

Strengthening Economic Prosperity

Strategic Objectives

- **To promote a vibrant and prosperous economy:**
 - to strengthen confidence in Hemel Hempstead’s role as a thriving sub-regional business centre and shopping hub;
 - to develop Maylands 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.

11. Creating Jobs and Full Employment

11.1. One of the ways that the Government proposes to deliver sustainable development is through building a strong, competitive economy. The National Planning Policy Framework states that:

“The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country’s inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future.”

11.2. The Council has commissioned a number of studies into its employment land supply, both in the context of the sub-regional and the local economy. These have taken place during a period of significant change, both to the national economy and to planning policy. The most recent of these studies¹ forecasts net jobs growth of approximately 10,000 in Dacorum over the period 2006-31, which is an increase of approximately 15% on 2006 levels. Many of these jobs will be office-based, and there is a forecast decline in the number of industrial and warehousing jobs.

11.3. The forecast growth in jobs over the plan period is an estimate, rather than a target because the Council cannot directly create jobs. Its role is to enable the estimated jobs growth through regeneration strategies, appropriate planning policies and employment land provision targets. This approach will ensure that planning policies do not unduly constrain economic growth, and complement wider regeneration initiatives.

11.4. Around 60% of the estimated employment growth is in non-B class uses, such as hotels and catering, construction, education, healthcare, retailing and leisure. Appropriate allocations for non-B class uses will therefore be included in the Site Allocations and East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan Development Plan Documents (DPDs). The Council will monitor the effectiveness of the Core Strategy’s policies in supporting the growth of such jobs.

11.5. Dacorum has a relatively high self-containment rate. A high self-containment rate is commonly used as a measure of the sustainability of journeys to work. The borough also has a low level of net out-commuting. The Council’s aim is to maintain a high self-containment rate and keep net out-commuting low. Net jobs growth of approximately 10,000 between 2006 and 2031 would be consistent with this aim.

11.6. This jobs growth is also reflective of Hemel Hempstead’s status as the main centre for development and change within the borough, the town’s evolving role as a strategic employment location within Hertfordshire and beyond, and the Council’s regeneration agenda for the town. Hemel Hempstead is a logical location for employment growth within the wider area, due to the availability of land, its proximity to the M1 and ability to provide jobs that are accessible to residents in other districts within south west Hertfordshire.

11.7. Substantial employment growth will be planned at Hemel Hempstead by:

- capitalising on strategic links to the wider sub-region and beyond;

¹ Dacorum Employment Land Update 2011: Roger Tym & Partners, July 2011.

- regenerating the Maylands Business Park;
- reconstructing and rationalising the Buncefield oil storage depot; and
- creating a more attractive and vital town centre, that makes best use of further regeneration and redevelopment opportunities.

11.8. These objectives reflect the aspirations set out within the Council's regeneration plans². They are also reflected in the Economic Development Strategies for both Hertfordshire and Dacorum (Table 4).

Table 4: Economic Development Strategy Objectives

Hertfordshire	Dacorum
Creating a vibrant, low carbon economy	Focussing on partnership and shared commitment in economic development
Stimulating enterprise, innovation and inward investment	Supporting the business community
Developing a well skilled workforce	Promoting inward investment and marketing through the 'Dacorum – Look No Further' campaign
Providing quality locations and infrastructure	The regeneration of Maylands as a well-connected green business park and the regeneration of Hemel Hempstead town centre
Creating vibrant towns and vibrant communities	Targeting key sites and locations to foster economic growth
	Supporting tourism
	Developing and adapting the skills base
	Simplifying the planning process for businesses

Source: Hertfordshire's Economic Development Strategy 2009-2021, Hertfordshire Works and Dacorum Economic Development Strategy 2009-2012 (January 2009).

11.9. The UK economy is becoming increasingly dependent on knowledge-based industries³. It is important for Dacorum's economy to strengthen the role and presence of knowledge based industries in order to remain competitive. The emphasis on Hemel Hempstead as a centre of economic importance within Hertfordshire and beyond provides an opportunity to increase the role of the knowledge economy within Dacorum. As the borough's largest concentration of employment land, Maylands Business Park will play a key role in enabling the transition towards a more knowledge-based economy; this will be progressed through the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan (AAP).

11.10. The diversity of the borough is reflected within the make up of the economy, which includes a significant rural sector that will be supported. The term 'rural economy' refers to economic activities that support employment in rural villages and sustain land uses across the rural area. This can include rural tourism.

² Set out within the Dacorum Development Programme (DDP).

³ The East of England in the Knowledge Economy: Collaboration to Compete? The Work Foundation, 2007

- 11.11. Consideration will also need to be given to wider issues such as skills. Although adult qualification levels in the borough are above average for both Hertfordshire and England, there are still some skills gaps that will need to be filled if the local economy is to reach its full potential.

A Low Carbon Economy

- 11.12. Both the Hertfordshire and Dacorum Economic Development Strategies (see Table 4) recognise the need to develop a low carbon economy. A county-wide study⁴ has helped increase understanding about what a low carbon economy means, what its implications are for the borough and how it can be delivered. This complements the 'UK Low Carbon Industrial Strategy' published by Government in July 2009. A low carbon economy is described as one in which economic performance improves whilst the use of carbon and greenhouse gases falls. It is also an economy where technology, especially in the field of telecommunications, plays an increasingly important role in the sharing and transfer of knowledge and information.
- 11.13. Hertfordshire's Economic Development Strategy aims to develop the potential for a specific low carbon technology cluster in the county across the 'energy and environmental goods and services' (EEGS). Businesses that are actively engaged in the design, manufacture, distribution, installation and maintenance of low carbon goods and services will be encouraged to locate within the borough. Technology will be a key part of the low carbon economy and it will be important for Dacorum's economy to take advantage of the latest low carbon technologies.
- 11.14. The Maylands Masterplan developed the concept of the 'greening Maylands.' This comprises developing more and better quality green spaces and encouraging the adoption of green business practices, sustainable development and the development of a Green Energy Centre. The creation of a Green Energy Centre would link with the identification of Maylands Business Park as an area with sufficient heat demand to enable the introduction of district heating (see Map 4). Its creation would also support the wider renewable energy sector, together with environmental goods and services supply chains. There may also be opportunities for links with an in-vessel composting facility or a relocated household waste recycling centre.
- 11.15. The objective of moving towards a low carbon economy complements the policies in Section 18 (Using Resources Efficiently). In particular new developments will be expected to meet the requirements of Policies CS28, CS29 and CS31.

Maylands Business Park

- 11.16 Maylands Business Park plays a significant role in the Dacorum economy; it is home to around 5% of the borough's businesses and just over 17% of employees⁵. The area will be enhanced through the planned regeneration, which aims to strengthen its role across the wider area. Successful regeneration will be delivered through environmental improvements, a new local centre and delivery of the Maylands Gateway and other projects within the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan (AAP). Key objectives for the AAP are set out in the Hemel Hempstead Place

⁴ A Low Carbon Economy for Hertfordshire. Oxford Economics, October 2009.

⁵ Business Intelligence Report, Dacorum Borough Council. Market Measures, February 2010.

Strategy (see Section 20). The role of the Maylands Business Park will remain complementary to that of the town centre, which will continue to have a strong economic function.

Supporting Tourism

- 11.17 Although the borough is not currently a main destination for tourism, it does attract both leisure and business visitors. The tourism sector is also closely linked to the area's cultural facilities (see Section 15).
- 11.18 Many visitor destinations are currently accessed by car. The promotion of sustainable tourism aims to reduce this dependence by creating new opportunities for tourism in locations with good access to public transport; promoting access by non-car modes to existing destinations; and respecting the built and natural environment.
- 11.19 Whilst there is already a reasonable range of visitor accommodation within the borough, there is scope for this sector to grow. Facilities that support local tourism, the rural economy and those that support existing businesses, through the provision of meeting and conference facilities, will be particularly encouraged. All new tourist facilities should seek to develop strong linkages with existing visitor attractions.

POLICY CS14: Economic Development

Sufficient land will be allocated to accommodate growth in the economy of approximately 10,000 jobs between 2006 and 2031.

Development that supports the knowledge-based economy, the transition to a low carbon economy, the rural economy and sustainable tourism, will be particularly encouraged.

Most employment generating development will be located in town and local centres and General Employment Areas in accordance with Policies CS1 and CS4. Hemel Hempstead will be the main focus for new economic development uses, which will be used to support the regeneration of the Maylands Business Park and Hemel Hempstead town centre. Employment levels elsewhere within the borough will be maintained to ensure a spread of job opportunities.

Initiatives that help the local workforce adjust to change and develop their skills will be supported.

Monitoring:

Indicator	Target
Net increase in jobs since 2006	10,000 new jobs by 2031
Percentage of the economically active population who are unemployed	Lower than the regional average and that of surrounding local authorities

<p>Net change in floorspace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by activity B1(a) office, B2 industry and B8 storage - by location i.e. settlement and type of employment area 	<p>Net positive change in floorspace</p>
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Delivery will be achieved by:

- designation of specific sites and consideration of their delivery through the Site Allocations DPD and East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan DPD;
- the Development Management DPD;
- implementation of the relevant economic development strategies;
- partnership working with the Local Enterprise Partnerships, the Economic Development team at Hertfordshire County Council, the local business community, West Herts College, and business support partners;
- implementation of the place strategies and Dacorum Development Programme; and
- use of Local Development Orders (LDOs).

