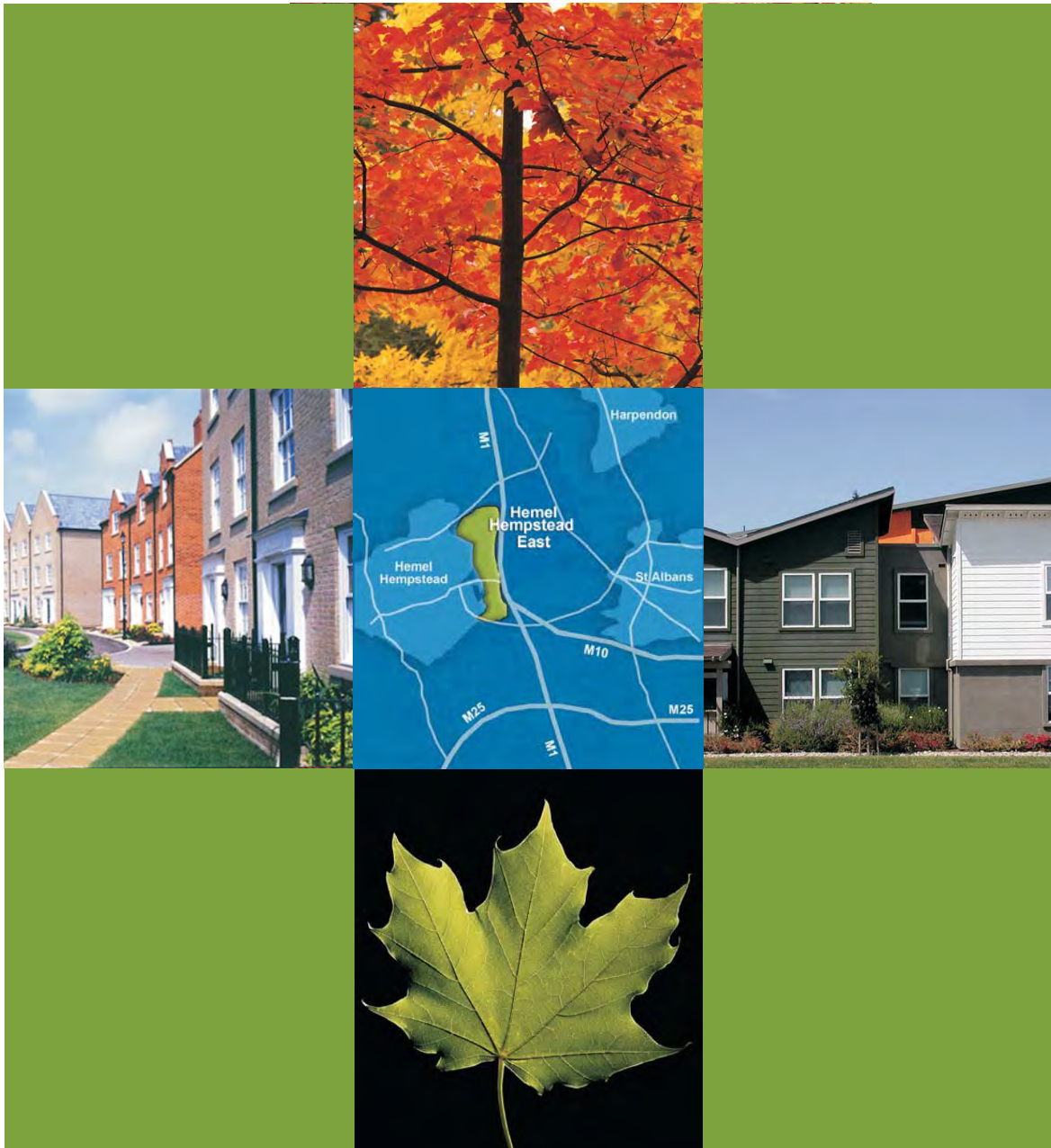


## Part A Introduction and Context



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## 1. Introduction and Purpose of the Document

This five part document sets out supporting technical information which builds on the already strong case for a major urban extension east of Hemel Hempstead, on The Crown Estate's land at Gorhambury. Our ideas have previously been set out in the Gorhambury Concept, last published in 2005. This latest supporting information document is produced in advance of the Dacorum and St. Albans Core Strategy Preferred Options document and in anticipation of work on the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan (AAP).

We believe that Gorhambury is the most sustainable option for growth of the town and this report explores how the proposed mixed use development can push the boundaries of sustainability, creating a highly sustainable mixed use extension to the town which assists in the overall regeneration of the town.

Specifically, the document sets out the evidence base to demonstrate why this broad area of land should be identified in the Core Strategy DPD for development and then allocated in the Site Allocations DPD and included in the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan.

At this stage therefore, the document seeks to demonstrate support for the idea of major development at Gorhambury from a range of national, regional and local policy perspectives. It seeks to show how development at Gorhambury can exploit key opportunities for employment, community and environmental objectives to be met. It also seeks to reassure how the proposed development can be accommodated within environmental and other constraints. It also explores the need for highly sustainable development which responds to climate change and key issues such as reducing carbon dioxide emissions, reducing waste arisings and water use.

In addition to the local authorities, the report will be of interest to other key stakeholders and interested parties. If the decision is made that the town should grow to the east, then the content of this document will form part of the evidence base for the Local Development Frameworks.

This document is divided into the following four parts, as follows.

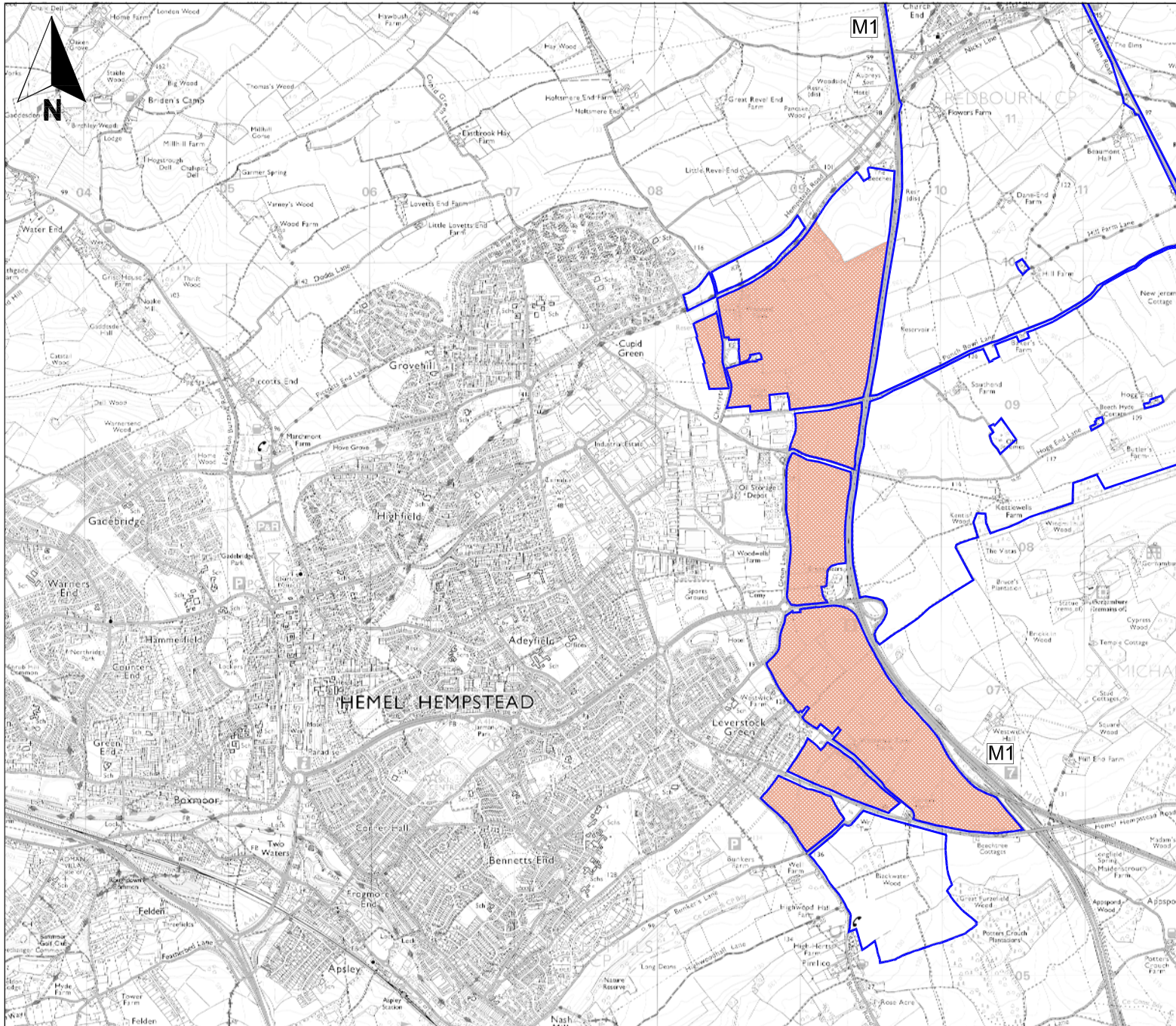
- **The remainder of Part A** restates the outline of the Gorhambury Concept in its current form. It then seeks to establish why Gorhambury is the right place to develop, with reference to the historical growth and development of Hemel Hempstead, the regional context for growth, housing and Green Belt issues, and the available alternative sites/areas for development at Hemel Hempstead. This provides the context for growth, the detail of which then provided in subsequent parts.
- **Part B** sets out a range of baseline information and explores how development at Gorhambury could contribute to the achievement of key local opportunities for employment and socio-economic issues, landscape and visual, transport, historic environment, ecology, utilities and infrastructure, informal recreation and public access, and air quality and noise. It seeks to show that development is capable of being accommodated with constraints identified through the baseline information.





- **Part C** relates to Climate Change and Sustainability and specifically explores how the proposed development could push the boundaries of sustainable development. It focuses on energy issues, including an assessment of the energy requirements of the development, what measures could be incorporated to ensure that the development works towards achieving zero carbon status. This section then considers the issue of water neutrality and water conservation and assesses the likely water demand requirements of the development before proposing measures that could be used to ensure that the water requirements of the development are minimised. It goes on to consider resource efficiency and waste reduction, assessing the likely waste arising from the proposed development and identifying ways in which the development can seek to reduce these.
- **Part D** brings together the findings of the baseline and opportunities work (Part B) and the technical work on climate change and sustainability (Part C) to set out how the land to the east of Hemel Hempstead could be developed. This focuses on our commitment to work closely with local authorities, key stakeholders and the public. It sets out options for how key design principles and concept, transport strategy, landscape strategy, community and stewardship, and delivery and phasing can be taken forward in more detailed discussions.
- **Part E** concludes the document by highlighting the key issues that have been raised in parts A to D and setting out the next steps should the decision be made that growth at Hemel Hempstead will be to the east of the town. It also sets out details of the key contacts should readers of the document wish to find out more about the proposals.







**Key**

-  Crown Estate's Land Ownership
-  Proposed development area

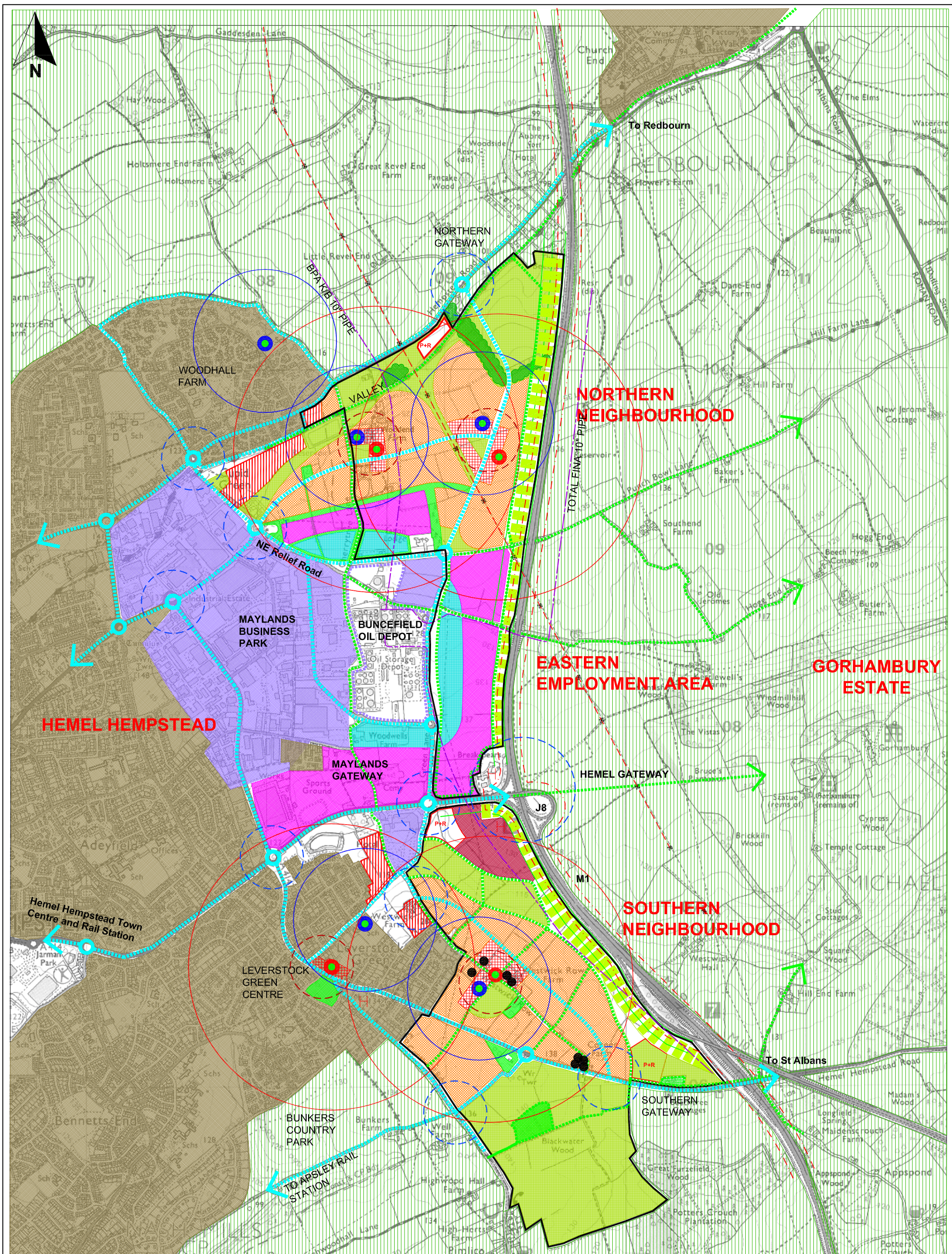


The Crown Estate  
Gorhambury LDF Submission

**Figure A1.1**  
**Site Location**

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Key:			
	Site Boundary		Proposed Residential Areas
	Existing Residential Areas		Possible Mixed Use Areas
	Existing Employment Areas		Park and Ride Facility
	Existing Oil Depot		Proposed Open Space
	Proposed Local Plan Housing Allocation (Adopted Dacorum Local Plan)		Woodland Planting
	Proposed Employment Areas		M1 Buffer Strip (Noise, air quality and future widening)
	Potential Stadium Site		M1 Widening Corridor
			Proposed Transport Routes
			Pedestrian / Cycle Friendly Routes
			Primary School Locations with 400m pedshed
			Local Centre with 800m pedshed
			Listed Buildings
			Major/Minor Gateways
			Centre
			Landmarks
			Existing Overhead Power Line
			Existing Underground Pipelines
			Potential Energy Park

The Crown Estate  
Gorhambury LDF Submission

**Figure A1.2**  
Draft Concept

November 2007  
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**Entec**

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## 2. The Gorhambury Concept

### 2.1 Introduction

The Gorhambury Concept is a long term vision promoted by The Crown Estate for an urban extension to the east of Hemel Hempstead. The Concept envisages the provision of up to 6,000-7,000 new homes in a major new neighbourhood of Hemel Hempstead, including employment land, open space and recreation facilities, local community facilities and sustainable transport links. The Gorhambury Concept was first published in a 2001 report and was updated in 2005 for submission to the East of England Plan Examination.

The Concept has been developed not only in the context of the growth of eastern Hemel Hempstead, but in the context of the growth of the whole town. A key influence in development of the Concept has been the urban structure and development history of the town. This understanding of the previous settlement pattern, along with detailed technical work on opportunities and constraints has informed the development proposals and options for the development. The options set out in this document are put forward as an indication of how the area could be developed to assist in the regeneration of eastern Hemel Hempstead following the Buncefield incident and in light of the need to regenerate the Maylands employment area and to introduce a mix of uses in the area to create a thriving new neighbourhood where people want to live and work.

Development of the Gorhambury Concept area will enable provision of a number of new community facilities as the scale of development is large enough to ensure provision of new facilities and public transport routes. The Concept includes northern and southern neighbourhoods, each of approximately 3,000 homes set around mixed use centres and village greens including new primary schools. Open space is proposed at the core of each neighbourhood. This will be in addition to new recreational links and open space areas, including a buffer zone adjacent to the M1 and possible new recreation links and footpaths linking to existing routes to the east of the M1. There is a significant opportunity to create a new Hemel Gateway, as an extension of the proposed Maylands Gateway. This offers the opportunity to significantly improve the key gateway into the town from the M1, with opportunities for high quality employment development and possibly a new town leisure stadium.

### 2.2 The Location

The location of the Gorhambury Concept, is between the eastern edge of Hemel Hempstead and the M1 motorway. The land covered by the Concept is owned by The Crown Estate, and is shown on Figure A1.1 (after page A2). The Crown also owns land to the East of the M1 motorway, but development is not envisaged here.

The land covered by the Concept falls within the District of St. Albans, whilst the proposed development would form an extension to Hemel Hempstead, which is located in the Borough of Dacorum.



## 2.3 The Crown Estate

The Crown Estate's core values are commercialism, integrity and stewardship. Its stewardship principles are key to the proposals for Gorhambury. The Crown Estate's commitment to stewardship means pursuing good environmental practice, making sure that its activities in the communities in which it operates are handled sensitively, and taking a sustainable long term view in its actions. The Crown Estate celebrates good practice through its annual awards.

The Crown Estate has two main objectives, the first of which is to benefit the taxpayer by paying the revenue from its assets to the exchequer. The second objective is to enhance the value of the estate and the income it generates.

## 2.4 Recent Context

In August 2004 the Hertfordshire Housing Development and Spatial Strategy Audit undertaken for EERA identified the broad location to the east of Hemel Hempstead as having 'good potential' for around 5,000 dwellings post 2011. The report recognised Hemel Hempstead as a strategic employment location and the need for employment development to be supported by housing development.

At present the Gorhambury Concept area remains in the Green Belt. However, the location of the land between the urban fringe and the M1 means that it adds little to the purposes of including land in the Green Belt, and the M1 is a logical long term boundary to the town. The original concept was revised in 2001 to reflect different circumstances and policy changes. In November 2005 part of the Concept was updated for submission to the RSS14 EiP. More recently, The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to draft RSS14 recognise the potential for growth at Hemel Hempstead, possibly including land in St. Albans. The Crown Estate therefore believes that the time is right to promote its land for development of an exemplar development that pushes the boundaries of sustainability and that assists in meeting the growth needs of the region, in particular assisting in meeting the need for more housing, including affordable housing.

The Concept has been discussed with officers from the local authorities and the County Council and this report is intended to bring this work together into a single document as part of the evidence base for the local authorities when considering the Core Strategy Preferred Options.

## 2.5 Promoting Gorhambury as a Key Location

The following chapters examine the evidence in support of Gorhambury as the right location for a major urban extension. These key considerations are examined:

- the historical development of Hemel Hempstead as a town, which is an important influence on its future development potential;
- the support for significant new development in the area in regional planning terms;



- the contribution to be made by new development to the local housing context;
- the function and purpose of the Green Belt surrounding Hemel Hempstead in the Gorhambury Concept area and its impact on development opportunities there; and
- the performance of the Gorhambury location compared to alternative locations.

## 2.6 Conclusions

The Concept for the Gorhambury area was first envisaged a number of years ago and has developed over the years. The supporting information in this document builds on the Gorhambury Concept that was first published in a 2001 report and updated in 2005 for submission to the East of England Plan Examination. This Chapter has provided an overview of the development of the Concept and the more recent context. The rest of this document builds on this to provide further supporting information including more up to date technical information and a revised Concept Plan. It also goes further by setting out the evidence in support of growth to the east of Hemel Hempstead.





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## 3. Hemel Hempstead - Overview of the Town's Development

### 3.1 Introduction

The development of an urban extension to the east of Hemel Hempstead cannot be viewed in isolation from the town and needs to be part of the growth of the whole town. In order to plan this it is essential to look at the historical development of the town as this has an important influence on its future development potential. This chapter therefore sets out how the town has developed over the years. Chapter 6 on the Historic Environment (in Part B of this document) also provides some detail on the history of Hemel Hempstead.

#### 3.1.1 Pre-New Town

In order to understand the town's growth to date so that future growth can be a natural continuation, it is essential to understand the town's history. Like a number of New Towns, Hemel Hempstead was developed around existing settlements. Understanding how these settlements were integrated into the town and identifying any settlements which existed in ancient history and now only have remnants such as field boundaries and lanes is important in order to embed any new growth into the place.

The main settlement in the area was originally named Henamsted or Hean-Hempsted, (High Hempstead), in Saxon times and in William the Conqueror's time by the name of Hemel-Amstede. The settlement is referred to in the Domesday Book as 'Hamelamesede', but in later centuries it became Hamelhamsted. Remains of Roman villa farming settlements have been found at Boxmoor and Gadebridge which span the entire period of Roman Britain. The first recorded mention of the town is the grant of land at Hamaele by Offa, King of Essex, to the Bishop of London in AD705. Hemel Hempstead on its present site is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 as a village, Hamelhamstede, with about 100 inhabitants.

After the Norman conquest the land thereabouts was given to Robert, Count of Mortain, the elder half brother of William the Conqueror as part of the lands associated with Berkhamstead castle. The estates passed through many hands over the next few centuries including Thomas á Becket in 1162. In 1290 King John's grandson, the Earl of Cornwall, gave the manor to the religious order of the Bonhommes when he endowed the monastery at Ashridge. The town remained part of the monastery's estates until the Reformation and break-up of Ashridge in 1539. In that same year the town was granted a charter by King Henry VIII to become a Bailiwick with the right to hold a Thursday market and a fair on Corpus Christi Day.

Hemel's position on the shortest route between London and the industrial Midlands put it on the Grand Junction Canal in 1795 and the London and Birmingham Railway in 1837. However, it remained principally an agricultural market town throughout the nineteenth century. In the last decades of that century development of houses and



villas for London commuters began. The Midland railway built a branch connecting to its main line at Harpenden in 1877 (see The Nicky Line). Hemel steadily expanded, but only became a borough on 13 July, 1898.

Figure A3.1 shows how the town has developed over the years, and also shows the possible options for its future development put forward by Dacorum Borough Council in its Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper.

Investigations into previous settlements to the east of the existing town have uncovered the existence of a medieval village which pre-dates Leverstock Green at Westwick (see Figure A3.2). There are no similar signs of ancient settlements to the north of Buncefield to influence any growth of the town to the north east. Figure A3.2 shows the late medieval infrastructure including roads, lanes and field boundaries. A number of manor houses and farmsteads appear centred on Westwick Row with lanes heading north-east towards the main Gorhambury House. There would have been numerous labourers' tenements not shown on the map. The main north to south and north to east routes are apparent and still exist today in the form of Hemel Hempstead Road and Bedmond Road.

The above is important in order to understand the significance of Westwick Row and its structural properties within the area. Any new growth in this area should respect the nature and character of Westwick Row and any surviving field boundaries with a memory of the lanes to the north east off Westwick Row. The footprint of the principal settlement area will give a clear indication as to how the area was developed previously and should inform the footprint of any future development.





Town Growth



Up to 1900's

Up to 1940's

Up to 1960's

Up to Present Day

**Figure A3.1 Hemel Hempstead's Growth over time and (top) possible future growth options put forward by Dacorum Borough Council as part of Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper**





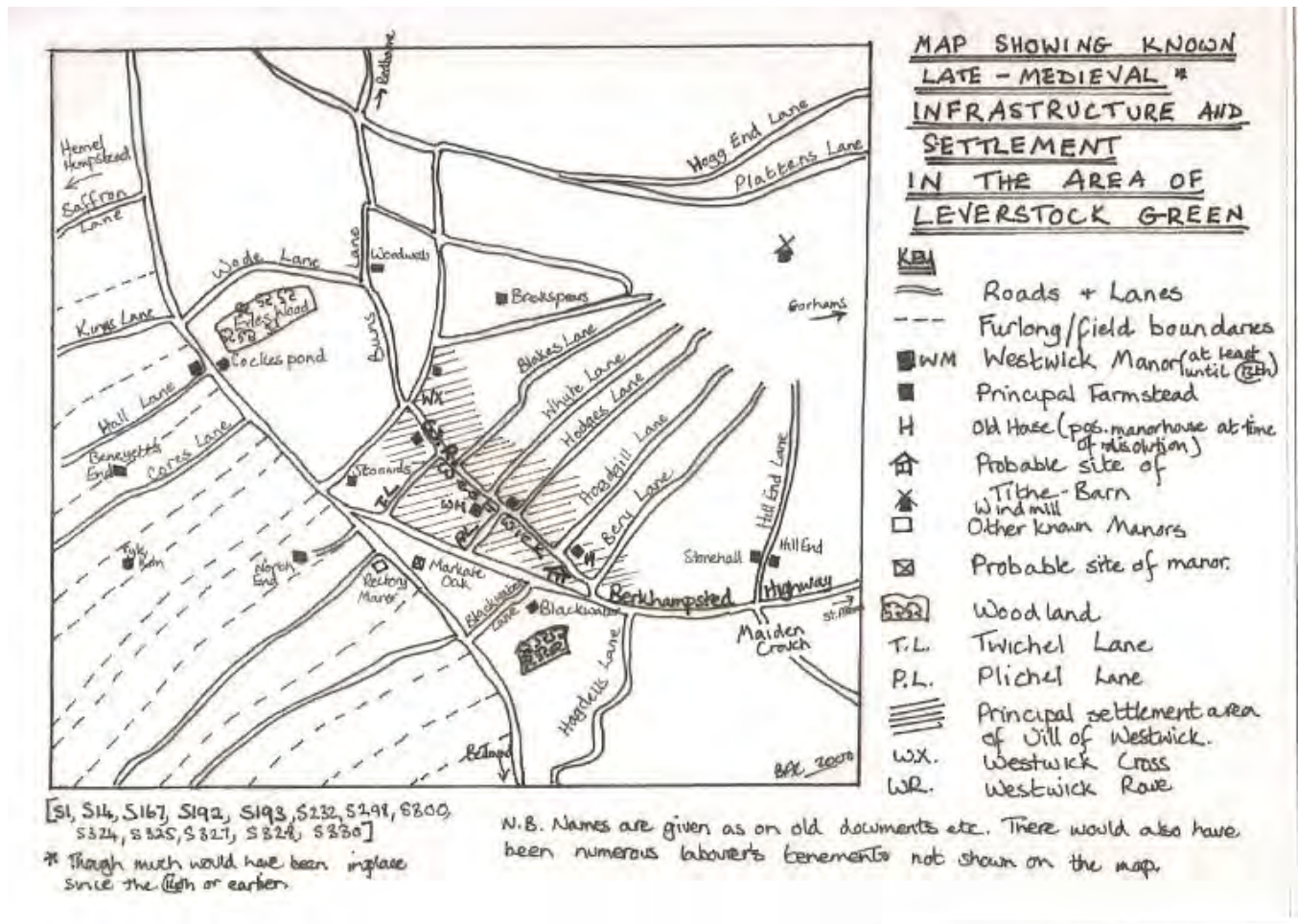


Figure A3.2 Medieval infrastructure in the Leverstock Green area around the settlement of Westwick (Source: Leverstock Green Chronicle)

### 3.1.2 The New Town Concept 1946

The major growth period in the area developed after World War II with the implementation of Hemel Hempstead as a New Town. In 1946, the government designated Hemel Hempstead as one of the New Towns designed to house the displaced population of London where slums and bombsites were being cleared. Initially there was much resistance and hostility to the plan from locals, especially when it was revealed that any development would be carried out not by the local council but by a newly appointed government body, the Hemel Hempstead Development Corporation (later amalgamated with similar bodies to form the Commission for the New Towns). However, following a public inquiry the following year, the town got the go-ahead. Hemel officially became a New Town on 04 February 1947.

On 04 February 1947 the Government purchased 5,910 acres of land and began work on The New Town. The initial plans for the New Town were drawn up by architect G. A. Jellicoe. His view of Hemel Hempstead, was “not



a city in a garden, but a city in a park”. However, the plans were not well-received by most locals. Revised, and less radical plans were drawn up, and the first developments proceeded in July 1948 despite local protests.

There was the central area, the industrial area largely in the vicinity of Cupid Green, and seven residential areas based on Hammerfield, Counters End, Warners End, Grovehill, Adeyfield, Leverstock Green and Apsley. Much emphasis was placed on open spaces. In the central area, the High Street would be retained, but Marlowes was to be totally redeveloped - it was envisaged by Mr Jellicoe as a sort of modern promenade, after the fashion of Cheltenham or Princes Street, Edinburgh - and the area to the east was to be totally redeveloped in secluded architectural squares and terraces.

## The First Areas to be Developed - 1949

The first area to be developed was Adeyfield. At this time the plans for a double ‘magic’ roundabout at Moor End were first put forward, but in fact it was not until 1973 that the roundabout was opened as it was originally designed. The first houses erected as part of the New Town plan were in Longlands, Adeyfield, and went up in the spring of 1949. The first new residents moved in April 1949 and the town continued its planned expansion through to the end of the 1980’s. Hemel grew to its present population of 80,000, with new developments enveloping the original town on all sides. The original part of Hemel is still known as the ‘Old Town’.

## Industry and Jobs in Tandem - 1950

At this time, work started on building new factories and industrial areas, to avoid the town becoming a dormitory town. The first factory was erected in 1950 in Maylands Avenue. As building progressed with continuing local opposition, the town was becoming increasingly popular with those moving in from areas of north London. By the end of 1951, there was a waiting list of about 10,000 wishing to move to Hemel. The neighbourhoods of Bennett's End, Chaulden and Warner's End were started.







Figure A3.3 Outline plan for the New Town - (Hemel Hempstead Development Corporation 1952)



## Redevelopment of the Town Centre - 1952

The redevelopment of the town centre was started in 1952, with a new centre based on Marlowes. The old centre of the High Street was to remain largely undeveloped, though the market square closed and was replaced by a much larger one in the new centre. The former private estate of Gadebridge was opened as a public park. New schools and roads were built to serve the expanding new neighbourhoods. Figure A3.3 sets out the outline plan for the New Town.

## Development of the Neighbourhoods - Mid 1950's

New housing technology such as prefabrication started to be used from the mid-50's, and house building rates increased dramatically. Highfield was the next neighbourhood to be constructed. Like other first generation new towns, Hemel is divided into residential neighbourhoods, each with their own 'village centre' with shops, pubs and services. Each neighbourhood is designed around a few major feeder roads with many smaller cul-de-sacs and crescents, intended to minimise traffic and noise nuisance. Figure A3.4 below shows the neighbourhood layout that was applied to Hemel Hempstead. In keeping with the optimism of the early post-war years, much of the town features modernist architecture with many unusual and experimental designs for housing. Not all of these have stood the test of time.

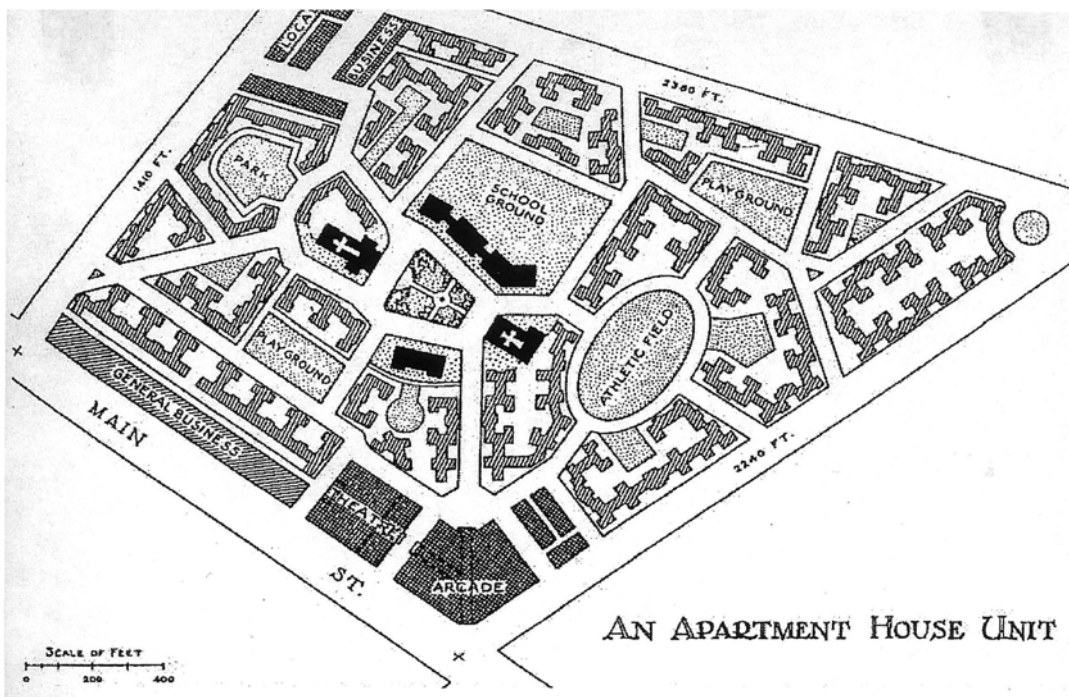


Figure A3.4 Clarence Perry's 1926 Conceptual Neighbourhood Layout which was applied to Hemel Hempstead





## Opening of the M1 Motorway 1959

The town's geographical position, between London and the Midlands, again was bolstered with the opening of the M1 motorway to the east of the town in 1959. A new road connecting it to the town was also opened which gave it a central position on the country's motorway network.

## Completion of the Planned New Town - 1960's

By 1962, the redevelopment of the new town as originally envisaged was largely complete (see Figure A3.5), though further expansion plans were then put forward. Dacorum College, the library, new Police station and the Pavilion (theatre and music venue) were all built during the 1960's. The last of the originally-planned neighbourhoods, Grovehill, began construction in 1967. However, further neighbourhoods of Woodhall Farm and Fields End were later built as part of the extended plans.



**Figure A3.5 Completed New Town 1962**



## 3.2 Hemel Hempstead Today

Hemel Hempstead had a population of 81,143 at the 2001 Census. It is part of the district (and borough since 1984) of Dacorum and the Hemel Hempstead parliamentary constituency. As of the 2001 census, Hemel Hempstead was the most populated urban area in Hertfordshire, narrowly more populated than its traditionally 'larger' rival, Watford.

Hemel Hempstead has a mixture of heavy and light engineering companies and has attracted a significant number of information and telecommunications sector companies helped by its proximity to London and the UK motorway network. However (and again in common with many new towns) it has a much narrower business base than established centres, particularly Watford and St. Albans. The Hemel 2020 vision is currently being progressed in the town and details of this are set out below.

### Hemel 2020 Vision



### Hemel 2020 Vision

This focuses on improvements to the town centre primarily:

- a new civic district;
- a high quality shopping and entertainment district;
- a River Walk;
- new housing and apartments overlooking the river and Marlowes;
- a new covered market and cinema;
- rejuvenating the Old Town; and
- new bus facilities and car parking.

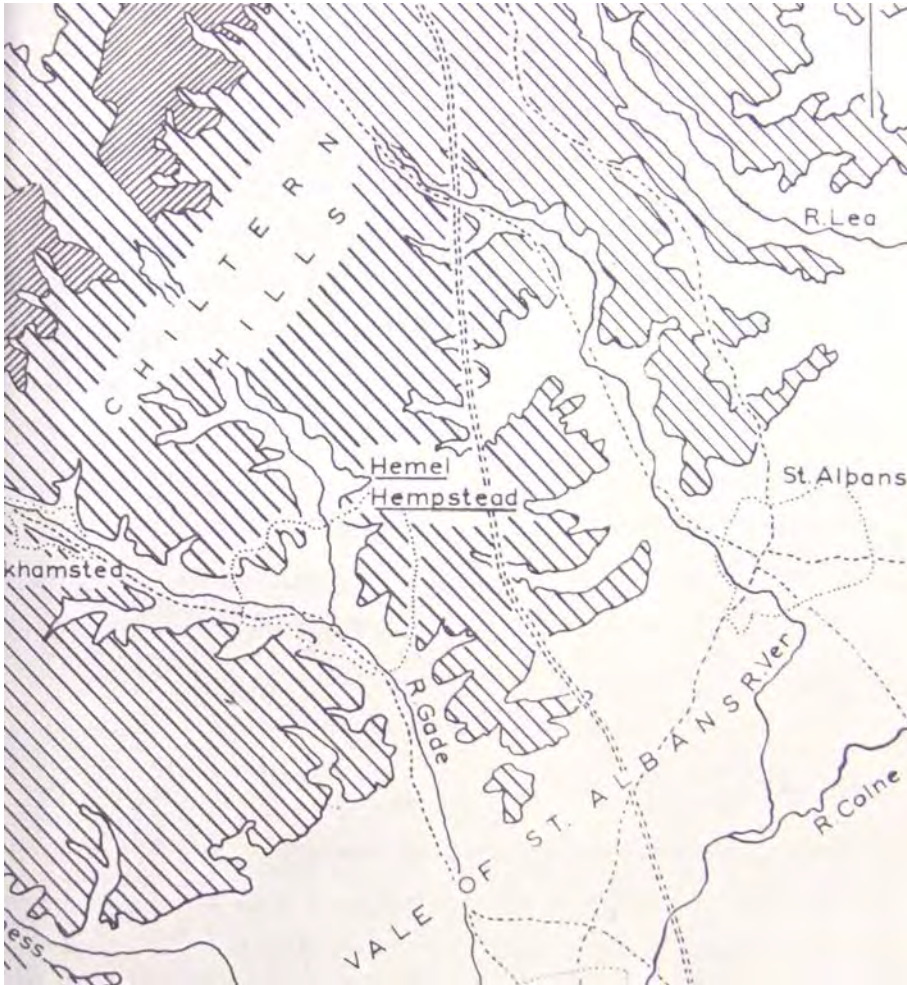
### 3.2.1 Hemel Hempstead's Urban Structure and Landform

Hemel Hempstead lies in a shallow chalkland valley at the confluence of the rivers Gade and Bulbourne. The main railway line from London Euston to the Midlands passes through Apsley and Hemel Hempstead railway stations to the west of the town, alongside the Grand Union Canal. These communication links, as well as the original A41





trunk road, all follow the natural course of the Bulbourne valley. In the 1990's, a motorway style bypass was built further west and numbered as the A41, which does not follow the natural lie of the land. Hemel is also linked to the M1 motorway to the east. The M25 is a few miles to the south. To the north and west lie mixed farm and woodland with scattered villages (such as the villages of Bovington and Bourne End) part of the Chiltern Hills (see Figure A3.6). To the south lies Watford and east lies St. Albans. Possibly the best view of Hemel Hempstead in its physical setting is from the top of Roughdown Common, a chalk hill to the south of the town.

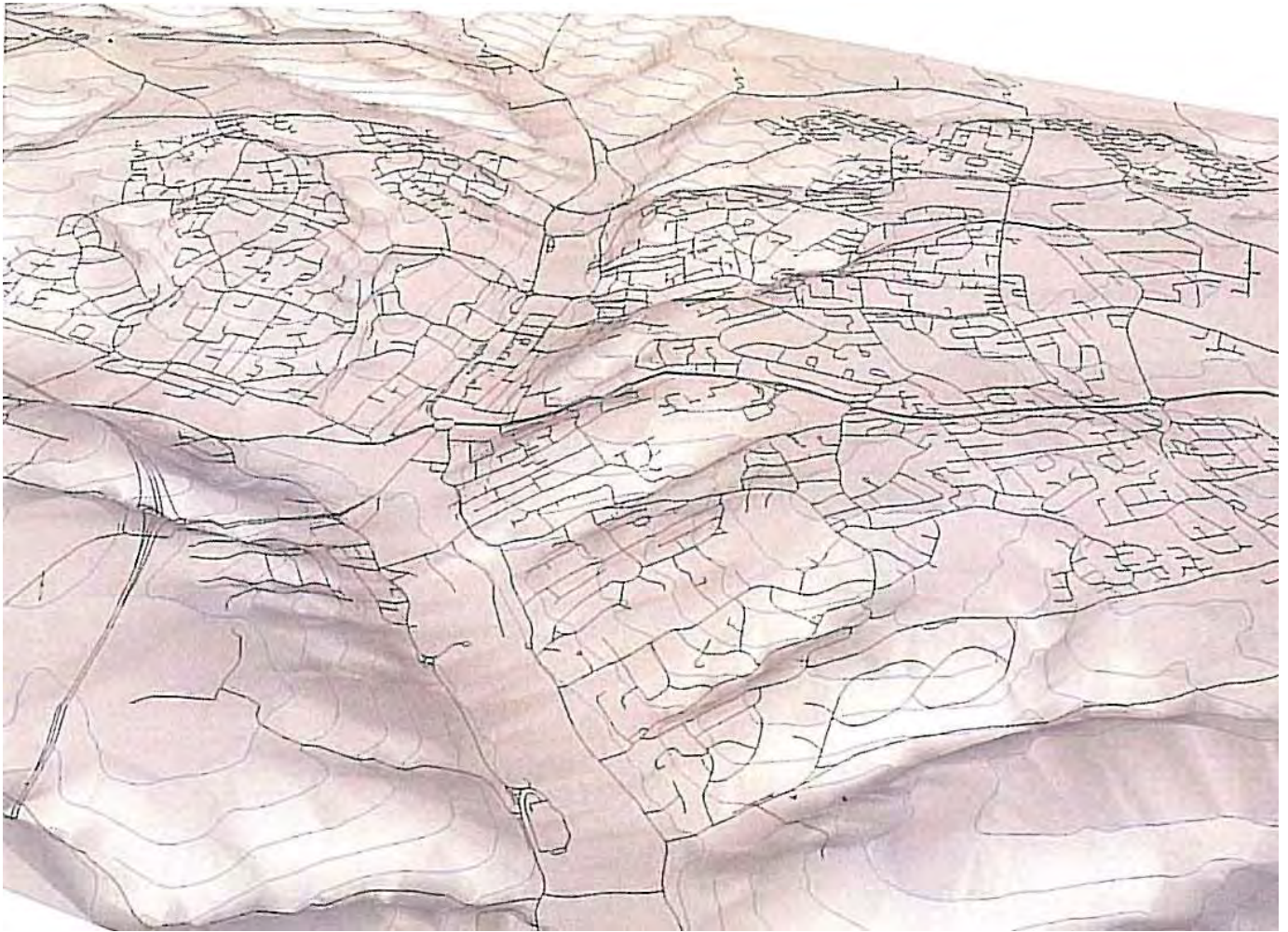


**Figure A3.6 Hemel's location on the edge of the Chiltern Hills**

The original concept for the New Town utilised the natural landform when locating the new residential neighbourhoods around the town centre which was set within a river valley. The steeper sides of valleys formed wooded areas and park areas with residential development on the flatter, higher land between valleys. This approach not only embeds the town within its landscape but also creates a more organic form of development and adds a great deal of variety and interest to the place. Figure A3.7 shows the topography of the town and Figure A3.8 highlights the key landscape elements.







**Figure A3.7** Hemel Hempstead's Topography showing the main valleys around the town centre and plateau to the east



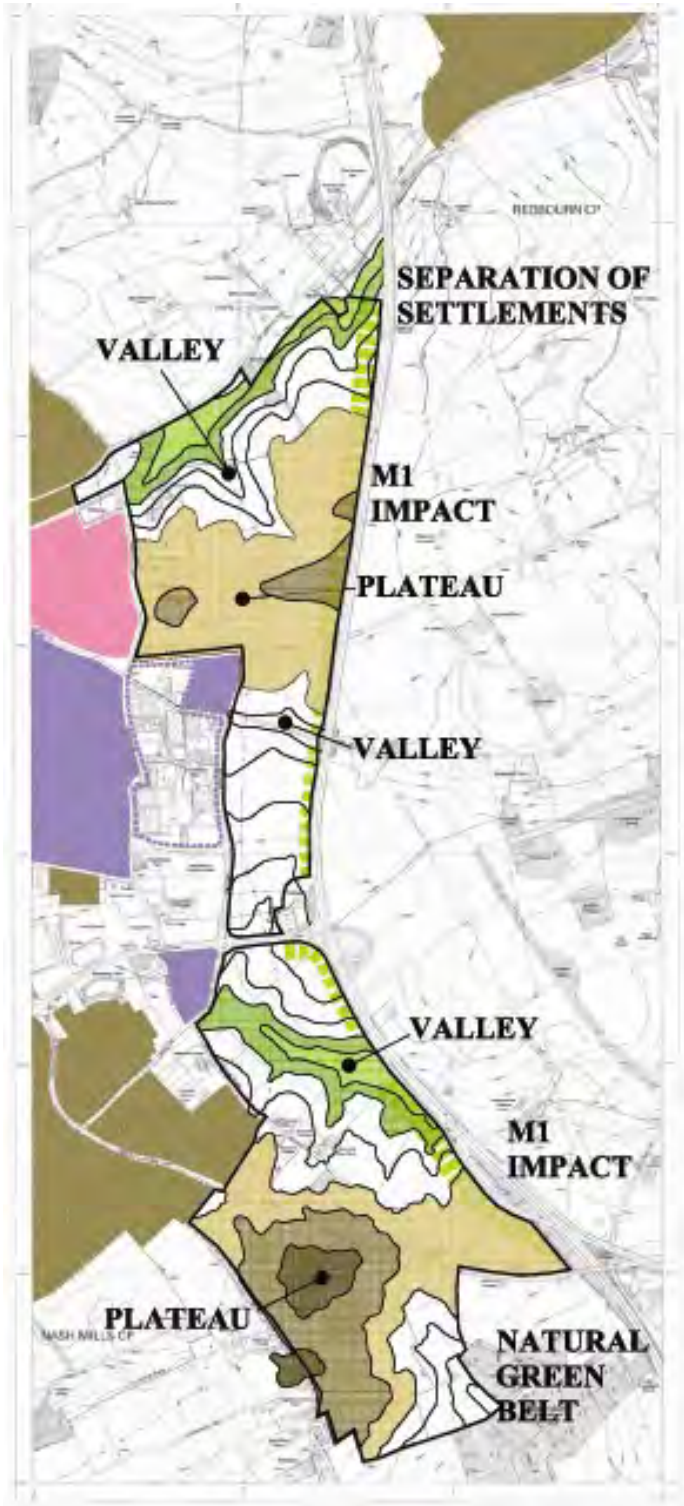


Figure A3.8 Key Landscape Elements





The land to the east of Hemel Hempstead has a clear series of landform elements which will structure any development proposals for the area. A well established valley to the north, along the Nicky Line, will form a clear development edge. Two minor valleys abut the main valley and will break up this edge and integrate it with the open land to the north. The plateau below this area is extensive and leads to long open views. Given that it is relatively flat however, sensitive edge treatments will enable development to be contained here with the potential to form the main northern community.

A more shallow valley cuts across north of Gorhambury along Hogg End Lane to define the central zone east of Buncefield. This gently slopes up towards the south at the Boundary Way roundabout and then drops down towards Breakspear Way and the potential Gateway into Hemel. Across Breakspear Way, the land again drops into a significant valley running east west across the M1 motorway to the south of Gorhambury.

A large very gently sloped plateau then forms the southern end of the eastern area. A valley system exists to the west and forms the southern edge of the town in the form of a nature reserve and country park. The high point of the plateau is formed between Bunkers Lane and Blackwater Wood.

### 3.3 Future Development of the Town

As a New Town Hemel Hempstead is well designed to grow further, based on the neighbourhood concept. Any planned new growth of the town needs to consider how the town has grown over the years and learn the lessons from this, allowing the town to grow in a sustainable way, with benefits for the wider town.

Hemel Hempstead, as with many of the other new towns has come to a point where certain areas are declining and the town is in need of regeneration. Further growth of the town can be used as a catalyst for the regeneration of the town and will provide benefits for the town as a whole, not just those living and working in the new development areas. The Buncefield fire in 2005 has exacerbated the need for regeneration of the Maylands area and the eastern part of the town. Therefore new development to the east of the town linking to the regeneration of the Maylands area is a logical next step in terms of growth of the town. There is also a clear boundary, the M1 in this direction which will provide confidence that development in this direction will not infringe on the open countryside in the longer term.

The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to Draft RSS14 states at paragraph 3.29 that:

*"...In providing sustainable locations for growth, the former new towns to the north of London have:*

- *a good record of balancing new housing with employment growth and are well-placed on strategic communications routes, making them both attractive for business investment and accessible to the London job market;*
- *relatively good existing infrastructure compared with smaller and older settlements, which further expansion can make efficient use of; and*





- *complex regeneration challenges, which the additional investment in infrastructure and services related to growth will contribute to addressing.*”

### 3.3.1 Housing

Lack of affordable housing in the London Commuter Belt area, and in particular in the Hemel Hempstead area is currently a major concern which impacts negatively on the growth of the economy by reducing the local labour force and reducing the number of key workers. Lack of affordable housing often leads to people having to travel greater distances to work, increasing pressure on the already over stretched infrastructure of the Region. The delivery of new affordable housing supply is dependent to a large extent on the delivery of market housing and associated Section 106 Agreements relating to affordable housing. This will be much more easily achieved through development of larger sites such as that to the east of Hemel Hempstead.

### 3.3.2 Employment

The residents of Dacorum are relatively prosperous and productive, scoring well in terms of skills and entrepreneurship by national and regional standards. Dacorum has a strong finance and business services presence with a strong ICT sector implying the presence of a highly skilled labour supply. This suggests that the area is suited to office type development. In the local office market, a shortage of space is not an issue so much as a shortage of quality space, office premises and environments that are competitive with modern business parks in other locations. The following sectors in the local area have displayed strong growth potential in relation to national trends: manufacture of chemicals and chemical products; hotels and restaurants; real estate activities; computer and related activities; and other business activities. There are therefore, opportunities for new employment development to complement established sites such as those in the Maylands employment area. Working with the Maylands developers will be key in ensuring that any eastern expansion of the town utilises existing opportunities and links.

### 3.3.3 Social and Community

The development of Hemel Hempstead is based on the neighbourhood concept which includes a neighbourhood centre and key social and community facilities such as schools, local shops and a community centre. Development of the town to the east would include these key facilities, but given the scale of the proposals also offers the opportunity to provide for key services and facilities to serve the wider town. For instance, there are opportunities to provide park and ride facilities and possibly a new town leisure stadium.

## 3.4 Conclusions

This chapter has considered the historical development of Hemel Hempstead in order to provide an understanding of how this influences the future development of the town. Hemel Hempstead originally developed around a number of existing settlements. Investigations have revealed that there was a medieval village which pre-dates



Leverstock Green at Westwick. The pattern of this development will have an important influence on the nature of future development in this area. This falls within the southern proposed development area.

Hemel Hempstead was principally an agricultural market town, and in the last decades of the nineteenth century development of houses and villas for London commuters began. The town continued to expand steadily, with the major growth period beginning in 1946 with designation of Hemel Hempstead as the site of a New Town. Originally there was a central area, an industrial area and seven residential areas. Building rates increased dramatically in the mid 1950's with work on the neighbourhoods, each of which contained their own 'village centre' with shops, pubs and services. This principle of providing services and facilities locally in neighbourhood centres is reflected in the Gorhambury Concept proposals, although is updated to reflect best practice. A number of these neighbourhoods that were built in the 1950's have not stood the test of time well and are in need of regeneration.

The landform and urban structure of the town is also considered in this chapter as this has an important influence on the future development of the town. The land to the east of the town has a clear series of landform elements which structure the Gorhambury Concept development.

This chapter illustrates that as a New Town, Hemel Hempstead is well designed to grow further, based on the neighbourhood concept. It has been recognised at the regional level that the former new towns have a good record of balancing new housing and employment growth and have relatively good existing infrastructure compared to smaller and older settlements. Parts of the town are in need of regeneration and further growth of the town can act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the town.



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## 4. Regional Context for Growth

### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to set out the regional planning context for the growth of Hemel Hempstead. The level of growth that is required to be met by different local authority areas is set out at the regional level in Regional Spatial Strategies. Hemel Hempstead is in Dacorum Borough Council. The area proposed for development immediately to the east of the town is within St. Albans City and District Council. Dacorum and St. Albans both fall within the East of England region.

The emerging regional planning guidance in the East of England is Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) 14, known as The East of England Plan. Once finalised this will be a statutory document which sets the framework for development in the region, including growth in Hemel Hempstead up to 2021.

The key stages of the plan are as follows:

- EERA commissioned a number of studies to inform production of the plan;
- Consultation Draft of East of England Plan published (by EERA) in December 2004;
- Examination in Public (EiP) (held by independent Panel) from November 2005 to March 2006;
- publication of Panel Report in June 2006;
- publication of Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Revision to the RSS (for public consultation) in December 2006; and
- Ministers will consider the representations to the Proposed Changes before publishing the final version of the RSS towards the end of 2007.

The preparation of the RSS has been informed by Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and also by Appropriate Assessment (AA) at the Proposed Changes stage.

Each of the above key stages is considered below.

### 4.2 Studies Commissioned by EERA

EERA commissioned a number of studies to inform production of the Draft Plan. This included 'The Hertfordshire Housing Development and Spatial Strategy Audit' which was prepared by Roger Tym & Partners for EERA in August 2004. This report identified Hemel Hempstead as a location with good potential for growth post 2011, and identified potential for around 5,000 greenfield homes.

