

# **Providing Homes and Community Services**

## Providing Homes and Community Services

### Strategic Objectives

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

## 15. Providing Homes

### How have we got to this point?

The Council must think about homes for all people over the plan period, not just now. The Government has not set a housing target. Instead the Council must set its own, having first considered reasonable alternatives. We have noted your concerns over the level of growth considered previously, particularly very high levels at Hemel Hempstead, and the level of infrastructure required for new development. Your consultation responses have also told us that the delivery of affordable housing and open space are important. In respect of the travelling community, our approach follows the balance of views received through a number of consultations.

- 15.1. Decent homes are fundamental to people's wellbeing and quality of life, and the foundation for achieving balanced and sustainable communities. Sufficient homes should be available for all sectors in the community, including the travelling community. Their design should help support the move towards a low carbon future and adaptation to climate change. Homes should be served by appropriate facilities and services.
- 15.2. The existing stock of housing is generally of good quality and there are very low levels of vacancy. Owner-occupied housing predominates, though there is also a large proportion of Council owned housing in comparison to other districts in the county. This reflects Hemel Hempstead's New Town legacy. The borough has a mix of house types that includes a large proportion of terraced housing, modest levels of detached properties, and lower proportions of flats and semi-detached properties relative to adjoining districts.
- 15.3. House prices are high due to the borough's proximity to London and its attractive local environment. House prices are high relative to incomes, which means that many local people find it difficult to get access to suitable accommodation. Most new completions are for open market housing, and levels of housing need within the borough continue to exceed the supply of affordable housing, particularly for first-

time buyers. The economic downturn has not significantly affected market affordability.

- 15.4. The need for housing is in part reflected by the high number of residents on the Council's Housing Register and lengthy waiting times for accommodation.
- 15.5. The supply of affordable housing has been growing over the last few years, but the amount and proportion in relation to the total housing supply have remained low. The existing supply of affordable homes has also been affected by the Right to Buy, leading to a continuing reduction in stock available to those in housing need, although take up has declined in recent years.
- 15.6. The borough's population is changing with growing numbers of elderly residents forecast as a result of increased life expectancy. Household size is projected to continue to fall (from 2.36 in 2006 to 2.15 in 2031), particularly as a consequence of an increase in one person households.
- 15.7. The potential supply of housing has been assessed through the South West Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and subsequent updates. The Council has reviewed the SHLAA in consultation with the development sector, firstly through the Housing Land Availability Paper (April 2009), and then through annual monitoring of sites. It shows there is significant housing potential in the borough. Urban capacity (that is sites within the existing settlement boundaries) is important to supply, but its potential contribution reduces significantly later in the plan period. Most of the potential supply then would be from greenfield sites.
- 15.8. Demand and need for housing has been assessed through the London Commuter Belt (West) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2010 (covering six Hertfordshire authorities, including Dacorum). The SHMA provides information on the type and tenure of housing required to meet need and market demand across different housing markets. The housing market areas are defined, with Dacorum chiefly affected by the Hemel Hempstead sub market that partly overlaps into the adjoining districts of St Albans and Watford. The northern fringes of the borough fall into the St Albans and Luton sub markets, whereas the southern tip falls within the Watford sub market.
- 15.9. The impact of affordable housing and other planning obligations on the viability of development schemes has been analysed through the Affordable Housing and Section 106 Viability Study (November 2009). The analysis has helped to set targets and thresholds in relation to the delivery of affordable housing.

## **Housing programme**

- 15.10. It is important that housing supply is measured against demand, if everyone is to have a decent home. The yardstick for comparison is the natural growth level expected in the population. It assumes nil-net migration. This would mean that growth in population and households that naturally occur in Dacorum would be accommodated here.

15.11. The planned level of housing does not seek to encourage net inward migration. The broad distribution of new housing will be guided by the settlement hierarchy (Policy CS1). Hemel Hempstead will continue to be the focus for higher levels of growth, given its status as the main centre for development and change within the borough. Elsewhere, development in the remaining towns and larger villages will be geared towards meeting their locally generated needs. There will be limited opportunities in the smaller villages, although rural exception sites are encouraged.

15.12. Opportunities for using previously developed land in urban areas will be optimised. However these alone will not maintain a sufficient and steady supply of housing. Some contribution from greenfield land is needed. The level will vary according to the final housing target. If there are extensions to any settlements, this normally affects the Green Belt.

15.13. Two alternative housing programmes are being considered:

Option 1: the lower level: this aims to optimise the use of land within defined settlements, and is sometimes referred to as urban capacity.

Option 2: the higher level: this adds to Option 1, with the inclusion of local allocations, i.e. modest extensions to existing settlements. (See paragraph 15.19 below for further explanation).

Table 7 sets out alternative programmes. The nil-net migration level for Dacorum by way of comparison is approximately 12,400 dwellings.

**Table 7: Prospective Housing Programme 2006 - 2031**

	<b>Total (Option 1)</b>	<b>Total (Option 2)</b>
<b>1. Completions 1.4.06-31.3.09</b>	1,202	1,202
<b>2. Committed Housing Capacity</b>		
(a) Defined urban sites	5,833	5,833
(b) Defined locations in Hemel Hempstead	1,100	1,100
(c) Gypsy and traveller pitches	59	59
(d) Rural exceptions	105	105
(e) Windfall	1,536	1,536
Sub total	8,633	8,633
<b>Sub total (1 + 2)</b>	<b>9,835</b>	<b>9,835</b>
<b>3. Local Allocations (to be included in the Site Allocations DPD)</b>	0	1,550
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,835</b>	<b>11,385</b>

15.14. Both options place environmental constraints on development and focus on economic prosperity, the protection of the countryside, and the provision of new homes. The best fit between economic and housing factors is at the natural growth level of housing (or higher).

15.15. The housing programme (supported by the housing trajectory in Appendix 2) will take a balanced approach to housing, taking account of:

- the amount needed to meet natural growth in the borough;
- the ability to deliver a sufficient, flexible and steady housing supply;
- the opportunities to ensure a mix of housing;
- local needs and opportunities, and potential benefits;
- the timing of key infrastructure to support new housing;
- the balance between jobs and homes;
- the support to the local economy and achievement of regeneration targets;
- the effect of new developments (i.e. the land used); and
- the relationship to environmental constraints and the character of particular settlements.

The question is where to strike the balance between the different factors. Some factors can readily be quantified and estimates given. Others are more difficult to quantify and should be compared in a relative way, for example, the mix of housing and the support to the local economy.

	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>
<b>Number of new homes 2006-2031</b>	9,835	11,385
<b>Number of affordable homes</b>	2,700	3,300
<b>Proportion of homes on greenfield sites</b>	28%	38%
<b>Money for infrastructure:</b>		
<b>(a) Developer contributions</b>	£53.8 million	£66.2million
<b>(b) New Homes Bonus</b>	£7.0 million	£8.6 million

15.16. A cornerstone of the housing programme and a basis for the net increase in homes is the retention of existing residential sites and accommodation.

15.17. Many housing sites will be allocated through the Site Allocations DPD, and a few in the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan. Site boundaries, mix of housing and other uses, and specific conditions will be set out there.

15.18. The supply of new housing includes:

- strategic sites within the Core Strategy, which will deliver around 280 new homes, and
- the local allocations in Option 2, which would deliver up to 1,550 new homes.

See Table 8. The broad requirements for these locations are set out in the Place Strategies (see sections 20-27).

**Table 8: Strategic Sites and Local Allocations**

Settlement	Location	Net Capacity	Option
Hemel Hempstead	Marchmont Farm	300	2
	Old Town	80	2
	West Hemel Hempstead	Up to 900	2
Berkhamsted	Durrants Lane/Shootersway*	200	1 and 2
	Hanburys, Shootersway	60	2
Tring	Icknield Way, west of Tring	150	2
Bovingdon	Chesham Road/Molyneaux Avenue	Up to 60	2
Markyate	Hicks Road*	Up to 80	1 and 2

*Notes: \* the Strategic Sites are in both options. Their early delivery is important to the success of the place strategies in Berkhamsted and Markyate.*

15.19. Local allocations would fulfil a number of purposes:

- They would extend the character and nature of housing supply, particularly for family housing.
- They would provide affordable housing locally.
- They can be planned in line with infrastructure capacity, particularly primary schools.
- They can be used to address local infrastructure deficits.
- They would also help maintain local population and the viability of settlements away from Hemel Hempstead.

15.20. The Council will maintain a continuous 5-year and 15-year rolling housing land supply. Action may be required to influence factors governing the supply in the light of progress. This will be reported through the Annual Monitoring Report. The management of local allocations (Option 2) would build in some flexibility into the housing programme (Policy CS3).

15.21. Delivery will be phased so that the development of housing sites can be co-ordinated with associated infrastructure and services (see sections 28 and 29).

15.22. Windfalls (i.e. previously unidentified sites which usually provide fewer than five dwellings each) will inevitably occur. They are therefore included in the housing programme.

15.23. However in setting the annual target for housing, no allowance has been made for windfall for the first ten years of the plan period. This has been done to accord with

Government guidance. It means that the target, which is expressed as a minimum, is lower than the figure expected from the housing programme. The two alternative housing targets are 370 dwellings p.a. (Option 1) and 430 dwellings (Option 2).

**POLICY CS17: Housing Programme**

**An average of:**

- **Option 1: at least 370 net additional dwellings,**
  - **Option 2: at least 430 net additional dwellings,**
- will be provided each year (between 2006 and 2031).**

**The new housing is planned to come forward in phases, taking account of the priorities for local allocations given by Policy CS2. Should housing completions fall below 15% of the housing trajectory at any time and review of the deliverability of planned sites indicates that the housing trajectory is unlikely to be recovered over the next 5 years, the Council will take action to increase the supply of deliverable housing sites.**

**Existing housing land and dwellings will normally be retained.**

**Monitoring:**

<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Target(s)</b>
Net additional dwellings per year and over the plan period	370 or 430 net additional dwellings per year
Land available – for 5 years ahead and 15 years ahead	-

**Delivery will be achieved by:**

- identifying housing allocations, their planning requirements and expected phasing in the Site Allocations DPD and East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan;
- preparing masterplans for important sites;
- implementing the Council’s Housing Strategy;
- monitoring of development progress in the Annual Monitoring Report;
- working with developers and landowners, and other partners such as the County Council and Registered Social Landlords; and
- using the Council’s resources in co-ordination with investment plans of key organisations such as the Homes and Communities Agency.

## Housing Mix

- 15.24. New homes should ideally match the needs of the community in terms of its size, type and affordability. They should also be adaptable and accessible to all occupiers. Planning for a mix of housing types is therefore very important.
- 15.25. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment recognises a need for supported housing, including housing for vulnerable groups and the elderly across the London Commuter Belt (West) study area. Hertfordshire County Council also stresses the accommodation needs of people in younger age groups, particularly for supported housing (e.g. special needs housing, short term hostels, and individual flats) and for independent living. Specific requirements have been identified by Adult Care Services for Extra Care (flexicare) Housing places, people with learning disabilities and mental health issues, and residential care (mainly private beds).
- 15.26. The projection of household types to 2021 in the SHMA indicates that there is a requirement for a mix of properties by size and tenure (Table 9). This varies between tenure with more 3-bed properties being required in market housing, and more 1-bed homes being needed for social renting.

**Table 9: Projected Size Mix of New Homes 2006 – 2031**

### Housing Programme Option 1

Size Mix of Housing Requirement 2006 - 2031 based on 9,835 growth during the 25 year period.

Type of housing	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed
All	2,016	2,275	4,410	1,008	126
Market	646	1,241	3,502	882	122
Affordable	1,370	1,034	908	126	4

### Housing Programme Option 2

Size Mix of Housing Requirement 2006 - 2031 based on 11,385 growth during the 25 year period.

Type of housing	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed
All	2333	2628	5110	1168	146
Market	635	1,414	4,189	1,022	141
Affordable	1,698	1,214	921	146	5

*Based on information in The London Commuter Belt (West) Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 and the Council's Housing Register.*

*The SHMA did not distinguish between houses and flats.*



- 15.27. This information gives a broad indication of priorities and will be used to guide decisions on the housing mix. It will be supplemented by up to date market information. Individual cases will be affected by the mix of affordable housing needed, as well as site and design considerations.
- 15.28. Housing should be designed to the life-time homes standard, i.e. that it is built with accessibility and adaptability at the design stage. This means that the home is flexible to the changing needs of the occupiers (be they elderly, the disabled or non-disabled people), and can be adapted at minimal cost and disruption to them. This approach ties in with the durability and life cycle of the property (see Policy CS29 Sustainable Design and Construction) and complements the national Building for Life standard developed by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE).
- 15.29. There may be a small role for live-work units within the housing supply. They provide an opportunity for households to combine home and work within the same premises, and reduce the need to travel for the occupiers. Such units are often attractive to office-based businesses such as media, design, IT and consultancy. However, no specific demand has been identified to justify them being specifically planned for.

**POLICY CS18: Mix of Housing**

**New housing development will provide a choice of homes. This will comprise:**

- (a) a range of housing types, sizes and tenure;**
- (b) housing for those with special needs; and**
- (c) affordable housing in accordance with Policy CS19.**

**Decisions on the appropriate type of mix of homes within development proposals will be guided by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other market and site-specific considerations.**

**Monitoring:**

<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Target(s)</b>
New dwellings designed to Lifetime Homes standards	
Size of new dwellings completed	
Number of flats and houses completed	

**Delivery will be achieved by:**

- allocating housing sites and targets for affordable housing through the Site Allocations DPD and East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan;
- policies in the Development Management DPD;

- guidance in Supplementary Planning Documents, including the Affordable Housing SPD;
- implementing the Council's Housing Strategy; and
- working in partnership with developers, the parish councils, local communities, landowners, developers, the County Council, and Registered Social Landlords.

## **Affordable housing**

15.30. Affordable housing is subsidised. It comprises:

- social rented; and
- intermediate housing (shared ownership and intermediate rented).

It excludes all market housing.

15.31. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment estimated that there will be a significant requirement for social rented housing in Dacorum between 2007 and 2021 (3,100 homes) to achieve a balanced housing supply by 2021. This represents nearly 40% of the housing requirement of 7,800 that the SHMA estimated for all homes over the same period. No specific requirement was identified for intermediate housing. The full affordable housing requirement over the plan period (2006-2031) would be around 5,300 homes. While this level of provision is unlikely to be deliverable, the aim should still be to maximise the provision of affordable housing in the borough. A target of 35% is realistic and achievable, when compared with past achievement, economic conditions and costs associated with new building.

15.32. In some areas it will be reasonable to exceed the normal level for affordable housing. Land values vary and so does viability. The opportunity to provide affordable housing is lower outside Hemel Hempstead, because there are fewer sites available. The most should be made of these sites. Supplementary work may justify higher levels of affordable housing, and this would be specified, normally in the Site Allocations DPD.

15.33. There may also be genuine circumstances where a lower level of affordable housing is appropriate, e.g. because of viability, site characteristics and abnormal costs. This would need to be justified in each case. The viability of a scheme will be tested on the basis of an open book financial appraisal, considering the residual value of the land and the profitability of the scheme.

15.34. Affordable housing should be provided on the application site. However where this is not feasible, off-site provision or a financial contribution will be accepted instead.

15.35. Intermediate housing is considered to be part of a balanced mix of affordable housing over the plan period and will be sought throughout the borough where it is justified by local circumstances.

15.36. Homes will be provided in the villages to enable people who are in housing need to stay locally and maintain their local connections with family and work. This in turn

helps to support the viability of rural services and amenities. Development opportunities will largely be on sites within and adjacent to the selected small villages identified in the settlement hierarchy. Villages are normally able to absorb modest, well-planned schemes without significant harm to their character or the setting of the countryside.

15.37. Detailed guidance on viability, commuted payments, eligibility criteria for the occupation of affordable housing and other matters is provided in Supplementary Planning Documents and the Council's Affordable Housing Advice Note.

#### **POLICY CS19: Affordable Housing**

**Affordable housing units will be provided on sites of:**

- **10 or more dwellings or of minimum size 0.3ha in Hemel Hempstead;**
- **5 or more dwellings or of minimum size 0.16ha in Berkhamsted and Tring and elsewhere in the borough.**

**35% of the new dwellings will normally be affordable housing units. Higher levels will be sought on sites which are specified in a development plan document, provided development would be viable and need is evident. 100% of all new homes will be affordable on rural exception sites (Policy CS20). A financial contribution will be sought in lieu of affordable housing on sites which fall below the thresholds.**

**A minimum of 75% of the affordable housing units provided should be for social rent.**

**Judgements about the level and mix of affordable housing will have regard to:**

- (a) Policy CS18 Mix of Housing**
- (b) whether the site demonstrably forms part of a larger overall site that would qualify for affordable housing;**
- (c) the overall viability of the scheme and any abnormal costs; and**
- (d) more detailed guidance in the Affordable Housing SPD.**

**Planning obligations or conditions will be used to ensure that the benefit of all affordable housing units will pass from the initial occupiers of the property to successive occupiers.**

## **POLICY CS20: Rural Exception Sites**

**Small-scale schemes for local affordable homes will be promoted in and adjoining selected villages in the countryside (ref Policies CS6 and CS7), and exceptionally elsewhere with the support of the local Parish Council.**

**Development will only be permitted if:**

- (a) it meets an identified local need for affordable housing;**
- (b) the housing is for people who have a strong local connection with the village or parish through work, residence or family; and**
- (c) the scheme is of a scale and design that respects the character, setting and form of the village and surrounding countryside.**

**Any site on the edge of a village must represent a logical extension to it.**

### **Monitoring:**

<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Target(s)</b>
Number of new affordable homes	35% of all new dwellings
Tenure of new affordable homes	A minimum 75% of the affordable units to be for social rent
Number of affordable homes delivered through rural exception schemes	-

### **Delivery will be achieved by:**

- allocating housing sites and targets for affordable housing through the Site Allocations DPD and East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan;
- policies in the Development Management DPD;
- guidance in Supplementary Planning Documents, including the Affordable Housing SPD which will consider dwelling mix, tenure and the formula for calculating financial contributions;
- implementing the Council's Housing Strategy; and
- working in partnership with developers, the parish councils, local communities, landowners, developers, the County Council, and Registered Social Landlords.

## **Travelling Communities**

15.38. Three travelling communities live in and visit Dacorum:

- people living in caravans: i.e.
  - Gypsies and Travellers; and
  - travelling showpeople
- people living in boats on the Grand Union Canal.

Their needs can be met by retaining existing accommodation and providing new sites.

<b>Table 10: Estimated Requirements for People Living in Caravans</b>				
	<b>2006 Stock</b>	<b>Planned: 2006-2011 Short term</b>	<b>2011-2031 Long term</b>	<b>2006-2031 Total Increase</b>
<b>Gypsies and Travellers (Residential Pitches)</b>				
Dacorum	36	20	39	59
Hertfordshire	244	176	346	522
<b>Gypsies and Travellers (Transit Pitches)</b>				
Hertfordshire	15	20	-	20
<b>Travelling Showpeople (Plots)</b>				
Hertfordshire	60	20	28	48

Source: Revision to the former Regional Spatial Strategy (July 2009)

### **Gypsies and Travellers**

15.39. The need for more, residential pitches is shown in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for South and West Herts (2005), and more pitches are recommended in the longer term to address natural growth. New pitches will provide a more settled base for Gypsies and Travellers, giving them better access to health and education services, and employment.

15.40. A small number of transit pitches should be provided across Hertfordshire, and local authorities, including Dacorum Council, will work together to determine their distribution.

15.41. The Council intends that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers should be progressively met and that all sites should be located, designed and managed on the basis of fairness, integration and sustainability: i.e.

- (a) fairness to both the Gypsy and Traveller community and the settled community;
- (b) to achieve acceptance by the two communities of each other, social coherence and a wider, shared sense of place and community; and

- (c) proximity to services, social inclusion, protection of heritage and important environmental features and conservation of natural resources.

15.42. The Council will collaborate with other agencies, such as the County Council, Police and community support groups, and site owners/managers to assist the assimilation of residents on new sites with settled community nearby.

### **Travelling Showpeople**

15.43. Initial provision for travelling showpeople is directed towards Broxbourne and East Herts. The Hertfordshire local authorities will work together to determine the distribution of the longer term growth. There is no identified demand within Dacorum itself, and more opportunity to accommodate plots within growth areas in Hertfordshire.

### **Boats**

15.44. Demand for residential and visitor moorings has followed supply. Opportunities for the construction of new residential and visitor mooring basins in the Dacorum section of the canal will be very limited. However through the gradual improvement of online moorings and adjoining facilities in settlements along the canal, more provision will be made for visitors.

#### **CS21: Existing Accommodation for Travelling Communities**

**Existing pitches, plots and mooring basins will be safeguarded from alternative development unless:**

- (a) a satisfactory replacement is provided; or**
- (b) there is no further need for the facility.**

## **CS22: New Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers**

### **New sites will be:**

- (a) distributed in a dispersed pattern around settlements;**
- (b) located close to facilities;**
- (c) of varying sizes, not normally exceeding a site capacity of 15 pitches;**
- (d) planned to allow for part occupation initially, allowing subsequent growth to full site capacity; and**
- (e) designed to a high standard with:
  - (i) an open frontage similar to other forms of housing; and**
  - (ii) landscaping or other physical features to provide an appropriate setting and relationship to existing residential areas.****

**Priority will be given to the provision of sites which are defined on the Proposals Map. If other proposals come forward, they will be judged on the basis of the need for that provision.**

### **Any new transit pitches should also:**

- (a) achieve good access to the M1 or A41 main roads; and**
- (b) minimise potential disturbance to adjoining occupiers.**

### **Monitoring:**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets</b>
Number of new pitches (net)	59
Number of new plots (net)	0

### **Delivery will be achieved:**

#### *For Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople:*

- by the identification of sites in the Site Allocations DPD;
- by provision of sites through multi-agency partnership (including the Dacorum Partnership), and through the Council's Housing Strategy and take up of available Government grants; and
- by private owners, registered social landlords or a local authority managing sites [relevant Government advice applying to design and management].

#### *For Canal Moorings:*

- by development management and collaboration with British Waterways.

### Question 9

Which annual housing target stated in Policy CS17 do you support?

Option 1

Option 2

Neither

If **neither**, please state what target it should be:

Please give reasons for your answer:

### Question 10

Do you support the approach to 'Providing Homes' set out in Section 15?

**Yes/No**

If **not**, please state the policy(ies) and/or paragraph(s) you disagree with, giving your reasons:

Please also specify the changes you think should be made:



## 16. Meeting Community Needs

### How have we got to this point?

Your consultation responses have told us that you support the approach we have set out for the provision of community and leisure facilities. This focuses on the provision of health and education facilities in the borough and supporting the key agencies that can help deliver them.

### Delivering community services and facilities

- 16.1. The fundamental day-to-day living needs and the well-being of society are dependent on having the appropriate social infrastructure (Figure 14) to deliver the required social and community services and facilities.

#### Figure 14. Social infrastructure

Social infrastructure includes:

- early years education to further education;
- primary and secondary health care;
- open space, outdoor leisure and indoor sports;
- libraries;
- community buildings and facilities for childcare, community care, general welfare, worship, social contact, performing arts, culture and civic duties; specialist facilities such as prisons
- job centre and related facilities; and
- cemeteries and emergency services.

- 16.2. The Dacorum Sustainable Community Strategy and the local planning system both aspire to promote and improve community well-being and help to provide the mechanisms to deliver the social infrastructure needed. The Council also aims to help agencies who provide social infrastructure to supply the right facilities in the right place.
- 16.3. Collaborative working, consultation and a variety of technical studies have helped to understand the opportunities and issues concerning social infrastructure. The 'Infrastructure Delivery Plan, 2010' has reviewed the existing social infrastructure in the borough and established future requirements of a growing population to 2031. Through consultation with infrastructure providers, the work established where the demands for certain services and facilities are not being met and where there are oversupply issues. Infrastructure providers' future service plans and requirements arising from projected population levels give a schedule of infrastructure requirements to 2031.

- 16.4. For the purposes of the Core Strategy, local communities were consulted at 'Place Shaping' workshops to help identify for social infrastructure or social services and facilities requirements around the borough. The workshops also helped to prioritise needs and helped to develop strategies for different places (see sections 20-27).

## **Education**

- 16.5. A collaborative partnership has been established between the Council and Hertfordshire County Council departments to develop a comprehensive plan for school places to 2031.
- 16.6. The work considered the need for more nursery, primary, secondary and higher education places and educational facilities for children and young people in the borough, as a result of a recent birth rate forecast. It has also considered the additional demand from housing growth in the borough, together with recent population forecasts.
- 16.7. As a result of this work, Hertfordshire County Council identified key educational constraints and threshold issues in the county and has had to reassess the method used to calculate school places in growth areas. The report 'Meeting the rising demand for school places, 2009' gives a flavour for the expected changes but does not fully consider the implications of growth in the borough. A separate report<sup>1</sup> will be published later this year to take full account of growth issues. The report will be expected to reconsider the future of the primary schools closed as part of the Hertfordshire County Council Primary School Review in 2007. It is expected that the affected primary schools (Jupiter Drive, Barncroft and Martindale) will either be reopened when the need arises, redeveloped to deliver new social and community facilities, or redeveloped for housing purposes. Two 'Education Zones' for new school provision have been identified on the edge of Berkhamsted. These are illustrated on the vision diagram (Figure 22) for the Berkhamsted Place Strategy (section 22).
- 16.8. This work has also identified a need for additional nursery, primary, middle and secondary school places where the need can be accommodated on existing school sites. More importantly it has identified the need for a number of new primary schools, along with the need for a larger replacement college to serve the needs of young people and adults in the borough.
- 16.9. The Council will also be working with Hertfordshire County Council on their investment programme to refurbish and remodel a number of existing secondary schools and secondary age special schools in the borough.

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<sup>1</sup> Hertfordshire County Council Report 'Feasibility of School Places and New Schools in Dacorum, 2010'

## **Health**

- 16.10. The Council has been working with the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) NHS Hertfordshire to identify existing issues with primary and secondary health care services. The PCT is currently responsible for improving the health of local people and delivering primary care services, such as services provided by GPs, community nurses, health visitors or school health advisors. The PCT also arranges healthcare for people in hospitals, care homes, clinics, community settings and in the patient's home. Government proposals are expected to lead to the abolition on PCTs, with the majority of their functions transferred to GPs through fund-holding surgeries by 2012.
- 16.11. The PCT and West Hertfordshire Hospital NHS Trust have recently delivered a new 24/7 Urgent Care Centre and a new GP-led health centre in 2009, as part of a programme of works to centralise acute facilities to Watford Hospital. This redevelopment programme will deliver a new General Hospital on the existing hospital grounds on a reduced footprint. The remaining part of the site will accommodate new homes and a primary school together with improvements to pedestrian, highway and green links with the town centre and the wider area.
- 16.12. Further collaborative working with the PCT has helped to produce the 'Investment Asset Management Strategy' for Dacorum. This summarises where the primary and secondary health service issues are likely to be in the borough and where new facilities are required. It also examines the quality of health service buildings in Dacorum (excluding the hospital) and explains how the provision of health services is calculated. With this information, the Council has established a need for suitable practise buildings and delivering new practises near to areas of housing growth.

## **Community**

- 16.13. The 'Place Shaping' workshops around the borough identified a need to improve existing facilities and consider further provision of community services and facilities. These facilities were primarily for young people and the elderly, with the requirement for new large community centres/halls, cultural centres, a shared space for multi-faith groups in Hemel Hempstead and more open space. Specific needs are identified in the place strategies (sections 20-27).
- 16.14. As well as considering opportunities to help improve and rectify these issues, the Council is beginning a programme of refurbishing many of the local centres in Hemel Hempstead. Improvements will be carried out as part of the neighbourhood centres regeneration programme and will include soft landscaping.
- 16.15. In addition to these issues, wherever new housing growth is planned there will be a need to expand existing social infrastructure or provide new services and facilities. New development will be expected to contribute towards these needs. For larger-scale development this could include the provision of a new local centre.
- 16.16. Another fundamental community service the Council will be expanding is its provision of cemetery space in Hemel Hempstead. A suitable location will be identified at the Site Allocation DPD stage.

## **Delivering leisure and cultural facilities**

### **Leisure**

- 16.17. Other than the important open space available for informal sport and recreation, which is covered in section 17, the borough also contains a variety of leisure space, including public and private outdoor sports facilities for children and young people, allotments and parks and gardens. Deficiencies in leisure space in the borough have however been identified<sup>2</sup>.
- 16.18. In 2009, a working group was established to help ensure the borough had sufficient quality and distribution of leisure facilities and makes best use of them. The working group included a number of representatives from the Council, the Dacorum Sports Trust, Sport England, Hertfordshire County Council, PCT, and Dacorum Sports Schools Partnership. Their work helped to facilitate the development of the Facilities Improvements Strategy<sup>3</sup>. The strategy examined the idea of a new sports facility in Hemel Hempstead as part of a strategic approach to the development and provision of leisure facilities, at the same time as targeting areas suffering from higher than average obesity levels.
- 16.19. Whilst the Facilities Improvements Strategy will provide a good basis for improvements and new opportunities for leisure, the Council will need to use existing land and buildings to rectify the deficiencies in leisure space and help respond to changing recreational and leisure demands. Land already identified as existing open space and leisure space, like land within the Two Waters Study area. Other opportunities, such as the new sports facility for the town will be supported to help deliver new sport and recreational facilities.
- 16.20. The County Council's schools improvement programme will also support this ethos by delivering additional public sports facilities on the basis that it can be shared by other users. Opportunities for other dual use facilities will also be supported.

### **Cultural Facilities**

- 16.21. The cultural facilities in a place are strongly linked to the leisure tourism sector (see section 12). The facilities on offer in Dacorum include arts and entertainment facilities, buildings and facilities for community events, built heritage and natural landscape, and important open space and leisure space, like the Chiltern Beechwoods and the Grand Union Canal. Culture is also delivered by individuals, community groups, arts organisations, sports teams and creative entrepreneurs who embed culture in the daily life of the borough.
- 16.22. There are a wide range of benefits in providing and promoting a variety of cultural activities and facilities. These include:

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<sup>2</sup> Open Space Study, 2008 has further details of deficiencies if leisure space in the borough.

<sup>3</sup> Facilities Improvements Strategy, 2010 for Dacorum Borough

- creating a rich, vibrant and diverse mix of uses which can act as a catalyst for regeneration in town centres;
- encouraging a sense of personal well-being, pleasure and enjoyment;
- enriching the quality of life of the community and visitors to the borough;
- generating tourism and creative industries which can contribute to the local economy;
- conserving the cultural and historic heritage;
- improving mental and physical health of residents;
- providing many and varied social benefits through the development of work and projects with local community organisations and with groups at risk of exclusion;
- supporting citizenship and community identity and safer and stronger communities; and
- providing an opportunity to build on Dacorum's cultural diversity.

16.23. The regeneration of Hemel Hempstead town centre is a springboard for the delivery of further cultural and tourist facilities. Its key ambitions include the provision of a Performing Arts Venue, other cultural facilities, urban park, additional open space and improvements to the accessibility of green space and the River Gade (see section 21). These will benefit the local communities and visitors alike.

16.24. New opportunities for arts and cultural businesses and links between local schools and communities will also be supported, particularly as part of mixed use developments and regeneration schemes.

### **Policy CS23: Social Infrastructure**

**Social infrastructure, providing services and facilities to the community, will be encouraged.**

**New infrastructure will:**

- (a) be located to aid accessibility; and**
- (b) provide for the multifunctional use of space.**

**The dual use of new and existing facilities will be promoted.**

**The provision of new school facilities will be supported on Open Land and in defined zones in the Green Belt.**

**Existing social infrastructure will be protected unless appropriate alternative provision is made, or evidence is provided to prove the facility is no longer viable. The re-use of a building for an alternative social or community service or facility is preferred.**

**All new development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of social infrastructure. For larger developments this may include land and/or buildings.**

**Monitoring:**

<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Target(s)</b>
Net increase in the forms of entry provided at First and Primary schools	-
New health facilities delivered	-
Net loss of existing services or facilities	-
Increase in the area of leisure space	
Retention of social and community facilities	No net loss of floorspace

**Delivery will be achieved by:**

- identification of infrastructure and planning requirements through the Site Allocation DPD. Detailed policies in the Development Management DPD.
- masterplans for strategic sites;
- application of the Planning Obligations SPD;
- partnership working with infrastructure providers including the Children Schools and Families (CSF) and Property Services at the County Council, health agencies, the Sports Trust and Sport England, and the voluntary sector;
- implementation of the Facilities Improvement Strategy (FIS); and
- implementation and monitoring of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

**Question 11**

Do you support the approach to 'Meeting Community Needs' set out in Section 16?

**Yes/No**

If **not**, please state the policy(ies) and/or paragraph(s) you disagree with, giving your reasons:

Please also specify the changes you think should be made: