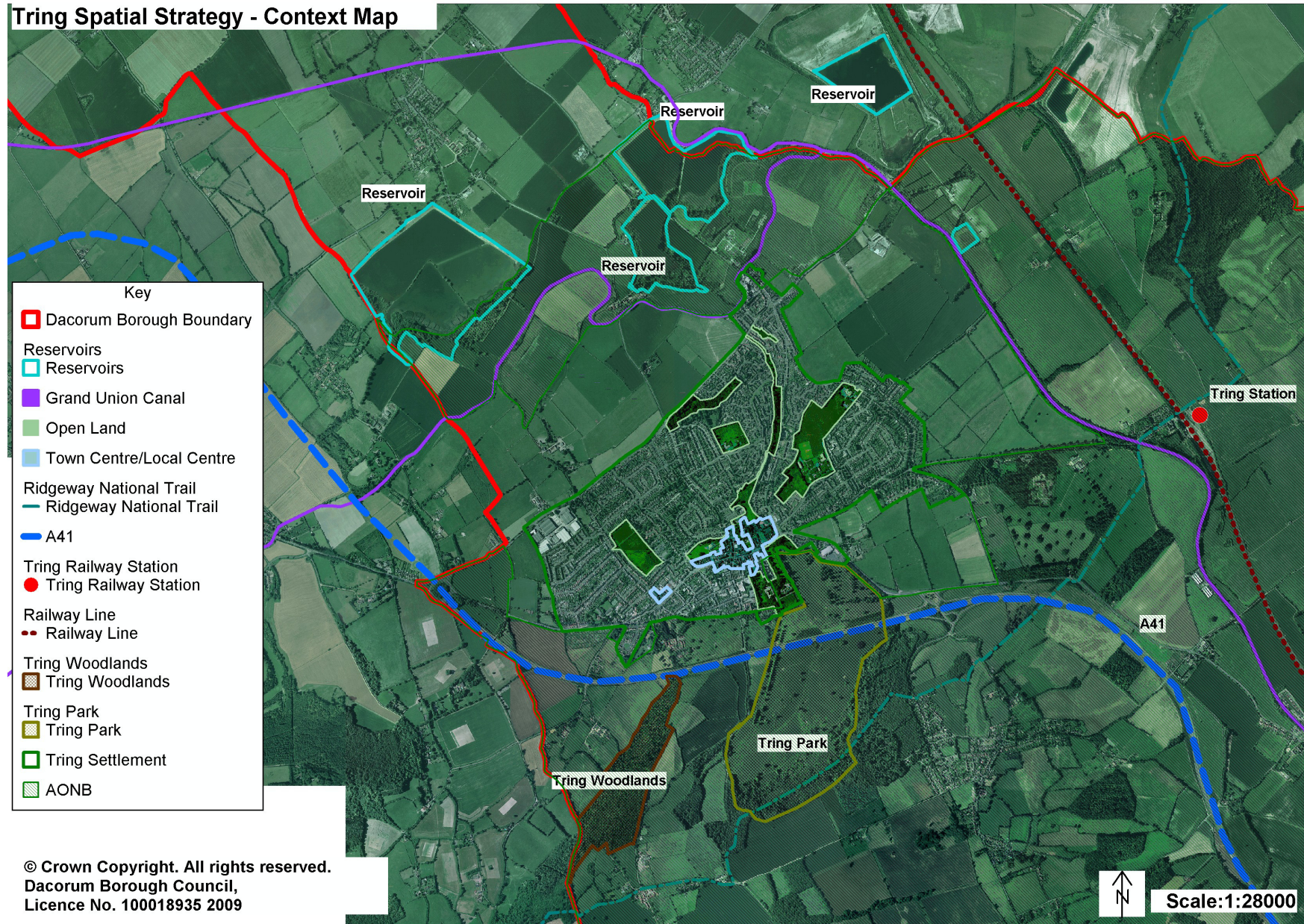
1.7 Key views

The key views within Tring are views of the church and its spire, and of the historic High Street, which is quite open near the church and the car park and much more densely packed and narrow towards Akeman street. A strong

⁴ The Urban Design Assessment for Tring (Urban Practitioners, 2006) - provides baseline evidence, settlement principles and urban design guidelines for Tring.

boundary between the settlement and countryside is present along Icknield Way. Near Icknield Industrial Estate there are stunning views of the surrounding hills to the south of the Tring and into the town centre. The key gateway into Tring from the east is also a 'green' gateway and provides scenic views of the countryside and Dunsley Farm leading into the heart of Tring. The Ridgeway National Trail bridge that crosses the A41 provides further spectacular views.

Figure 1.1 - Tring Context Map



1.8 Leisure & sports facilities

The sports centre in Mortimer Hill is managed by the Dacorum Sports Trust, called Sportspace, and needs new investment. It has a large indoor multi-purpose sports hall, swimming pool and outdoor all weather pitch. There is considered to be a high level of sport participation in Tring and outdoor sports pitches facilities are heavily used.

1.9 Apart from sports facilities, Tring is home to the Natural History Museum off Akeman Street: this offers exhibitions, events and workshops throughout the year, in addition to free access to the residents of Tring and tourists. Victoria Hall, which is also off Akeman Street and the Court Theatre at Pendley along Station Road both host a variety of other leisure pursuits like plays and concerts, and these are promoted throughout the year by Tring Arts Trust. Tring also has one community centre.

1.10 Local business

The High Street is full of character with many shops and small businesses tucked away off the alleys along it. Other uses include a range of banks, restaurants and cafes, some specialist shops, as well as the Zoological Museum. A good mix of uses is present along the High Street with offices and flats above the shops at ground level. These uses should be retained to deliver a sustainable mix of local employment.

1.11 Tring Town Council refurbished the old cattle market along Brook Street in Tring, in 2005 as Tring Market Place to promote and encourage all forms of market trading in Tring. The Charter market is held on Fridays and on alternate Saturdays there is a Farmers Market. The town centre is also well known for its auction rooms. Tring Market Auctions is located behind the Market Place and auctions are held twice a month for the sale of general antiques, with additional specialist auctions for fine art and 20th century decorative art and toys.

1.12 In addition to the business that the auction rooms and markets bring, Tring has three employment areas. There is an industrial estate along the Icknield Way to the north west of the town that serves large businesses, and there are also employment areas off Akeman Street and Brook Street, which are limited in size and are therefore suited to smaller businesses. Extension of Icknield Way Industrial Estate is recommended in the Employment Space Study, particularly for local firms to expand and/or relocate to. The employment area along Akeman Street has limited parking and is limited to business use. The employment area is quite run down in parts but is fundamental to the local economy, consequently it is necessary to consider if alternative business uses are appropriate.

1.13 Heygates' Tring mill in the New Mill area is a significant employer. It has eighty employees, and sixteen lorries delivering to companies and outlets throughout the south of England.

1.14 Social & Community

Tring has a unique educational facility for gifted young people to specialise in dance, drama, musical theatre or music. Tring Park School for the Performing Arts is an independent co-educational boarding and day school and is one of a couple of independent schools located in Tring.

1.15 Tring is a Fairtrade Town and a Transition Town. Tring achieved Fairtrade status in 2007 by demonstrating that Fairtrade produce was readily available to buy, eat and drink in a number of places. In spring 2008, Tring became the 51st 'Transition Town' worldwide. 'Tring in Transition' is an action group founded by residents and supported by the Tring Town Council to promote a safe and sustainable future, with the aim of moving away from the dependence on non-renewable energy.

2.0 The vision for Tring

Vision

Tring will remain a small successful market town. The aim is to seek a better quality of life and prosperity for its residents and business community. This will be achieved by delivering a greater range of high quality housing to suit long-term local need whilst retaining and enhancing the town centre vitality and character of the town. Small-scale business activity will be encouraged, public transport links improved and promoted, and advantage taken of the town's tourist attractions, such as the Zoological Museum and the town's green hinterland and Tring Reservoirs. A cohesive community with additional social facilities for the young and elderly and with improved outdoor leisure facilities.

Question 1 (Tring)

Do you agree with the vision for Tring?

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 Tring. The plan defines the approach to development in market towns, notably: considerations that must be given to the protection and enhancement of the historic environment; encouragement of the Borough's tourist industry promotion of public transport; and improvements to local walking and cycle networks.

3.2 The options for development are limited due to the character and position of the town, and therefore only a level of housing growth that maintains the current population or accommodates natural change are considered possible

for the town (Population: Background Note for the Core Strategy⁵). This would provide some opportunities for small-scale development, including the provision of local affordable housing.

3.3 Tring faces challenges and there are opportunities for improvements. These have been identified through consultation and a variety of technical studies. The main issues are listed below :

Key Issues

- More affordable housing and a greater range of housing
- Capacity issues at Tring Secondary School and threshold issues at primary schools in Tring
- A wider variety of shops, services and facilities for the children, young people and the elderly e.g. outdoor sports facilities; a day care centre for the elderly; and a local studies resource centre associated with the local history museum
- A deficit of nearly 9 hectares of leisure space
- Quality of football pitches at Miswell Lane and Bishop Wood C of E School need improving
- Public transport services need to be promoted, frequency of bus services need to be increased and different bus routes provided
- A small deficit in retail space
- Retaining and protecting the existing character of the town, the countryside, the Green Belt and the historic town centre
- Encouragement of local business enterprise and small businesses and identification of additional employment land
- Retention of the Cattle Market site with its current uses
- Shortage of burial space in the longer term

3.4 A certain amount of development and change will be required to maintain the town's existing vitality. Our view is that a minimum of 465 dwellings would maintain the current level of population and a maximum of about 939 dwellings would be sufficient to accommodate natural growth (2006-2031). Our Housing studies show that 310 dwellings could be accommodated in the urban area. However, this is not enough housing to address the affordable housing shortfall in Tring or provide sufficient community benefits from developer contributions, such as additional leisure space and community facilities. As a result an additional amount of housing would be beneficial on greenfield sites within identified locations around Tring.

3.5 There are a number of factors that would determine the preferred level of development for Tring:

- Tring is the smallest town in the Borough and very large scale development would affect its character and that of the Green Belt;
- it is close to the AONB;

⁵ Population: Background Note for the Core Strategy – this gives information on population assumptions and calculations used in the Core Strategy.

- there are some very clear countryside boundaries which we recommend should not be broken; and
- there is not a lot of spare capacity in the secondary school.

3.6 It is more logical therefore to assume minimum growth and the lowest level of greenfield development i.e. to maintain the town's vitality but not generally alter the character of the town nor create school capacity problems. Our proposed level of greenfield development for Tring is no more than about 150 dwellings (in addition to the 310 dwellings identified, for the urban area).

Question 2 (Tring)

Do you agree with this level of growth?

Yes/No

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

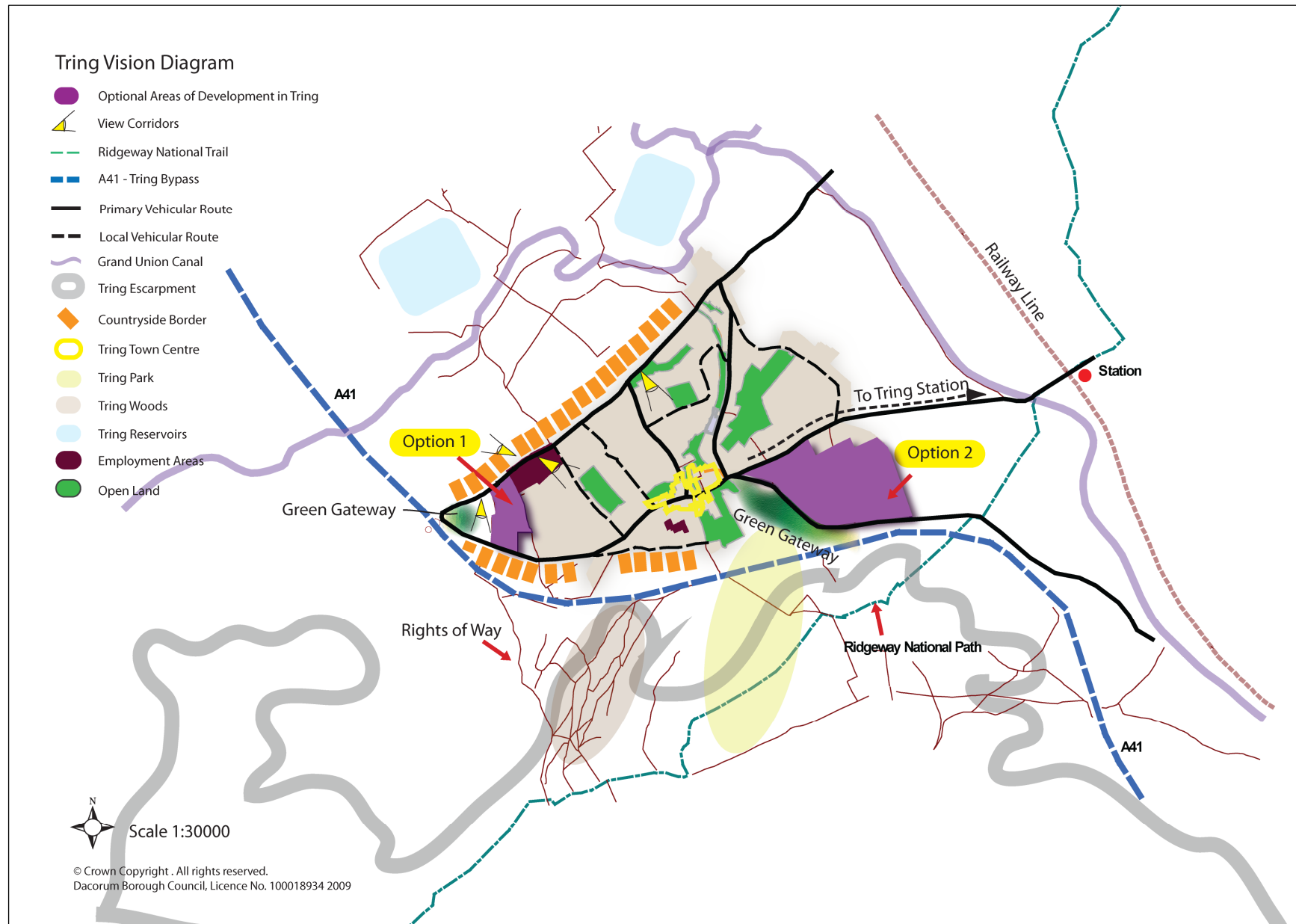
3.7 There are alternative directions in which the town could grow. We have decided to reject some options now, although there is landowner/developer interest in development. The reasons are explained in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 - Reasons for rejecting options

Direction	Reasons
North and North West of Tring, off Icknield Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong countryside boundary (Icknield Way) to the Greenbelt would be breached • Environmental impacts to the Grand Union Canal and Tring Reservoirs SSSI • Development would detract from the compact nature of the settlement
North East of Tring, between Bulbourne Road and Station Road (Marshcroft Farm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental impacts to the Grand Union Canal • Development would detract from the compact nature of the settlement
South and South West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the Chilterns AONB • Strong countryside boundary would be breached (Park Road/ Aylesbury Road) to the Green Belt.

3.8 Our suggested choices of options are shown in Figure 1.2, Tring Vision Diagram.

Figure 3.1 - Tring Vision Diagram



Question 3 (Tring)

Are there any additional big issues we should be considering?

Yes/No

If yes, please list. (Please see questionnaire)

4.0 Development Options

Development Options	Pros	Cons
<p>Option 1 (Land to the West; it has the capacity to deliver 380 dwellings without any other uses)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller site with clear boundaries to contain development • Next to the largest employment area in the town • Near a local centre • Good road access off Icknield Way • Land in the AONB to the west would be retained providing a western gateway to the town • Could accommodate some employment space, cemetery space and local open space • Achieves the minimum level of development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some distance (approximately 1.8km) from the town centre, and 3.7km from the railway station • Next to the Chilterns AONB • Views from Icknield way and the Chilterns AONB would be possible. • Site would be too small to include all of the leisure space aspirations, additional leisure space may need to come forward from Option 2
<p>Option 2 (Land to the East – it has the capacity to deliver up to 600 dwellings with a minimum of 22 hectares of open space)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closer to the town centre and the station (1km to the centre of the site) • Close to a secondary school • On a flat site • Not all of the site will need to come forward for housing • All of the leisure space deficit could be accommodated here (8.95 hectares) and more • Could achieve more than the minimum level of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This site includes a large county wildlife site • This green gateway into the town centre is a key green corridor into the town and part of its established character • Very large sprawling site with access off Station Road, Cow Lane and/or London

	<p>development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing playing fields and new leisure facilities could be redeveloped to provide improved facilities and meet wider aspirations to achieve more than the minimum level of development 	<p>Road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close to the Chilterns AONB Most leisure space in Tring would be located in one site.
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Question 4a (Tring)

Do you prefer Option 1:

Yes/No

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

Question 4b (Tring)

Do you prefer Option 2:

Yes/No

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

5.0 Spatial strategy themes

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

- looking after the environment;
- social and personal welfare;
- economic prosperity; and
- location and access.

a) Looking after the Environment

(i) The spatial structure of Tring is compact. However there is a limited opportunity for small-scale development and change. This scale of growth should aim to enhance the existing landscape setting, gateways and views of the Chiltern escarpment and, within the town, the views of the High Street and the church spire. Consideration should also be given to enhancing and maintaining the character of existing urban design zones and other landscape features such as Tring Mansion hedgerow and tree belts, and Dundale Wildlife Site.

(ii) Key features of the town's setting e.g. Tring Woodlands SSSI, Tring Reservoirs, Tring Park, the GUC corridor and Brook Street's Streamside Walk would be maintained in the Core Strategy.

(iii) Tring triangle and the conservation area include buildings from the Rothschild period and the Tudor revival period. The design of future developments must relate sensitively to the existing conservation area and listed buildings.

(iv) Tring is a Transition Town and aims to reduce the dependence on non-renewable energy. New development must reduce carbon emissions in line with the Code for Sustainable Homes, relevant Government Policies and the renewable energy policies in the Core Strategy.

(v) Current views and wildlife corridors should be protected in development design. Therefore, if either Option came forward for development, it would be expected to maintain existing key views and provide some open space. Development Option 2 would be expected to deliver a much more aspirational level of open space, beyond the leisure space deficit, because of its size and current county wildlife site within the location. Development Option 2 also lies within the 'green' gateway of Tring and developing here would affect the current green corridor into the town centre. If Option 2 were to be developed the design of the development should incorporate open space along the London Road to retain the green gateway.

Question 5 (Tring)

Should the key built and environmental assets of Tring be protected and enhanced, as outlined in paragraphs 1.3 to 1.6?

Yes/No

If not please list your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

b) Social and personal welfare

(i) Tring will deliver some small-scale housing and employment space to meet local needs only. The level of housing development will be based on the town's character, size and setting. The main options for growth are shown in Figure 3.1. i.e. to the west (Miswell Lane/Icknield Way) and Dunsley Farm to the east. Development to the west may be necessary for additional employment space through the expansion of Icknield Way Industrial Estate and for expansion of the cemetery to the west of Tring.

(ii) The County Council's expertise is required to investigate the future capacity levels of Tring Secondary School. Since Tring Secondary School is currently around the maximum capacity level and additional forms of entry cannot reasonably be added, Tring town should only accommodate a limited level of

growth which will provide some additional affordable housing and community facilities.

(iii) In order to deliver further services and facilities for children, young people and the elderly, new development should seek to deliver contributions for new facilities from all new developments. A change of use for Akeman Street employment area to allow community facilities could also improve the situation.

(iv) To overcome concerns related to leisure activities and encourage the use of leisure facilities we will continue supporting the amalgamation of Miswell Lane playing fields into one open space. The provision for further sports facilities in the Dunsley Farm area should be considered.

c) Economic prosperity

(i) To ensure the town can be a sustainable settlement, a reasonable balance needs to be struck between new homes and local job opportunities. The built up nature of the town offers limited opportunities to expand businesses in the town centre but more opportunities are possible elsewhere.

(ii) There is a clear opportunity to provide more employment land by extending Icknield Way Industrial GEA. Heygates' Tring Mill is encouraged to remain; it could be redesignated from a residential area to an employment area or some form of mixed use (with employment). Akeman Street employment area could offer more diverse opportunities, including community uses, in conjunction with the town centre.

(iii) Tring town centre has a historic backdrop of architecturally rich buildings with an unusual vibrant mix of retail and leisure facilities. The cattle market, farmers' market and the auction rooms, and the Natural History Museum are key to this unusual mix, and if sustained will promote vitality and economic prosperity in the town centre. These particular facilities will be protected from redevelopment and incompatible change of use. The Natural History Museum and Tring Reservoirs will be promoted as places of local tourist interest.

(iv) The small retail space deficit in the town centre identified in the Retail Study may be rectified through the provision of some additional A1 uses, in the town centre or extensions to existing stores with an A1 use.

Question 6 (Tring)

Should Akeman Street employment area include a wider range of uses?

Yes/No

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

Question 7a (Tring)

Do you agree that Heygates' Tring Mill should be redesignated to employment use?

Yes/No

Please list your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 7b (Tring)

Do you agree that Heygates' Tring Mill should be redesignated to mixed use?

Yes/No

Please list your reasons. (Please see questionnaire)

Question 8 (Tring)

Should the market, the auction rooms and the Natural History Museum be protected from redevelopment?

Yes/No

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

Question 9 (Tring)

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

Yes/No

If yes, please list. (Please see questionnaire)

d) Location and access

(i) The town has a bypass and the town centre has had traffic calming measures installed (traffic calmed town centre). A variety of other measures have also been implemented to reduce problems with rat running on local roads. In general, movement east-west is easier along the valley floor than north-south across and up the valley sides. The Natural History Museum, Tring Park and Tring Reservoirs are either situated to the south or north of Tring; all are a significant draw for residents in the Borough and tourists alike. Signage to these places and

accompanying car parks should be improved from the town centre and A41 to help facilitate ease of movement. Additional footpaths/cycleways improvements, where possible, would improve accessibility and may increase the number of visitors into Tring. Furthermore, better signage and accessibility would promote these facilities for leisure purposes and enhance the economic prosperity of the town through tourism.

(ii) The need for improved cycle routes and an extension to parking facilities at the railway station emerged as an issue for the area through earlier consultation on the Core Strategy. West Hertfordshire Area Transport Plan has implemented some improvements, but a number of other schemes proposed have not been carried out because they have proved difficult to implement; some were costly and some did not demonstrate a contribution to countywide transport targets. The Council will explore appropriate schemes further with Hertfordshire Highways through an update of the Tring Urban Transport Plan in 2012/13. Tring Urban Transport Plan will also consider the issues raised above.

Question 10 (Tring)

The spatial strategy for Tring 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 11 (Tring)

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

Yes/No

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