



Dacorum's Local Plan

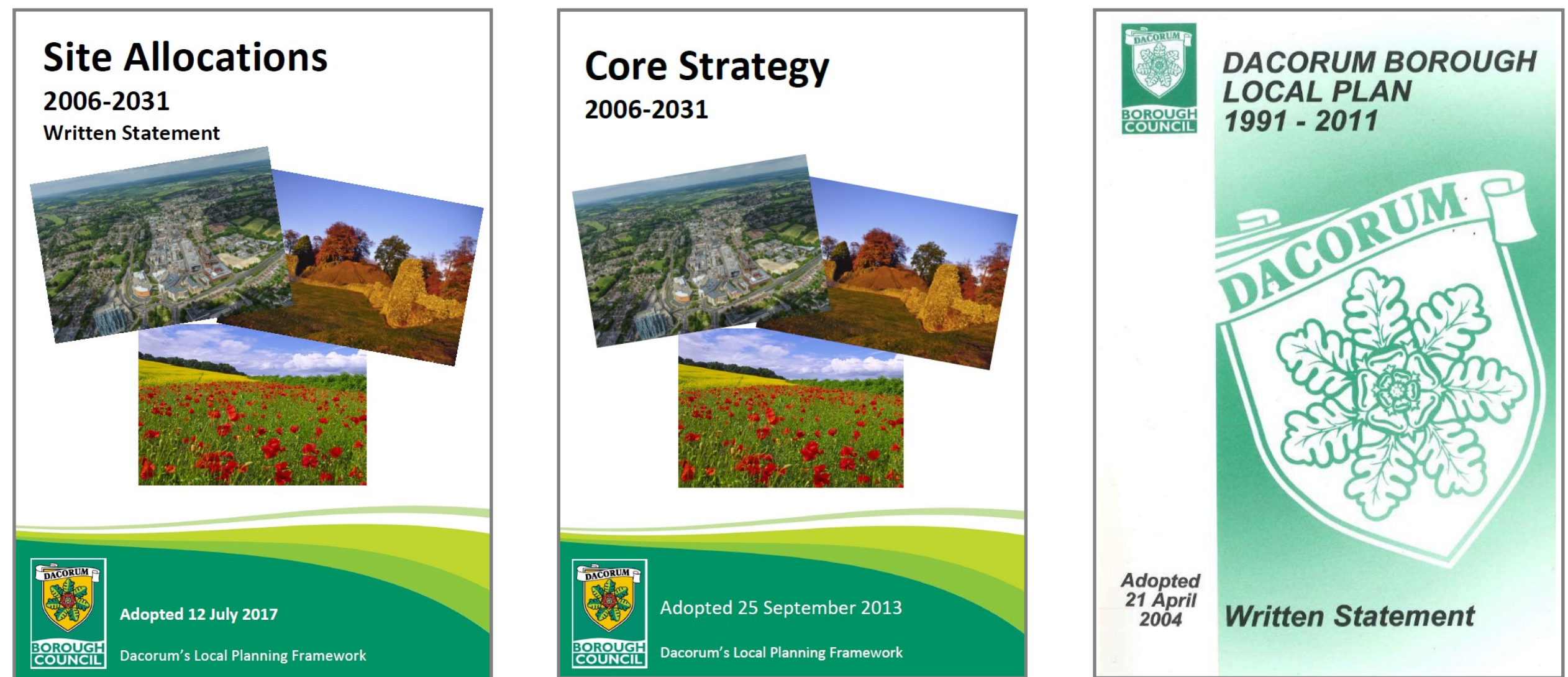
2013-2036

Issues and Options Consultation

What is a Local Plan?

The Local Plan is the document which sets out the **planning strategy** for Dacorum for the next 20+ years. It sets out the amount and broad location of new development we must plan for and includes policies to protect our natural and historic environment. It will ensure new development is well designed and supported by necessary infrastructure.

The key documents that will be replaced by the new Local Plan.



Government requires us to review our planning strategy every five years. For Dacorum, we have been told that we need to look at:

- 1.) The need for new homes in the area;
- 2.) The role of our Green Belt, and whether any of this land should be used for new development;
- 3.) How we work with neighbouring Councils to deliver local housing needs.

Saying 'no' to any further growth in Dacorum is not a realistic option. The Government continues to stress the need to provide more homes across the country, particularly in high house price areas such as Hertfordshire. **The new Local Plan consultation is the opportunity for local communities to influence how Dacorum should grow.**

We have started collecting and producing the evidence that will help inform these decisions, alongside feedback from this consultation. This work is referred to as the 'Evidence Base' and includes studies on particular topics like the need for new homes, shops and jobs. It will be expanded and updated as the new Local Plan progresses.

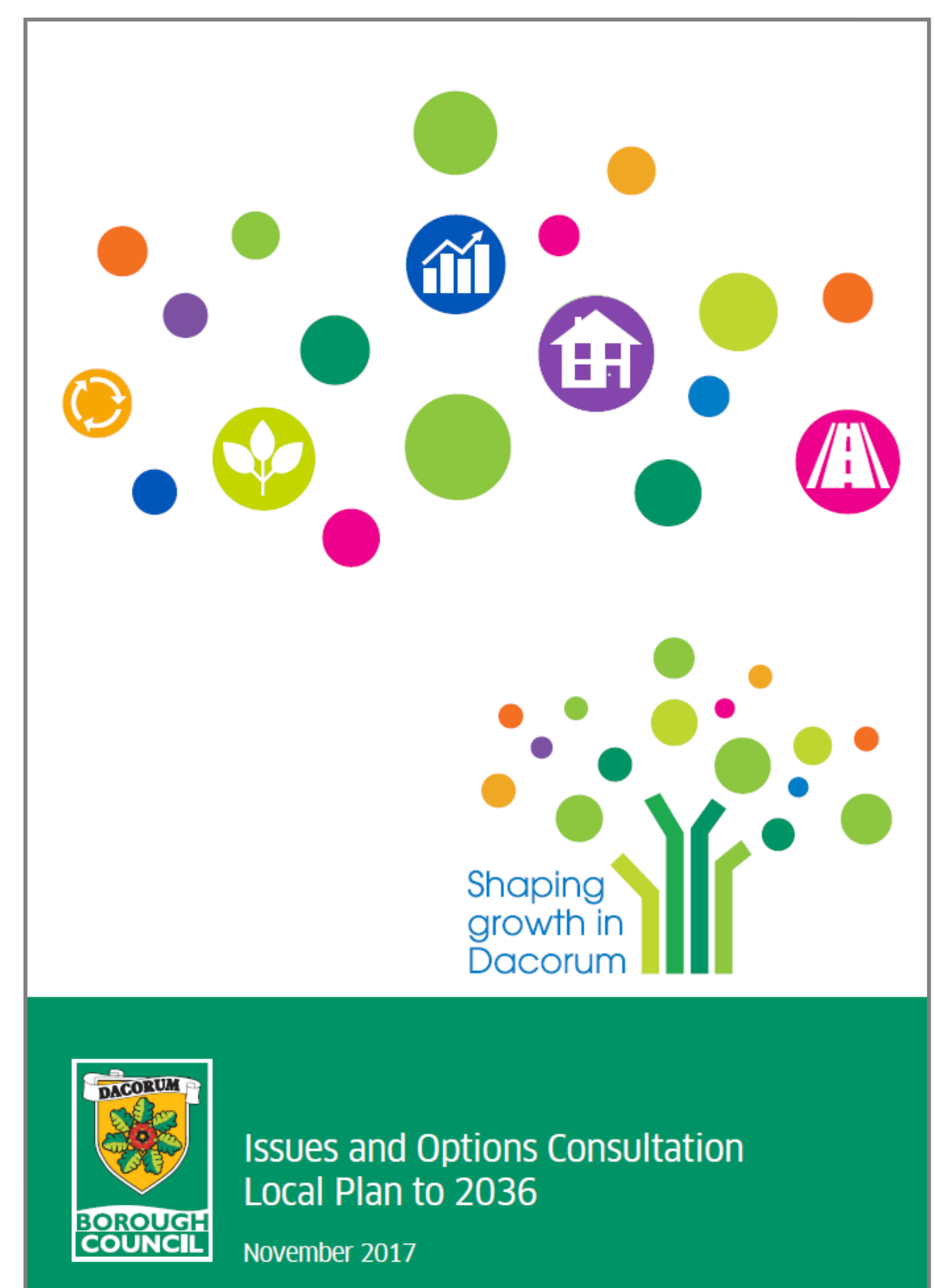
What is this consultation about?

The Council has not yet made any decisions about what the new Local Plan should say or what development sites it should include. This is your chance to begin to influence the new planning strategy for Dacorum.

This consultation is about the planning **issues** we face as a Borough and the **options** we have for addressing these issues. This exhibition summarises what the consultation covers and explains how you can make your views known.

A key part of the consultation is to explore the growth needs of Dacorum and how far these needs should be met. The detail of actual development sites will evolve as work on the new Local Plan progresses.

We are also taking this opportunity to carry out a **'call for sites'** to allow anyone to put forward any land they think might have development potential. This will make sure that we have a clear and full picture on the options available.





A vision for the new Local Plan

The Issues and Options document sets out a vision for what we feel the area should be like in 2036, with the new Local Plan in place. This vision must be supported by a series of objectives which relate to the different sections of the Local Plan. Our suggested objectives are set out below. We would like to know whether or not you agree with these or think some changes are needed.

Sustainable Development

- To promote healthy and sustainable communities and a high quality of life.
- To mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- To promote social inclusion and cohesiveness, embrace diversity and reduce inequalities.
- To enable convenient access between jobs, homes and facilities, minimise the impact of traffic and reduce the overall need to travel.
- To promote the towns of Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring as the focus for homes, jobs and strategic services.
- To conserve and enhance the function and character of the villages and countryside.
- To ensure the effective use of existing land and previously developed sites.
- To create safe and attractive environments through high quality design.

Strengthening Economic Prosperity

- To promote a vibrant and prosperous economy
- to strengthen confidence in Hemel Hempstead's role as a thriving sub-regional business centre and shopping hub.
- to develop Maylands Gateway as a hub for Envirotech business.
- to maintain commercial enterprise and employment opportunities in the market towns and large villages.
- to support rural enterprise.

Homes and Community Facilities

- To provide a mix of new homes to meet the needs of the local population.
- To provide for a full range of social, leisure and community facilities and services.

Looking After the Environment

- To protect and enhance Dacorum's distinctive landscape character, open spaces, biological and geological diversity and historic environment.
- To promote the use of renewable resources, reduce carbon emissions, protect natural resources and reduce waste.
- To protect people and property from flooding.
- To minimise the effects of pollution on people and the environment.

Infrastructure and Delivery

- To ensure that all development contributes appropriately to local and strategic infrastructure requirements.
- To co-ordinate the delivery of new infrastructure with development.





Planning for growth

The Issues and Options consultation **sets out the main planning issues which face Dacorum** under the following headings:



Our towns, villages and countryside



Homes



Our Economy



Our Environment



Infrastructure

After each issue we ask for feedback on whether you support the way we propose to address the issue in the new Local Plan, or whether you think we should take a different approach.



Our towns, villages and countryside

In Our towns, villages and countryside section of the consultation we ask for your views on a number of issues, including:

- How should we distribute new development?
- What is the role and function of the Green Belt?
- What is the role and function of the wider Rural Area?
- How will we select development sites?
- How will people get around?
- How can we maximise the quality of new development?
- What other policies are required to help us control and guide new development?

Some of the key issues are summarised alongside.

We will continue to prioritise the use of 'brownfield sites' i.e. sites that have been previously developed. Within Dacorum a large number of these brownfield sites have already been developed, with **84% of new homes since 2006 having been built on such sites.**

However, the available supply of such land is decreasing and we will have to look increasingly towards 'greenfield' sites to accommodate new development. Greenfield sites are undeveloped sites and can be located in both urban areas and in the countryside.

Almost 85% of our Borough is countryside, with 60% of this area designated as Green Belt. However, this means that we have to balance conflicting Government policies which generally seek to protect the Green Belt from development, but also require us to plan for enough homes, jobs and supporting facilities to meet our future needs.

We have been specifically told that we need to review our Green Belt boundaries as part of our new Local Plan when looking at options for meeting our local housing needs.

The implications for the Green Belt will of course depend upon the scale and distribution of growth that is included in the final Local Plan.



Homes

In the homes section of the consultation we ask for your views on a number of issues, including:

- How many new homes need to be provided by 2036?
- What land is available for the new homes needed?
- What types of homes do we need to plan for?
- How should the delivery of housing sites be managed?

Some of the key issues are summarised below.

The Government is requiring all Councils to significantly increase new house building to help meet growing housing needs. This is the biggest challenge for our new Local Plan.

How many new homes do we need to provide?

What is Dacorum's 'local housing need' for the new Local Plan (2013-36)? As the Issues and Options consultation document explains, it could be one of a range of figures, depending on how it is calculated:

Draft Government figure	602 homes a year 13,846 homes over the plan period
Locally assessed need	756 homes a year 17,388 homes over the plan period
Upper Government figure	1,000 to 1,100 homes a year 25,300 homes over the plan period

To put these figures in context, our **current Core Strategy has a target of 430 new homes a year** and we have broadly been meeting this rate of delivery for the last seven years. Whatever figure is finally agreed, it will represent a substantial increase in historic rates of building in the area.

Whilst we can try to set a new homes target in our Local Plan that is lower than our housing need, this is unlikely to be approved by the Government Planning Inspector and we would leave the area at **very high risk of speculative, ad-hoc development.**

In addition, we may be asked to meet some of the housing need not met from other nearby areas, including London.

What land is available for the new homes?

We estimate that there is the **capacity to provide around 10,940 homes from existing and planned sites** that are consistent with existing planning policies. The following table shows how these new homes are spread across the Borough:

Location	Assumed housing capacity (2013-36)*
Hemel Hempstead	8,900
Berkhamsted	600
Tring	500
Bovingdon	90
Kings Langley	50
Markyate	200
Small villages and the countryside (combined)	600
TOTAL	10,940

** Some of these homes have already been built over the 2013-16 period (equating to 1,257 homes)*

Whilst we will keep this 10,940 figure under review, it is not expected to change dramatically. This means that if we are trying to meet our local housing needs in full, then we will **have to make up the difference through greenfield land from Green Belt sites around the edge of our towns and villages.**

We need to carefully consider what **type of homes we plan for.** This includes making appropriate provision for affordable housing, homes suitable for older people and sites for travelling communities. We also need to consider if we should allocate any plots for 'self-builders.'



Our economy

In the economy section of the consultation we ask for your views on a number of issues, including:

- How many new jobs are needed in Dacorum by 2036?
- What additional sites should we set aside for office, industrial and warehousing development?
- What additional retail development is required and where should this be?
- What approach should the new Local Plan take towards tourism?

Some of the key issues are summarised below.

We estimate that there will be a need for an extra 10,900 jobs by 2036. Almost half of these jobs are predicted to be in office, industrial and warehousing roles. There is expected to be a *decrease* in demand for land for industrial uses of about 10 hectares, but this is cancelled out by a similar *increase* in demand for warehousing land. We are predicted to need about 13 hectares of land to provide for new offices.

The Issues and Options consultation suggests that to meet these needs, new employment provision could be made through making the best use we can of available land in the Maylands Business Park, especially the area within the Enterprise Zone, and creating new employment sites on greenfield land:

- south west of Kings Langley;
- east of the A41 at Two Waters Hemel Hempstead; and at
- Dunsley Farm, Tring.

Despite recent moves towards online shopping, there is still an important role for our town and local centres, and retail parks, and we need to ensure these continue to cater for our future needs. Depending upon the scale and location of growth chosen for the new Local Plan we may need to provide new retail facilities. For example, new local centres will be required if we allocate any major new housing developments.

We would therefore like your views on how we can best plan for the future employment and shopping needs of the area and where any new sites should be located to support these needs?



Infrastructure

In the infrastructure section of the consultation we ask for your views on a number of issues, including:

- What are the area's physical infrastructure needs?
- What are the borough's social infrastructure needs?
- What are the area's green infrastructure needs?
- How will infrastructure be funded?

Some of the key issues are summarised below.

Infrastructure covers a wide range of services (provided by both public and private agencies). It includes:

Physical Infrastructure – roads, public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes/paths, electricity, gas, provision of clean water, sewerage and waste collection/disposal;

Social Infrastructure – schools, nurseries, further education, healthcare, emergency services, and social and community buildings; and

Green Infrastructure – the network of green space which connects towns, villages and the wider countryside. It can include green corridors, formal and informal open green spaces, sports and recreation facilities and waterways.

We are not responsible for the provision of most types of infrastructure, but rather we play an 'enabling' role – liaising with providers such as the water companies, local highway authority and health providers to ensure that appropriate provision is made.

We have developed our understanding of the infrastructure necessary to support different scales and types of development through discussions with infrastructure providers and through technical work (e.g. the Settlement Hierarchy Study and Infrastructure Delivery Plan).

How much and what new infrastructure is needed to support future development will depend on which growth option is chosen. Delivering infrastructure for scattered or small-scale growth can be very challenging compared to larger-scale growth which can provide facilities directly or make more sizeable financial contributions. A site's ability to support new infrastructure will be an important factor when considering whether or not it should be allocated for development within the new Local Plan.

However, Government rules state that the level of new infrastructure we can require a development to provide (either directly or through financial contributions) has to be in proportion to the actual scale and impact of that development. We also need to make sure that infrastructure contributions aren't set so high as to make the scheme unviable – as this means the development would not actually take place.