



Dacorum's Local Development Framework

Core Strategy



Draft for Consultation

November 2010

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Contents

1. Introduction to the Consultation	7
2. Summary of the Strategy	10

PART A – CONTEXT

3. Introduction	17
4. Borough Portrait	21
5. Challenges	27
6. Borough Vision	29
7. Strategic Objectives	31
8. Other Plans	34

PART B – THE STRATEGY

The Sustainable Development Strategy

9. Promoting sustainable development	39
The distribution of development	42
The location and management of development	45
The Towns and Large Villages	47
The countryside	49
10. Enabling convenient access between homes, jobs and facilities	54
11. Securing quality design	60
Successful urban design	61
Quality of the built environment	63
Quality of the public realm	66

Strengthening Economic Prosperity

12. Creating jobs and full employment	68
A low carbon economy	70
The Maylands Business Park	71
Supporting tourism	71
13. Providing for offices, industry, storage and distribution	74
Offices	74
Industry, storage and distribution	75
14. Supporting retailing and commerce	78
The retail hierarchy	78
Shopping areas	79
Out of centre retail development	80

Providing Homes and Community Services

15. Providing homes	85
Housing programme	86
Housing mix	91
Affordable housing	93
Travelling communities	95
16. Meeting community needs	100
Delivering community services and facilities	100
Delivering leisure and cultural facilities	103

Looking after the Environment

17. Enhancing the natural environment	106
Protecting the natural environment	106
Green infrastructure	110
18. Conserving the historic environment	116
19. Using resources efficiently	119
Renewable energy	121
Sustainable design and construction	125
Sustainable resource management	130

Place Strategies

20. Introduction	136
21. Hemel Hempstead	139
22. Berkhamsted	159
23. Tring	168
24. Kings Langley	173
25. Bovingdon	176
26. Markyate	180
27. Countryside	186

PART C – IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

28. Delivery	192
Partnership working	192
Key projects	193
Flexibility and contingency	193
29. Infrastructure	197
Infrastructure requirements	198
Developer contributions	198
30. Monitoring	201

PART D – APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Schedule of Superseded Policies	203
Appendix 2	Housing Trajectory <i>(to follow)</i>	208
Appendix 3	Delivery Mechanisms for the Vision and Strategic Objectives	211
Appendix 4	Glossary	224

Figures

Figure 1	Structure of the Local Development Framework	17
Figure 2	Core Strategy Preparation Stages	20
Figure 3	Dacorum's Location within South West Hertfordshire	22
Figure 4	Population Pyramid	24
Figure 5	Population Structure Projections	25
Figure 6	Relative Levels of Deprivation Across Dacorum	25
Figure 7	Other Key Documents and Strategies	34
Figure 8	Relationship Between Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Development Framework Objectives and Policies	35
Figure 9	Principles of Sustainable Development	40
Figure 10	Structure of Core Strategy	41
Figure 11	Dacorum's Spatial Awareness Framework	61
Figure 12	Urban Design Principles	62
Figure 13	3 Step Approach to Successful Design	63
Figure 14	Social Infrastructure	100
Figure 15	Biodiversity and Geology Designations	112
Figure 16	Energy Hierarchy	121
Figure 17	Town Centre Character Zones and Development Opportunities	144
Figure 18	East Hemel Hempstead Character Zones and Development Opportunities	147
Figure 19	Hemel Hempstead Vision Diagram: Built	155
Figure 20	Hemel Hempstead Vision Diagram: Natural	156
Figure 21	Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Vision Diagram	157
Figure 22	East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan Vision Diagram	158
Figure 23	Berkhamsted Vision Diagram	167
Figure 24	Tring Vision Diagram	172
Figure 25	Kings Langley Vision Diagram	175
Figure 26	Bovingdon Vision Diagram	179
Figure 27	Markyate Vision Diagram	185
Figure 28	Countryside Vision Diagram	191

Maps

Map 1	Key Diagram	16
Map 2	Principal Landscape Areas	108
Map 3	Dacorum's Green Infrastructure Network	111
Map 4	Energy Opportunities Plan	124

Tables

Table 1	Settlement Hierarchy	43
Table 2	Major Developed Sites	51
Table 3	Transport Responsibilities	56
Table 4	Economic Development Strategy Objectives	69

Table 5	Retail Hierarchy	78
Table 6	Out of Centre Retail Locations	80
Table 7	Prospective Housing Programme 2006-2031	87
Table 8	Strategic Allocations and Locations	89
Table 9	Size Mix of Housing Requirement 2007-2021	91
Table 10	Estimated Requirements for People Living in Caravans	96
Table 11	Additional CO ₂ Reductions	125
Table 12	Characteristics of Villages and Hamlets	189

Policy Schedule

Policy CS1	Distribution of Development	44
Policy CS2	Selection of Development Sites	46
Policy CS3	Managing Selected Development Sites	46
Policy CS4	The Towns and Large Villages	48
Policy CS5	Green Belt	51
Policy CS6	Selected Small Villages in the Green Belt	52
Policy CS7	Rural Area	53
Policy CS8	Sustainable Transport	57
Policy CS9	Management of Roads	58
Policy CS10	Quality of Settlement Design	64
Policy CS11	Quality of Neighbourhood Design	64
Policy CS12	Quality of Site Design	65
Policy CS13	Quality of the Public Realm	67
Policy CS14	Economic Development	72
Policy CS15	Office, Research, Industry, Storage and Distribution	76
Policy CS16	Shops and Commerce	83
Policy CS17	Housing Programme	90
Policy CS18	Mix of Housing	92
Policy CS19	Affordable Housing	94
Policy CS20	Rural Exceptions Sites	95
Policy CS21	Existing Accommodation for Travelling Communities	97
Policy CS22	New Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers	98
Policy CS23	Social Infrastructure	104
Policy CS24	Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	113
Policy CS25	Landscape Character	114
Policy CS26	Green Infrastructure	114
Policy CS27	Quality of the Historic Environment	117
Policy CS28	Renewable Energy	127
Policy CS29	Sustainable Design and Construction	128
Policy CS30	Carbon Offset Fund	129
Policy CS31	Water Management	133
Policy CS32	Air, Soil and Water	134
Policy CS33	Hemel Hempstead Town Centre	150
Policy CS34	Maylands Business Park	151
Policy CS35	Infrastructure and Developer Contributions	199

PART A

THE CONTEXT

1. Introduction to the consultation

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.

A summary of the Core Strategy is set out in Section 2. This includes the Key Diagram (Map 1), which shows where change will be focussed in the borough.

Do I need to comment?

Many people have responded to previous consultations (see chart in Figure 2 at the back of Section 3). These responses have been used to help prepare the draft Core Strategy.

It is important that you **continue** to give feedback to ensure that the final Core Strategy document continues reflects your views and those of the local community. Expressions of support are as useful as expressions of concern.

What do I need to know before I comment?

The draft Core Strategy contains:

- two alternative housing targets; and
- a set of policies (the principles for which were set out in the Emerging Core Strategy Paper published in June 2009).

The Core Strategy will guide development through economic ups and downs. The regeneration of Hemel Hempstead town centre and Maylands Business Park are important drivers for economic and social change. Significant increases in employment should normally be balanced with proportionate levels of housing. There is a strong need for new homes in Hemel Hempstead and in other parts of the borough. New development should support new infrastructure. The provision of new homes and jobs must take account of the environmental effects - both positive and negative.

You are advised to read the relevant sections of the draft Core Strategy (and any other information you consider appropriate) before commenting. A box at the beginning of each section explains how we have arrived at this point. General questions are asked at the end of most sections, encouraging you to give reasons for your answers and to specify the changes you think should be made.

If you would like further advice or to discuss matters with Council Officers before commenting you may attend one of the drop-in sessions that are being held around the borough: these are being advertised in Dacorum Digest, in Council Offices and on the website.

What can I comment on?

In Part A, you can comment on whether you support the borough vision and the set of strategic objectives that have been developed to measure the progress of the vision.

In Part B, you can comment on each section within:

- The Sustainable Development Strategy;
- Strengthening Economic Prosperity;
- Providing Homes and Community Services;
- Looking after the Environment; and
- The Place Strategies.

In Part C, you can comment on the approach for Delivery, Infrastructure and Monitoring.

Is there any additional information that supports the draft Core Strategy?

The draft Core Strategy 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.

Any further questions?

If you have any further 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.

How do I comment?

Please submit comments **online** using Dacorum Council's consultation portal. Alternatively, comments can be sent to the Spatial Planning Team at Dacorum Borough Council using the questionnaire that is available.

Copies of the draft Core Strategy, comments forms and background information can be found on the Council's website www.dacorum.gov.uk/planning, at local libraries or at Borough Council Offices subject to opening times. Anyone without internet access will be able to fill in a questionnaire and send it to the following address:

By consultation portal: <http://consult.dacorum.gov.uk>

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

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

By fax: 01442 228771

Responses must be received by 5.15pm on Wednesday 15th December.

All comments received will be publicly available.

What happens next?

The results of this consultation, together with the independent sustainability appraisal and other technical work, will assist the Council in preparing its final draft of the Core Strategy (known as the Pre-Submission or Publication document) in Summer 2011.

The Pre-Submission Draft will be subject to further public comments and assessed by an independent Planning Inspector, before it is finally agreed. This is expected to be in Autumn 2012.

2. Summary of the strategy

The purpose of the Core Strategy is to anticipate and manage change in Dacorum over the years to 2031. It needs to balance the need for new development and infrastructure against the need to maintain the environmental assets and unique character of the borough. It is also one of the key tools to help maximise and co-ordinate new investment in Dacorum and help promote economic regeneration.

Dacorum is an attractive borough, with a largely affluent, healthy and mobile population. However, when looking ahead there are a number of challenges to face:

Challenges	
How to achieve:	
1. Balanced and sustainable growth	
2. A stronger role for the Maylands Business Park	
3. The regeneration of Hemel Hempstead town centre	
4. Strong, inclusive communities	
5. A resilient natural environment	
6. A high quality and sustainable built environment	

In order to meet these challenges, the Core Strategy sets out a vision of what the borough should be like in 2031. Strategic Objectives set out how this vision will be realised. They include objectives for the central themes of:

- Strengthening Economic Prosperity
- Providing Homes and Community Services; and
- Looking After the Environment.

How much growth and change there will be within the borough

One of two options will be chosen for the level of new homes that will be provided between 2006 and 2031.

	Target ¹ <i>(new homes per year 2006-2031)</i>	Total Housing Programme <i>(2006-2031)</i>
Option 1	370	9,835
Option 2	430	11,385

¹ The annual target is slightly lower than the total housing programme due to Government rules regarding the inclusion of 'windfall' sites.

Option 1 aims to optimise the use of land within defined settlements and is sometimes referred to as ‘urban capacity’. Option 2 adds to Option 1 through the inclusion of Local Allocations. These are modest extensions to existing settlements which would help meet local housing needs and also help meet gaps in local infrastructure.

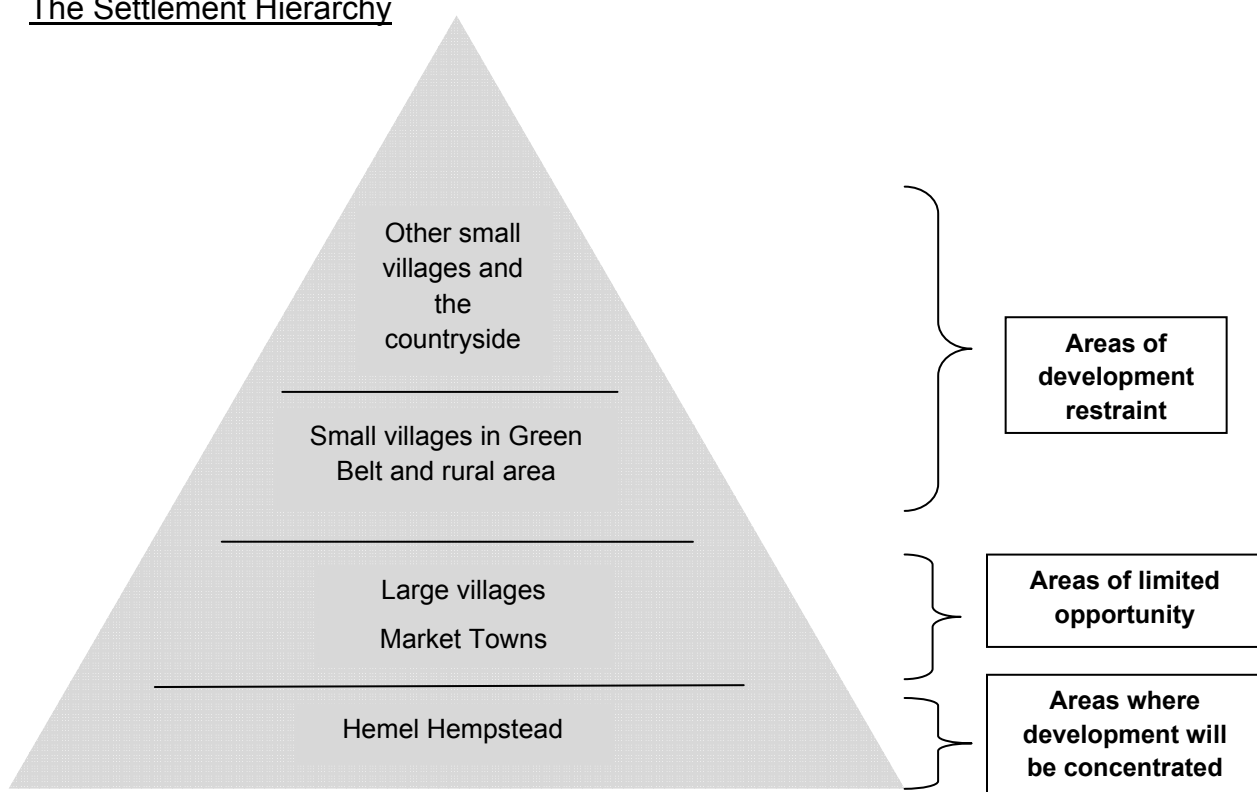
In addition to new homes, an additional 222,700 sq m (net) office floorspace and 28,500 sq m (net) of industrial, storage and distribution space are proposed. This will help meet a target of up to 18,000 new jobs by 2031 and support the drive towards achieving full employment within the borough. Supporting infrastructure, including schools, hospitals and leisure facilities will also be provided, together with improvements to the local transport network.

The emphasis is upon sustainable growth which links social and economic objectives and balances these with environmental considerations. The choice of housing target will depend upon the emphasis placed upon these considerations.

Where change will be focussed within the borough

The Key Diagram (Map 1) shows where these changes are expected to happen. These changes will be managed through a ‘settlement hierarchy’ which identifies areas which will be the focus for development and those which will be subject to greater development restraint.

The Settlement Hierarchy



Further detail of development strategies for each of the towns and large villages, and the wider countryside, is set out in the 'Place Strategies' section (Chapters 20 to 27) of the Core Strategy. Each strategy includes a local vision and objectives which express specific aspirations for these places.

The place where development will be concentrated

1. Hemel Hempstead

Hemel Hempstead will be the Main Centre for Development and Change in the borough and the focus for new homes, jobs and infrastructure. This will include:

- **New homes.** Two options for new housing development are put forward in this plan. Option 1 would provide around 7,530 and Option 2 8,800 new homes in the town. Option 2 includes Local Allocations at West Hemel Hempstead, Marchmont Farm and the Old Town. 35% of all new homes will normally be made available at affordable prices or rents.
- **New jobs.** A significant proportion of anticipated new employment floorspace will be delivered over the lifetime of this strategy.
- **New services and facilities.** New leisure facilities, a performing arts venue and cemetery will be provided. Hertfordshire County Council have also advised that six new primary schools will be needed to serve both the new and existing population of the town.
- **New infrastructure.** Public transport links between Maylands Business Park, the town centre and Hemel Hempstead railway station will be improved. A new covered bus station will be built in the town centre.

Within Hemel Hempstead four areas have been identified for particular attention:

(a) Town Centre

The regeneration and refurbishment of the town centre will continue, building on its distinctive identity through improvements to the public realm. This will include provision of around 1,800 new homes, a general hospital, a primary school, a new supermarket, cultural facility and performing arts venue.

(b) East Hemel Hempstead (Maylands Business Park)

Promote Maylands Business Park as a sub-regional business centre. It will be the focus for high quality, energy efficient development, with improved access to open space and local services and facilities. Approximately 1,000 new homes, a primary school and a significant amount of new office floorspace will

be developed. The delivery of some facilities, such as Park and Ride and a new sports ground may require extending into St Albans District, on land between the town and the M1.

(c) Neighbourhood Centres

The New Town neighbourhood structure will be reinforced and enhanced, and work will continue to regenerate, reinvigorate and “green” neighbourhood centres.

(d) Green Spaces

The network of open land will be maintained. Public open spaces will be improved, with priority given to the creation of a new urban park in the Two Waters area of the town.

The town centre and Maylands Business Park are designated as Key Regeneration Areas.

Places of limited opportunity

2. Market Towns

A ‘second tier’ of market towns will meet their local housing needs and provide employment and services for local and adjacent communities.

- a) **Berkhamstead** – will have around 1,130 (Option 1) or 1,200 (Option 2) new homes. Option 2 includes a local allocation at Hanburys, Shootersway. Both options include the strategic site at Durrants Lane/Shootersway (Egerton Rothesay School), which will provide new homes, improvement to the school and additional playing pitches. Two ‘education zones’ have also been identified on the edge of the town to ensure the future primary age schooling needs are met. Existing employment land will be retained.
- b) **Tring** – will have around 330 (Option 1) or 480 (Option 2) new homes. Option 2 includes a local allocation at West Tring to provide new homes, an extension to the Icknield Way General Employment Area, playing fields and new open space. The capacity of Tring School will be increased and new detached playing fields can be provided.

3. Large Villages

The following villages have been identified as areas where limited development is appropriate to ensure population stability.

- a) **Markyate** – will have around 190 new homes (Options 1 and 2). Up to 80 of these will be provided as part of the redevelopment of the Hicks Road General Employment Area, together with a new doctors surgery, public space, employment premises and other commercial uses.
- b) **Bovingdon** – will have around 90 new homes (Option 1) or 150 (Option 2) new homes. Option 2 includes a local allocation north of Chesham Road to provide new homes and open space. Existing employment uses such as the Prison and Brickworks will be protected. A long-term solution to parking issues in the village centre will continue to be sought.
- c) **Kings Langley** – will have around 70 new homes (Options 1 and 2), and see improvements to school facilities. Its growth will complement proposals to the east of the Grand Union Canal in Three Rivers District.

Areas of development restraint

In rural areas and the urban fringe the priority is to maintain existing urban boundaries and protect the character of the smaller villages and the wider countryside.

4. Small Villages within the Green Belt and Rural Area

Significant environmental constraints apply in this ‘fourth tier’ of small villages and their rural character will continue to be protected. Some small villages are identified as being important for local services and facilities. Local affordable housing and other very limited development will help sustain the villages i.e:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| a) Chipperfield | f) Long Marston |
| b) Flamstead | g) Wilstone |
| c) Potten End | |
| d) Wigginton | |
| e) Aldbury | |

5. Other small settlements and the wider countryside

The approach is to:

- a) maintain the openness of the areas of the borough designated as Green Belt or Rural Area;
- b) protect and enhance both the natural and historic landscape character;
- c) protect and extend the identified network of Green Infrastructure within and outside settlements, with particular attention being given to Key Biodiversity Areas; and

- d) conserve the special qualities of the parts of the borough within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;

Maintaining the countryside helps to prevent towns and villages from merging into one another and ensures that they retain their distinctive characters.

Support will be given to the rural economy, with particular emphasis upon farming, local food production and sustainable tourism. The landscape, habitats and biodiversity will be protected and enhanced, particularly those that are rare or locally distinctive.

How development and change will be managed

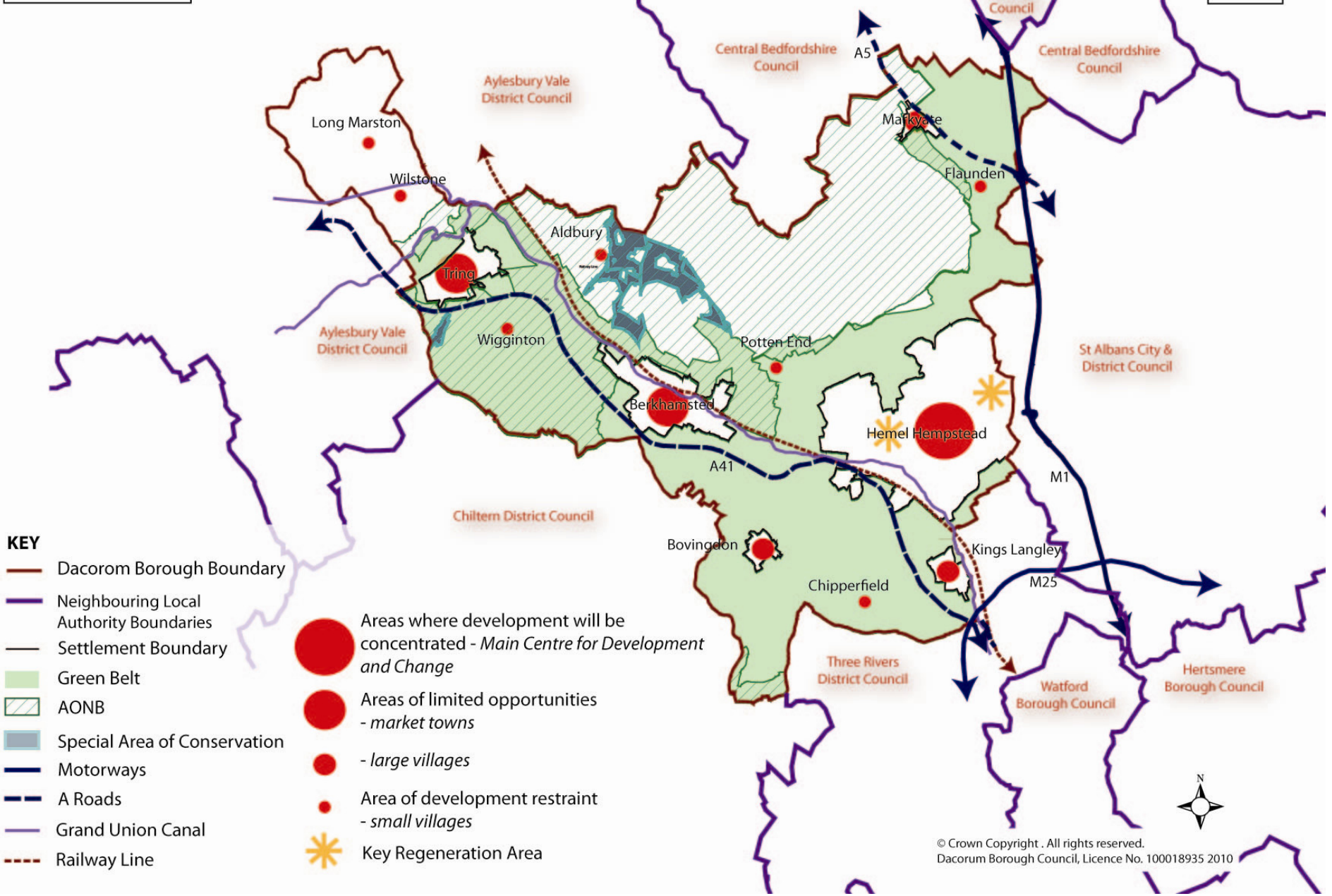
Development and change will be controlled through a series of policies designed to help the borough respond to future challenges. These cover topics such as accessibility, economic development, the mix and tenure of new homes, the provision of social and community facilities and protection of the historic and natural landscape. Particular emphasis is placed upon the use of sustainable design and construction methods and ensuring that all development is of a high quality and reflects local character.

New development will be phased to ensure that there is either existing infrastructure capacity to accommodate increased demand or that additional infrastructure is provided. Careful consideration will be given to the provision of physical infrastructure (e.g. roads, sewerage and waste disposal facilities), social infrastructure (e.g. such as schools, healthcare and recreational facilities) and green infrastructure (e.g. formal and informal open space and waterways). Development will be expected to make appropriate contributions towards these infrastructure needs. These contributions will usually be in the form of planning conditions, obligations or tariffs. Where appropriate, pooled contributions will be used to address the cumulative impact of development proposals.

The Council's monitoring processes will determine whether the Council's planning policies are being delivered as intended, are having the desired outcomes and whether they are successful at responding to changing needs and circumstances.

Key Diagram

Map 1



KEY

- Dacorum Borough Boundary
- Neighbouring Local Authority Boundaries
- Settlement Boundary
- Green Belt
- AONB
- Special Area of Conservation
- Motorways
- A Roads
- Grand Union Canal
- Railway Line

- Areas where development will be concentrated - *Main Centre for Development and Change*
- Areas of limited opportunities - *market towns*
- *large villages*
- Area of development restraint - *small villages*
- Key Regeneration Area

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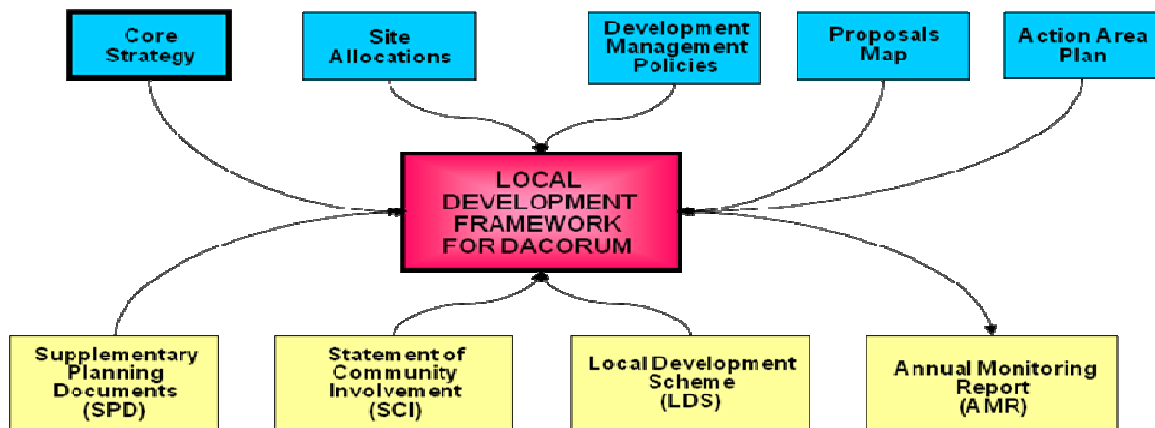
Introduction

3. Introduction

The Core Strategy

3.1. The Core Strategy is the first of the documents that will make up the borough’s ‘Local Development Framework’ (LDF) (see Figure 1). The LDF is the collective name for a series of documents (known as Development Plan Documents) that together will guide future development.

Figure 1: Structure of the Local Development Framework



3.2. The Core Strategy sets out the planning framework for guiding the location and level of development with the borough over the next 20 years. It will be used to determine planning applications and as a starting point for more detailed policies and site specific proposals that will be contained in subsequent planning documents. It will also help implement the land use elements of other plans and strategies.

3.3. Other Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that will help to achieve the vision and objectives set out within this Core Strategy are:

- **Development Management Policies** – supports the Core Strategy by setting out additional, more detailed planning policies that the Council will use when considering planning applications.
- **Site Allocations** – sets out the Council’s detailed proposals and requirements for particular sites and areas. These will be illustrated on the Proposals Map.
- **East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan (AAP)** – provides a detailed planning framework for the eastern part of Hemel Hempstead, whose

regeneration is of particular importance to the wellbeing and prosperity of the borough and beyond. The extent of this AAP within Dacorum is shown on the Proposals Map. The extent of the AAP within St. Albans is to be confirmed.

- 3.4. These DPDs will be supported by a series of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which give specific guidance on how the Council's planning strategy and policies will be implemented for specific topics, areas or sites. Although they will not form part of the statutory development plan for Dacorum, they will be important considerations in the Council's planning decisions.
- 3.5. Whilst documents in the LDF are being prepared, policies in the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 will continue to be used to guide development until they are replaced. Those Local Plan policies that are superseded by policies in this Draft Core Strategy are listed in Appendix 1.

Consultation and Evidence

- 3.6. This Draft Core Strategy has been prepared following extensive consultation with stakeholders and the local community, in line with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement. The main preparation stages are shown in Figure 2. A summary of all consultation undertaken so far is contained in the Consultation Reports available from the Council's website www.dacorum.gov.uk/planning.
- 3.7. To ensure that the Core Strategy and other DPDs are based on a thorough understanding of the issues and challenges faced, a wide range of information and studies known as the 'evidence base,' have also been prepared. A full list of these, together with links to the individual documents, is available online at www.dacorum.gov.uk/planning.

Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment

- 3.8. The policies and proposals in this Core Strategy have been subject to a formal Sustainability Appraisal (SA), carried out by independent consultants C4S. This Sustainability Appraisal incorporates Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as required under European law.
- 3.9. Sustainability Appraisal is a mechanism of systematically assessing the social, environmental and economic effects of strategies and documents contained within Development Plan Documents. It is also a continuous process. The framework for assessing policies and proposals was established through an initial Scoping Report (February 2006) and followed by a series of Working Notes associated with each stage of consultation. Sustainability Appraisal has also been an integral part of assessing the merits of strategic sites and local allocations and helping develop policy wording.

- 3.10. This Draft Core Strategy is accompanied by the '*Local Development Framework Core Strategy - Consultation Draft, Sustainability Appraisal Report (November 2010)*'. Any further issues raised by the Sustainability Appraisal process will be addressed before the Core Strategy is formally submitted to Government.
- 3.11. Under national and European law² the Council is required to assess plans or projects which could affect sites of European importance (known as Natura 2000 sites). These are Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for habitats. Part of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC lies within Dacorum (see Map 1). A 'screening' has been undertaken to assess whether proposals within the Core Strategy would have any adverse impacts upon these sites, either alone, or in combination with other plans. No significant effects were identified.
- 3.11 The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, subsequent Working Notes, the Sustainability Appraisal Report and Appropriate Assessment Screening Report all form part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework. Copies are available from www.dacorum.gov.uk/planning.

² The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994 (as amended).

**Figure 2:
Core Strategy
Preparation**



Stage Completed



Not yet done

**We Are
Here**

- Adoption of Core Strategy**
- Receipt of Inspectors Report**
- Examination**
- Submission of; and representations on**
 - Core Strategy
 - Sustainability Appraisal
- Publication of, and representations on**
 - Core Strategy
 - Sustainability Appraisal
- Consultation on**
 - Draft Core Strategy
 - Draft Final Sustainability Appraisal – November 2010
- Consultation on**
 - Emerging core Strategy
 - Issues and Options – East Hemel Hempstead. Area Action Plan
 - Sustainability Appraisal Working Notes – June 2009
- Consultation on**
 - Supplementary Issues and Options – Site Allocations
 - Sustainability Appraisal Working Note
 - Place Workshops – Summer 2008
- Consultation on**
 - Issues and Options – Site Allocations 1
 - Supplementary Issues and Options – Core Strategy, Growth at Hemel Hempstead
 - Sustainability Appraisal Working Notes – November 2006
- Consultation on**
 - Issues and Options – Core Strategy
 - Sustainability Appraisal Working Note – May 2006
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report** – February 2006
- Consultation on**
 - Emerging issues and options – July 2005
- Gathering background information and commencing technical studies** – 2004 onwards

Borough Portrait

4. Borough Portrait

Location and context

- 4.1. The name Dacorum comes from the “Hundred of Dacorum,” one of the ancient administrative units of Hertfordshire. The borough covers 81 square miles of West Hertfordshire extending almost from the outskirts of Watford, northwards to the Chiltern Hills (see Figure 3). It is currently home to approximately 138,000 people, making it the largest district in Hertfordshire.
- 4.2. The majority of residents live in the principal town of Hemel Hempstead. This is a Mark 1 New Town and will continue to be the focus for development and change within the borough. Much of the town’s infrastructure is over 50 years old and in need of renewal. The ‘Hemel 2020 Vision’ sets out the future aspirations for the town. The regeneration focus is upon:
- improving the natural and historic environment
 - sustainable housing and communities
 - exciting and thriving town centre; and
 - rejuvenating the Maylands Business Park

The town centre and Maylands Business Park are designated as key regeneration areas (Map 1).

- 4.3. In addition to Hemel Hempstead, there are also two market towns (Berkhamsted and Tring) and a number of villages, all with their own distinctive character. Almost 85% of the borough is rural. 60% of this area, and just over half of the borough as a whole, falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 4.4. Its location on the south western edge of Hertfordshire means that the area has strong links with the adjoining counties of Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire. Significant growth is planned for the neighbouring towns of Luton and Aylesbury, whilst many other nearby small towns, such as Amersham and Chesham, will experience relatively little change.
- 4.5. Much of the borough’s countryside falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt, reflecting its proximity to London and the development pressures that this brings. This countryside is accessible to visitors from a wide area. The Chiltern Hills are one of the most accessible areas of countryside for residents of many large towns and cities, including Aylesbury, Luton, Watford and London to spend their leisure time and plays an important role as their ‘green lung’.

- 4.6. The main lines of communication through the borough are the A41 trunk road, the Euston to Glasgow (West Coast main line) railway and the Grand Union Canal. The M1 runs down the eastern boundary and the M25 crosses the south-eastern tip of the borough. There are limited east-west links. Luton airport is easily accessible from the M1, with Heathrow airport also within a relatively easy distance. There are mainline stations at Berkhamsted, Tring, Kings Langley and two stations in Hemel Hempstead. All offer good commuter and leisure services south to Watford and London, and north to Milton Keynes, Northampton and Birmingham.

Figure 3: Dacorum's Location within South West Hertfordshire



Dacorum's economy

- 4.7. Dacorum has a successful economy, which employs around 60,600 people (2008)³ across a range of sectors and size of businesses. Historically, the economy of the area has included a strong element of manufacturing. The area was once a centre for paper making, with a number of mills located along the canal, although all of these have now ceased commercial production. In recent years the manufacturing sector has declined significantly. Around a quarter of jobs are now in knowledge based industries such as high-tech manufacturing, financial and business services (FBS), computing and research and development (R&D), and communications industries. Storage and distribution, retail, health, education and the service sectors

³ Annual Business Inquiry, 2009

also employ significant numbers of people. The rural economy and tourism are relatively small, but locally important sectors.

- 4.8. The Maylands Business Park in Hemel Hempstead is of significance to the borough and wider sub-region and is a focus for regeneration. The Buncefield oil terminal, on the eastern edge of the Maylands area, is of national significance for the storage and distribution of fuel – in particular aviation fuel. The site is subject to reconstruction following a fire in December 2005.
- 4.9. Hertfordshire has the highest average income in the East of England. At £29,224, Dacorum's average annual income is slightly lower than that of Hertfordshire and the adjoining authorities of St. Albans and Three Rivers⁴. However, it is significantly higher than that of nearby Luton, and slightly higher than for the adjoining authority of Central Bedfordshire.
- 4.10. Unemployment levels are low compared to the national average, but slightly higher than the average for Hertfordshire. However, these levels vary within the borough, with Hemel Hempstead's unemployment rate almost twice that of Berkhamsted and Tring.
- 4.11. Adult education qualification levels in Dacorum are above average for Hertfordshire and England, with only 5.4% of the adult working population having no recognised qualifications⁵. Nevertheless, there are still local skills shortages, particularly in terms of basic numeracy skills and specialist skills within certain employment sectors.
- 4.12. Due to good transport links, many residents work outside the borough. However, the proportion of residents working elsewhere is currently the lowest in the county, making Dacorum more 'self-contained' than the rest of Hertfordshire. Within the sub-region the borough's principal competitors for office-based jobs are Watford and St Albans, with Luton and Hatfield also seeking to attract local employers. Historically the M4 corridor has been more successful at attracting new employers than south-west Hertfordshire. A significant number of residents regularly commute into London.
- 4.13. Whilst there are high levels of vehicle ownership, just under a fifth (17.3%) of households do not own a car⁶. The level of vehicle ownership varies across the borough, and tends to vary with levels of deprivation. Vehicle ownership is a lot higher in the rural wards than those in and around Hemel Hempstead.

⁴ Hometrack, 2009

⁵ Census 2001

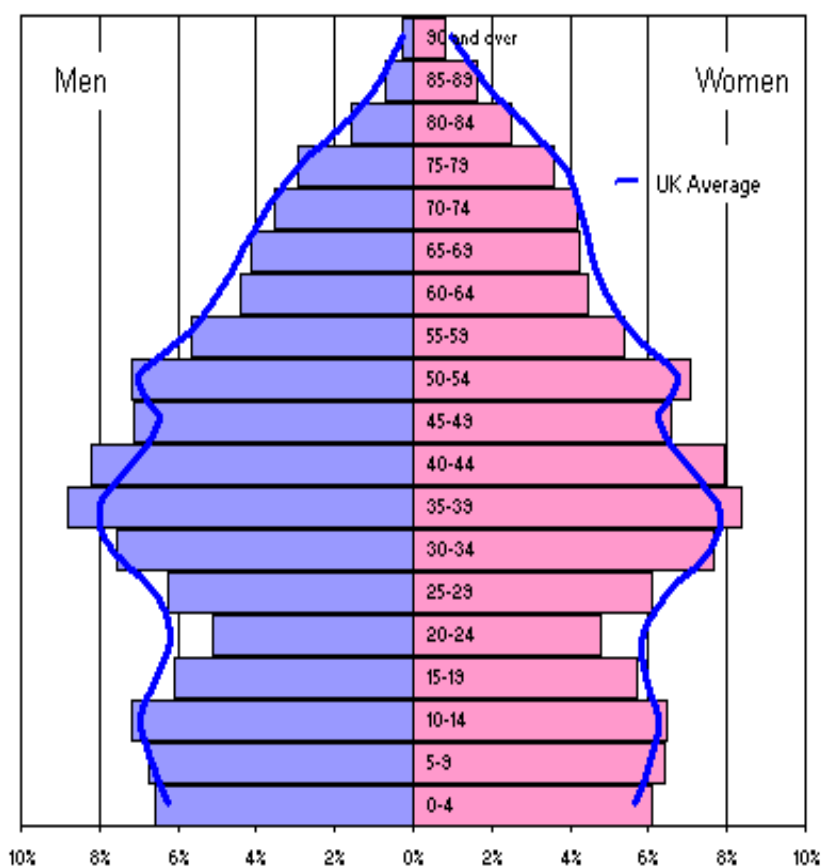
⁶ Census 2001

4.14. Hemel Hempstead is the principal retail destination within the borough. The larger towns of Milton Keynes and Watford are Hemel Hempstead's main competitors. Dacorum's market towns and small villages play an important retail role, especially in terms of convenience goods and provide a greater range of specialist, independent shops.

Dacorum's Community

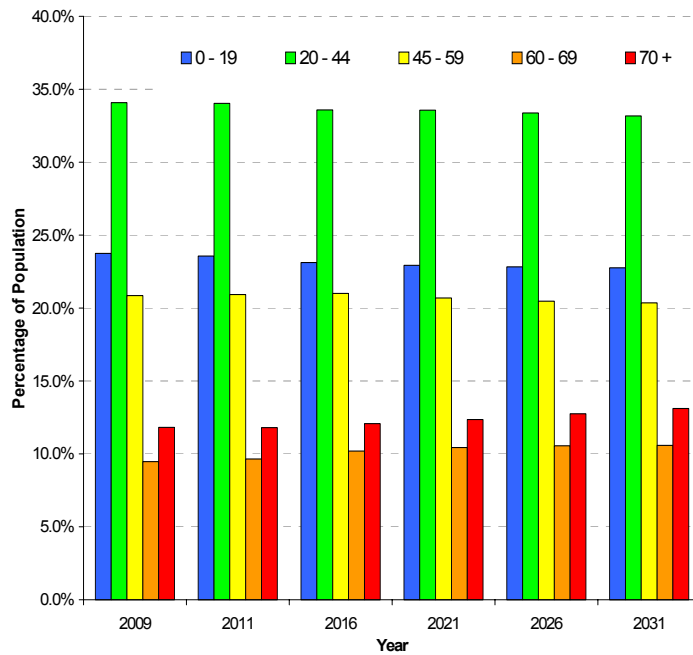
4.15. The age structure of Dacorum's population is very close to that for the country as a whole (see Figure 4). Around a quarter of the population is under 20 and a fifth are over 60. Future projections indicate that the number of people over the age of 60 will increase substantially by 2031 (see Figure 5). This raises challenges for the borough in terms of providing the right mix of accommodation and ensuring easy access to essential services and facilities.

Figure 4: Population Pyramid



Source: Census 2001, Office for National Statistics

Figure 5: Population Structure Projections

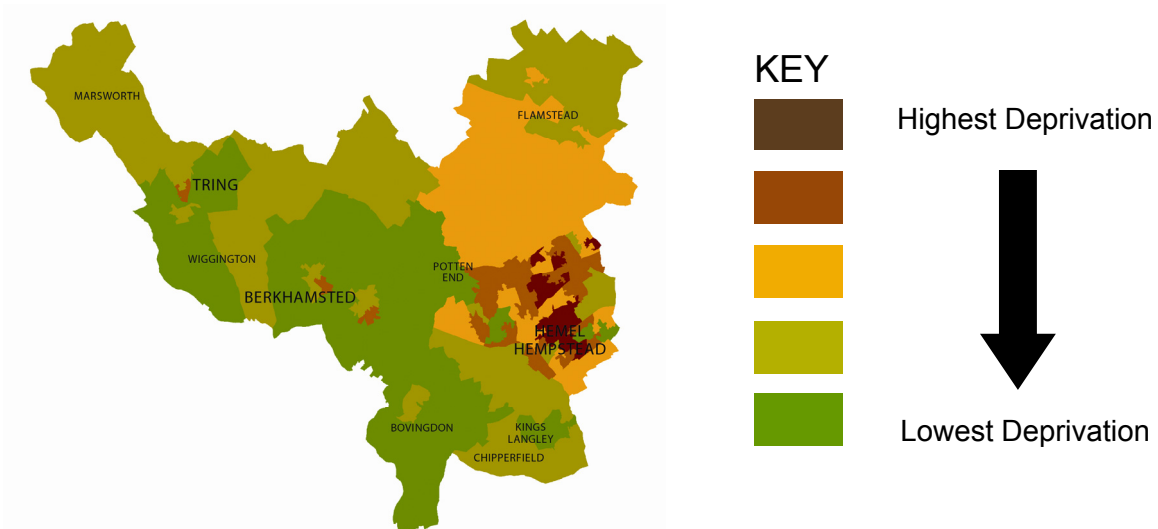


Source: Hertfordshire County Council

4.16. Dacorum is less ethnically diverse than the average for England, with just over 8% of the population classifying themselves as ‘non-white.’ The Asian population is the largest non-white group. There is a varied ethnic mix across the borough, with Hemel Hempstead having the highest non-white population.

4.17. The 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks the area as only the 287th most deprived district out of 354 authorities. Although overall deprivation levels are generally low, there are pockets of deprivation. The least deprived wards tend to be located in the eastern half of the borough (see Figure 6). The most deprived wards in the borough are all located at Hemel Hempstead, underlining the need for social and economic regeneration initiatives to be focussed upon the town.

Figure 6: Relative Levels of Deprivation across Dacorum



- 4.18. Housing in Dacorum is expensive by national standards. The average house price for Dacorum is almost £330,000, compared with the average for the London Commuter Belt of around £324,000⁷. Whilst earnings growth has kept pace with national figures, house prices have more than doubled over the same period. The borough has high levels of public sector housing stock, particularly in Hemel Hempstead; a legacy of its New Town roots. Provision of additional affordable housing to meet existing and future needs is a key challenge.
- 4.19. The 2001 census found just over 70% of Dacorum's population to be in good health. However, there are inequalities within the borough by location, gender, level of deprivation and ethnicity.
- 4.20. Crime levels in Dacorum are around average for the East of England, and slightly lower than both the national and county averages. Total recorded crime has actually fallen in recent years.

Dacorum's environment

- 4.21. The borough has a range of very attractive and distinctive landscapes, with several significant visitor attractions including the Ashridge Estate, Grand Union Canal and Tring's Zoological Museum. Over a third of the area falls within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This designation, together with the Green Belt, constrains the amount and type of development that is allowed within the rural areas. The countryside is one of the assets most highly valued by the local community⁸ and it is well used for recreational purposes. The beechwoods at Ashridge and Tring woodlands are designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and protected under European law.
- 4.22. The borough's landscape ranges from the rolling hills, beech woods and chalk streams that characterise the Chilterns, to the lower, flatter landscape of Boarscroft Vale. It is home to a number of rare species, including the Black Poplar, Water Voles and White-Clawed Crayfish. Dacorum also has a rich and varied historic heritage, from the distinctive New Town architecture to more traditional brick and flint buildings of the market towns. The Grand Union canal runs north to south, providing the power for the paper mills that once dominated the Gade Valley. The borough is home to 25 Conservation Areas and about 2,000 Listed Buildings.

⁷ Hometrack, March 2010

⁸ Dacorum Residents Survey 2009, Opinion Research Services

Challenges

5. Challenges

- 5.1. As the borough portrait outlines, Dacorum is an attractive borough, with a largely affluent, healthy and mobile population. However, this generally positive picture hides some significant challenges.
- 5.2. The core challenge is to provide balanced and sustainable growth.

Challenge 1 - Balanced and sustainable growth

New jobs ought to give residents a choice of working close to where they live. These jobs will need to be in a range of different sectors to suit differing skill levels, but focus upon those sectors where there is predicted be the largest rise in future demand.

Locally generated housing needs, based on the natural growth of the existing population, ought to be accommodated. The right type of housing should be provided in the right locations, taking into account changes in the population structure. The borough's high average house prices should be compensated for by a rise in the number of new affordable homes, catering for a range of different needs.

By carefully considering the location of homes, jobs and essential services, travel demand can be managed, congestion and pollution eased and all residents given better access to the places where they work, shop and spend leisure time. This can also help to reduce the predicted growth in traffic on the M1 and other heavily congested routes through central Hertfordshire.

The approach to new development and growth must recognise the borough's environment and countryside, and therefore it is appropriate to exercise some restraint.

- 5.3. There are also more specific challenges that relate to the borough's economic health, the well being of its residents and the future of its environment:

Challenge 2 - Strengthen the role of the Maylands Business Park

- 5.4. The Maylands Business Park is the largest in the borough and also of sub-regional importance. Its success is critical to the wider economic prosperity of the borough and beyond. The need for a strong regeneration focus was given added impetus by the Buncefield explosion in December 2005. The development of The Gateway as a

green business park will assist with long-term recovery and provide skilled jobs. The area currently suffers from a lack of services and facilities accessible to its daytime population. Proposals for the Heart of Maylands will be critical in filling this gap and help improve the attractiveness of the areas to employers and employees alike.

Challenge 3 - Regenerate Hemel Hempstead town centre

- 5.5. The range of shops and facilities offered by Hemel Hempstead town centre has already been improved through the Riverside development. However, further improvements to both the retail offer and quality of the overall environment must be made if the town is to compete with larger sub-regional centres across the borough boundary. Central to this regeneration is the provision of new homes and high quality office space, both of which will increase footfall. A performing arts venue will help revive the evening economy and improve the range of cultural facilities available to local residents.

Challenge 4 - Strong, inclusive communities

- 5.6. The impact of new development upon community cohesion and local character must be carefully considered. In particular it must contribute fully to infrastructure needs and not result in undue pressures upon local schools, health facilities and other key services and facilities. Where possible it should help increase the range of social, leisure and cultural facilities, which are currently quite low for the size of the population. Inequalities, whether based on race, gender, religion or income, must be reduced.

Challenge 5 - A resilient natural environment

- 5.7. The combined effects of climate change and population growth will increase pressures on the natural environment. These impacts must be reduced through the prudent use of natural resources, encouraging renewable energy production, the effective disposal of waste, the sustainable design of new development and careful land management.

Challenge 6 - A high quality and sustainable built environment

- 5.8. Development must celebrate and reinforce local distinctiveness - reinforcing the good qualities and reducing or removing the bad. It must recognise that what is appropriate in one location cannot necessarily be replicated elsewhere, in order to retain the individual identities of each place. Development must also help to mitigate against the impacts of climate change, through sustainable design and construction and reducing the need to travel, particularly by car.

Borough Vision

6. Borough Vision

How have we got to this point?

Through consultation we have understood that the Dacorum Sustainable Community Strategy vision, the borough vision, should be taken a step further. The borough vision should support the approach we take to the visions for the towns and large villages.

- 6.1. The Sustainable Community Strategy⁹ has the vision of “*Working together to make Dacorum a happy, healthy prosperous place to live, work and visit.*” The Council has taken this vision and used it to develop a more detailed picture of what the borough will be like in 2031.

DACORUM 2031: A VISION

Dacorum’s Sustainable Community Strategy has been fulfilled. The community recognises Dacorum as a happy, healthy, prosperous and safe place in which to live and work and to visit.

The natural beauty of the Chiltern Hills and the varied character of the countryside is admired and cherished. The countryside is actively managed and supports a healthy local economy and diversity of wildlife. Water quality in the rivers is good. Towns and villages have sufficient water supply. Carbon emissions have been reduced and renewable energy production is sensitive to its surroundings. New woodlands have been planted for the future and the borough looks much greener. Effective use has been made of developed land in the towns and villages, protecting the countryside.

Hemel Hempstead has been transformed through regeneration of the town centre and Maylands Business Park. The town is fulfilling its potential as a sub-regional business centre, important for green enterprise, and is meeting the locally generated demand for new homes.

The market towns of Berkhamsted and Tring and the large villages provide all the necessary services for their communities and surroundings.

The economy is buoyant and all parts of the borough have local employment opportunities, which are both varied and accessible.

⁹ *Towards 2021 – the Dacorum Sustainable Community Strategy*, The Dacorum Partnership, January 2008

Communities are inclusive and healthy. Minority groups are an accepted part of culture and diversity. New homes are affordable and cater for the needs of the population. Open space, facilities and services are accessible. New schools have opened and Hemel Hempstead has a new local hospital. Access to the Watford Health Campus is improved. Public transport is more widely used.

Differences in the character of each place are recognised and valued. Developments have added to character through their design, and sustainable construction is the norm. Special features, such as the Grand Union Canal, remain an active part of the heritage of the borough. The wider historic environment is valued and protected.

- 6.2 This borough vision is complemented by a set of local visions set out in each Place Strategy (see sections 20 to 27). These local visions express specific aspirations for the individual towns and large villages and for the wider countryside.

Question 1

Do you support the 'Borough Vision' out in Section 6?

Yes/No

If **not**, please state the part of the vision you disagree with, giving your reasons:

Please also specify the changes you think should be made:

Strategic Objectives

7. Strategic Objectives

How have we got to this point?

You have told us you support the aims set out in the Emerging Core Strategy (2009), with suggestions for some changes. We have been separately advised that strategic objectives should guide the achievement of the Borough vision. The strategic objectives follow on from a review of the previous aims. The strategic objectives complement local objectives for places within the borough.

- 7.1. In order to focus action, measure progress and meet the borough vision, a set of strategic objectives have been developed. These have been subdivided into the four Theme sections from the Strategy (Part B), together with Delivery and Monitoring (Part C). The first three objectives are cross-cutting. This means that they will not be achieved solely through the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy policies, but through the combined effect of all policies within the Core Strategy.
- 7.2. These strategic objectives are complemented by a set of local objectives set out in each Place Strategy (see Sections 20-27). These highlight issues of specific importance to each of the borough's towns, large villages and countryside that need to be addressed.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To promote healthy and sustainable communities and a high quality of life for Dacorum. 2. To mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. 3. To promote social inclusion and diversity and reduce inequalities. 4. To enable convenient access between jobs, homes and facilities, minimise the impact of traffic and reduce the overall need to travel by car. 5. To promote Hemel Hempstead as the focus of the borough for homes, jobs and strategic services, reinforcing the role of the neighbourhoods in the town 6. To conserve and enhance the function and character of the market towns, villages and countryside. 7. To ensure the effective use of existing land and previously developed sites. 	<p>The Sustainable Development Strategy</p>
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<p>8. To create safe and attractive environments through high quality design.</p>	
<p>9. To promote a vibrant and prosperous economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – to strengthen confidence in Hemel Hempstead’s role as a thriving sub-regional business centre and shopping hub; – to develop the Maylands Business Park as a leader of “green enterprise” and focus of the low carbon economy; – to maintain commercial enterprise and employment opportunities in the market towns and large villages; and – to support rural enterprise. 	<p>Strengthening Economic Prosperity</p>
<p>10. To provide a mix of new homes to meet the needs of the population.</p> <p>11. To provide for a full range of social, leisure and community facilities and services.</p>	<p>Providing Homes and Community Services</p>
<p>12. To protect and enhance Dacorum’s distinctive landscape character, open spaces, biological and geological diversity and historic environment.</p> <p>13. To promote the use of renewable resources, protect natural resources and reduce waste.</p> <p>14. To protect people and property from flooding.</p> <p>15. To minimise the effects of pollution on people and the environment.</p>	<p>Looking After the Environment</p>
<p>16. To co-ordinate the delivery of new infrastructure with development.</p> <p>17. To ensure that all development contributes appropriately to local and strategic infrastructure requirements.</p>	<p>Implementation and Delivery</p>

- 7.3. Progress towards meeting these strategic objectives needs to be monitored. Whilst some of the strategic objectives can be directly monitored, others set a broader direction of travel. The Council's approach to monitoring delivery of the Core Strategy is set out in Part C – Delivery and Review.

Question 2

Do you support the Strategic Objectives set out in Section 7?

Yes/No

If **not**, please state the strategic objective(s) you disagree with, giving your reasons:

Please also specify the changes you think should be made:

Other Plans

8. Other Plans

- 8.1 The challenges and objectives outlined cannot be tackled by the Local Development Framework alone. They are already being addressed in varying degrees by a range of other strategies and policies at national, county and local levels. It is therefore important that the Core Strategy, and other Development Plan Documents, complement and reinforce these. Figure 7 lists some of these key documents and strategies.

Figure 7: Other Key Documents and Strategies

National
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning policy statements and guidance (PPSs and PPGs) • Planning Circulars
County or Sub-region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hertfordshire 2021 A Brighter Future • Hertfordshire’s Economic Development Strategy 2009-2021 • Local Economic Assessment (LEA) • Local Transport Plan (LTP) • Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) • Minerals and Waste Development Framework for Hertfordshire • Management Plan for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Local
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towards 2021- The Dacorum Sustainable Community Strategy • Corporate Plan • Housing Strategies • Green Space Strategy • Dacorum’s Economic Development Strategy 2009-2012 • Hemel 2020 – our vision, our future • Maylands Masterplan • Local Biodiversity Action Plan

The Community Strategy

- 8.2 ‘Towards 2021- The Dacorum Sustainable Community Strategy’, sets out the community’s aspirations for Dacorum. It was produced by the area’s Local Strategic Partnership, (LSP) a group which represents the borough and County Councils and delivery partners such as local healthcare providers, community groups and voluntary organisations operating within Dacorum. The LDF is a key delivery mechanism for the wider Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). Its objectives

must therefore link with, reinforce and elaborate upon those drawn up for the SCS (Figure 8).

8.3 The objectives of Dacorum’s SCS broadly correspond to those set out within the County’s community strategy, ‘Hertfordshire 2021 A Brighter Future,’ prepared by Hertfordshire Forward. The principal difference relates to the inclusion of specific objectives relating to transport and access within the Hertfordshire strategy.

Figure 8: Relationship Between Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Development Framework Objectives and Policies

Community Strategy Objective	Equivalent Strategic Objective(s)	Principal Core Strategy Policies
Reducing crime and creating a safer Dacorum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote healthy and sustainable communities and a high quality of life • To create safe and attractive environments through high quality design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS10 • CS11 • CS12 • CS13 • CS29 • CS30
Creating a cleaner and healthier environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To protect and enhance Dacorum’s distinctive landscape character, open spaces, biological and geological diversity and historic environment. • To mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. • To minimise the effects of pollution on people and the environment. • To promote the use of renewable resources, protect natural resources and reduce waste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS23 • CS24 • CS25 • CS26 • CS28 • CS29 • CS30 • CS31 • CS32
Delivering lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 the Maylands Business Park as a leader of “green enterprise” and focus of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS7 • CS14 • CS15 • CS16 • CS23

	<p>the low carbon economy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain commercial enterprise and employment opportunities in the market towns and large villages; and • To support rural enterprise. • To promote social inclusions and diversity and reduce inequalities. • To provide a full range of social, leisure and community facilities and services. 	
Encouraging business and local employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 the Maylands Business Park as a leader of "green enterprise" and focus of the low carbon economy; • To maintain commercial enterprise and employment opportunities in the market towns and large villages; and • To support rural enterprise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS4 • CS7 • CS14 • CS15 • CS16
Meeting housing need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a mix of new homes to meet the needs of the population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS3 • CS6 • CS7 • CS17 • CS18 • CS19 • CS20 • CS21 • CS22
Promoting culture, arts, leisure and tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a full range of social, leisure and community facilities and services. • To protect and enhance Dacorum's distinctive landscape character, open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS14 • CS23 • CS24 • CS25 • CS26 • CS27

	spaces, biological and geological diversity and historic environment.	
Encouraging community involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote social inclusions and diversity and reduce inequalities. • To provide a full range of social, leisure and community facilities and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS1 • CS2 • CS8 • CS23
Meeting the needs of children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a full range of social, leisure and community facilities and services. • To enable convenient access between jobs, homes and facilities, minimise the impact of traffic and reduce the overall need to travel. • To co-ordinate the delivery of new infrastructure with development. • To ensure that all development contributes appropriately to local and strategic infrastructure requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS8 • CS9 • CS23 • CS34
Improving social care and health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a full range of social, leisure and community facilities and services. • To promote social inclusions and diversity and reduce inequalities. • To co-ordinate the delivery of new infrastructure with development. • To ensure that all development contributes appropriately to local and strategic infrastructure requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS2 • CS23 • CS34
Meeting the needs of older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a full range of social, leisure and community facilities and services. • To enable convenient access between jobs, homes and facilities, minimise the impact of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS8 • CS9 • CS23 • CS34

	<p>traffic and reduce the overall need to travel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To co-ordinate the delivery of new infrastructure with development. • To ensure that all development contributes appropriately to local and strategic infrastructure requirements. 	
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8.4 The Sustainable Community Strategy's cross cutting themes (Promoting healthy and caring lifestyles; Developing community cohesion; Rejuvenating Dacorum and Acting on climate change) will be supported by the Core Strategy as a whole, rather than being linked to an individual objective or policy.