



GADE ZONE

Planning Statement

April 2012

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1. Background

1.1 Dacorum Borough Council is seeking to extensively regenerate Hemel Hempstead town centre. The regeneration of the town centre has been identified as one of six key challenges in Dacorum's Local Planning Framework Pre-Submission Core Strategy and the Council is currently working towards the delivery of a Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan. The Masterplan, which will guide regeneration in different parts of the town centre, is scheduled to be adopted as a supplementary planning document in November 2012.

1.2 The Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan Area Diagram (Figure 1) maps out seven Town Centre Character Zones. The Gade Zone, which includes the north western section of the town centre from Queensway to the Market Square, holds significant regeneration opportunities for educational, civic, residential, retail, restaurant and community uses. It represents the focus for town centre regeneration plans over the next ten years.

1.3 The regeneration plans for the Gade Zone have been disrupted in recent years owing to the collapse of the Waterhouse Square Project in early 2010 and the weak state of the national economy. However there is now renewed activity in this area. Major public sector services within the Gade Zone including the library, the police service, the court service, the Borough Council and the college are working towards the redevelopment of much of the site.

1.4 Planning guidance for the Gade Zone is set out in Hemel Hempstead Civic Zone Development Brief Supplementary Planning Document (adopted November 2005). This document reinforces the policy context provided by the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 (adopted April 2004). However it is felt necessary to update this guidance in light of the emerging submission Core Strategy and the draft Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan together with renewed focus on regenerating the area.

2. Purpose of the Planning Statement

2.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Dacorum Borough Council to provide guidance on the broad policy, development and design framework for the Gade Zone in Hemel Hempstead town centre. It takes account of existing and emerging planning policy and will help inform and guide prospective developers on the potential opportunity to comprehensively redevelop this area of the town centre.

2.2 The Gade Zone is expected to be the first town centre zone to come forward for redevelopment therefore it is critical that it sets the appropriate tone for delivery and quality of design.

3. Status of the Planning Statement

3.1 Whilst this Planning Statement is neither a development plan document (DPD) or a supplementary planning document (SPD), it should be given material consideration in the determination of planning applications for the Gade Zone. It takes the principles set out in the Dacorum Borough Local Plan and the Hemel Hempstead Civic Zone Development Brief SPD as the starting point for providing guidance on the future redevelopment of the Gade Zone. It is informed by current evidence and emerging policy and in that sense it both reflects and updates the advice contained within the Civic Zone SPD.

3.2 The policy context of this planning statement is addressed in section 5: Planning Policy Context and Annex 1.

3.3 The document has been both informed by, and subject to, extensive consultation.

3.4 In January 2011, Inspire East facilitated a participatory workshop event entitled "Hemel Hempstead Masterplan Charette". This brought together Dacorum Borough Council Officers, Councillors, County Council Officers, landowners and business representatives, plus a host of other stakeholders in a broad level discussion of the town centre, including its strengths and opportunities for future. A follow up stakeholder event was held in January 2012 to further support the preparation of the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan. This brought together the same mix of stakeholders in a more focused discussion about major land uses and access and movement in the town centre.

3.5 The Gade Zone Planning statement has been prepared against the background of the emerging Masterplan and all that which has informed it. The draft of this document has also been extensively consulted on. A draft version of the document was circulated to the following:

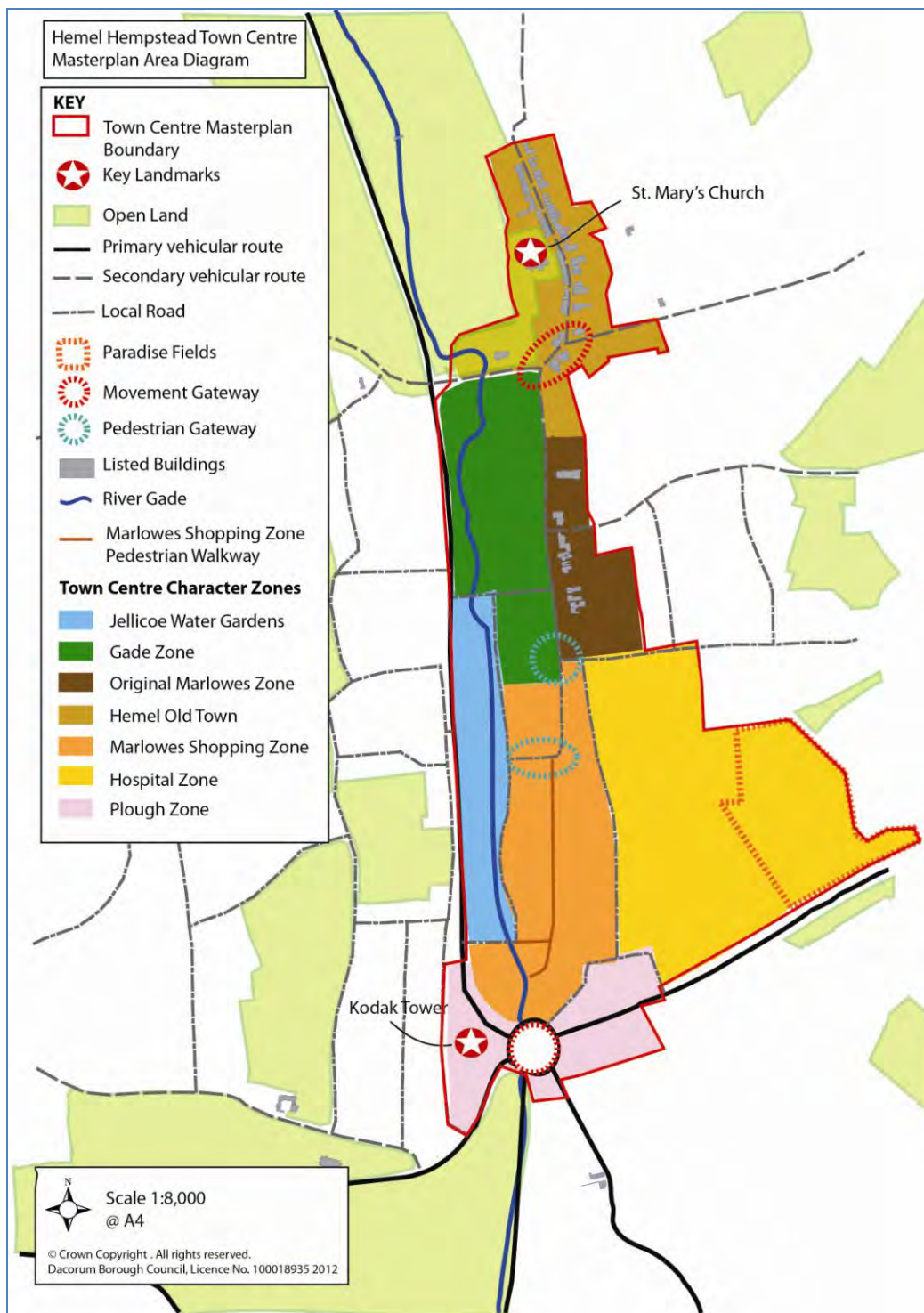
- The Borough Council's Development Management Team
- The Borough Council's Trees and Woodlands team
- The Borough Council's Design and Conservation team
- The Borough Council's Building Services team
- The Environment Agency
- Hertfordshire Highways
- English Heritage
- UK Power Networks
- Veolia
- Thames Water

3.6 With the exception of English Heritage, who declined to comment on the document, consultation responses were received from all of the above. These have been considered and the draft document adjusted or supplemented where appropriate.

4. The Site

4.1 The Gade Zone is shown in Figure 1 (below) and totals approximately 7.5 hectares (18.5 acres). The area represents a valuable and unique opportunity to create a high-quality mixed use development and set in motion the wider regeneration of Hemel Hempstead town centre.

Figure 1: Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan Area Diagram



5. Planning Policy Context

5.1 The policy context for the site is set by national and regional policy guidance, the Dacorum Borough Local Plan, associated supplementary planning documents, and emerging policy. A detailed assessment of all applicable policies is provided in Annex 1. This section offers a synopsis of the policies that are most relevant to the Gade Zone.

Local Policy Context

(a) Existing policy

Dacorum Borough Local Plan

5.2 The Dacorum Borough Local Plan (adopted 21 April 2004) is the statutory Local Plan covering the whole of the Dacorum Borough. It forms the basis for decisions on land use on the site.

5.3 Hemel Hempstead town centre is designated in Policy 39. The Gade Zone falls wholly within the town centre area (see Local Plan Proposals Map sheet 4). In town centres a mix of uses is sought.

5.4 The Local Plan includes a strategy for Hemel Hempstead Town Centre (including the Old Town Centre). The strategy sets out overarching guidance and establishes a vision for the town centre. A series of town centre zones are identified.

5.5 Key Local Plan policies are addressed in detail in Annex 1.

Civic Zone Development Brief SPD

5.6 The Civic Zone Development Brief SPD (adopted in November 2005) supplements the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Strategy contained within the Dacorum Borough Local Plan. Excluding the land between Bridge Street and the Market Square, the development brief covers the same area as the Gade Zone.

5.7 Key objectives for the Development Brief Area are set out on page 4 and include the need to:

- Be planned and developed as a comprehensive scheme
- Contribute towards the overall achievement of the town centre's regeneration and enhancement
- Be developed to its optimum potential

5.8 The development guidelines provide a framework of how the Council will aim to focus the future development within the Development Brief Area. The northern and central areas of the Gade Zone are identified for predominantly residential development. Mixed uses are encouraged in the southern area.

5.9 The adopted SPD is a material consideration in the preparation of the Town Centre Masterplan and the determination of planning applications for the site. Although adopted in 2005, the principles it contains still reflect the Council's intentions for the area.

(b) Emerging policy

Pre-Submission Core Strategy

5.10 The Council is currently preparing a new Local Planning Framework for Dacorum Borough. This will replace the existing Local Plan which was adopted in 2004. The Core Strategy is the central document in the Local Planning Framework. It is hoped that the final Core Strategy will be adopted by the Council in late 2012/early 2013. However, a significant number of the policies contained within it already hold weight as material planning considerations.

5.11 The Core Strategy sets out overarching guidance for the town centre in much the same way as the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Strategy within the Local Plan. The local objectives for the town centre are to deliver around 1800 homes, a local general hospital, a primary school, a new library and college, new civic and cultural facilities, a supermarket and other shops, a bus interchange and a better footpath network.

5.12 The Core Strategy identifies seven Character Zones (of which the Gade Zone is one) to guide regeneration in different parts of the town centre. The Town Centre Masterplan will provide further guidance and detail, particularly on the areas of greatest change and activity.

5.13 Policy CS33: Hemel Hempstead Town Centre sets out the guiding principles for development in the town centre. These are addressed in Section 7: Planning and Regeneration Objectives.

5.14 Key pre-submission Core Strategy policies are addressed in detail in Annex 1.

Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan and associated Cabinet Reports

5.15 The Council's Cabinet has agreed to proceed with a strategy of incremental regeneration based on a comprehensive Masterplan for the town centre. A focus on three town centre sites in the following priority was agreed:

1. Civic Block – with an investigation of viability for new civic hub uses, foodstore and residential development
2. Market Square/Water Gardens – to examine development opportunities for civic hub, foodstore and leisure uses

3. Paradise/Hospital Zone – highlighting future opportunities for this part of the town centre for new local general hospital facilities, housing, primary school and other mixed uses

5.16 The purpose of the Masterplan is to provide a long-term vision for the future of the town centre, focusing on the need for regeneration and building upon the framework of the seven character zones set out in the Core Strategy. Once adopted, the Masterplan will provide strategic guidance for new investment and development in the town centre. Work is currently underway on the Masterplan and it is scheduled to be completed in November 2012 subject to approval by Full Council.

5.17 On 29 November 2011 Cabinet endorsed the first phase of major regeneration proposals for Hemel Hempstead town centre. Thirteen recommendations were approved in total. Further information on these proposals is provided in Annex 1.

(c) Technical work

5.18 Two key studies have been commissioned to help develop the Masterplan. These are the Access and Movement Study (JMP Consultants) and the Major Land Use Study (Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners). Other work has also been commissioned to help understand the historic significance of the Water Gardens, to help identify the new location for the Public Service Quarter and to analyse the viability and phasing of the key proposals.

5.19 Improvement Strategies for each of the town centre character zones are being developed and will sit underneath the Masterplan providing greater detail in relation to future development. To date only the Marlowes Shopping Zone Improvement Strategy has been completed (JMP Consultants). A Heritage Improvement Strategy will be produced alongside the Old Town Improvement Strategy to address the heritage assets of the old town centre and the new town centre together.

5.20 A level 2 strategic flood risk assessment for Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead was published in June 2008 as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy. This identified areas of the Gade Zone as being within flood zones 3a and 3b. Further information is provided in Annex 1.

6. The Vision

6.1 The vision for Hemel Hempstead town centre is set out in the Core Strategy. However a more succinct version is contained with the Hemel Evolution brochure as follows:

In 2031 Hemel Hempstead town centre will be an appealing, attractive and sustainable destination with a thriving economic centre and a high quality environment. The regeneration and evolution of the town centre will emphasise the natural and cultural assets of the town and celebrate its New Town history and rich heritage.

Hemel Hempstead town centre will evolve into a vibrant place where people want to shop, work, live, learn and visit.

6.2 The regeneration of the Gade Zone will make a significant contribution towards the achievement of this vision.

7. Planning and Regeneration Objectives

7.1 The objectives set out below are aligned with the Borough wide objectives set out in the Local Plan and Chapter 6 of the Pre-Submission Core Strategy. They also reflect and update advice provided in the Hemel Hempstead Civic Zone Development Brief SPD and other relevant planning policies.

7.2 The Gade Zone is a highly accessible and sustainable town centre site. A comprehensive approach to redevelopment should contribute fully to the regeneration of the town centre and should maximise the potential of this key town centre site. In order for this to be achieved, new development will be encouraged to comply with the following strategic town centre objectives set out in the masterplan¹:

Strategic Town Centre Objectives

In terms of land use:

- **To deliver an appropriate mix of uses;**
- **To enable a distribution of uses that secures the greatest benefit to the town centre as a whole;**
- **To encourage new development that will promote linked trips with the shopping core and improve the vitality of the northern part of the town centre;**
- **To deliver a significant level of residential development, including an appropriate level of affordable homes, to support the vitality and viability of the town centre and the Old Town shopping area (residential development to be part of mixed use schemes where appropriate);**

In terms of access and movement:

- **To create a more cohesive form of development which promotes sustainable methods of transport and strengthens links to and between key facilities (bus and railway stations, the hospital, the town centre and main employers)**
- **To create new north-south and east-west connections within the town centre;**
- **To incorporate sufficient and appropriate access, servicing and car parking;**
- **To improve traffic circulation and optimise town centre functionality;**

¹ Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan – supporting technical work, the emerging draft and the final masterplan once adopted

In terms of design:

- To encourage the highest quality, legible development with cohesive and effective urban design, and appropriate co-ordinated materials and street furniture;
- To enhance and maximise well-designed, high quality public space; and
- To create a safe and pleasant environment in which to live, work and visit, where all uses contribute towards public safety, community cohesion and security.

7.3 New development is also encouraged to comply with more specific objectives relating to the Gade Zone. These are as follows:

Gade Zone Objectives

In terms of land use:

- To secure residential use in the northern area of the Gade Zone to help strengthen the retail function of the Old Town;
- To introduce a new supermarket in the central area of the Gade Zone to attract movement and footfall from the main town centre shopping area thereby increasing vitality in the northern part of the town centre;
- To encourage a leisure & evening economy in the southern area of the Gade Zone to help revitalise the Water Gardens;
- To retain/re-use buildings of character and historic importance
- To increase activity in and around the public square and promote uses which support the evening economy in that location;

In terms of access and movement:

- To improve linkages and pedestrian/cycle movement into, through and around the town centre;
- To relocate bus services to create a central bus interchange in order to promote sustainable transport
- To create a continuous riverside walk and cycle way from the Water Gardens to Gadebridge Park providing improved north-south connectivity;
- To create new and enhanced east-west pedestrian and vehicular connections;
- To provide key pedestrian and cycle crossings across Leighton Buzzard Road and Queensway improving linkages with the wider town;
- To promote safe highway conditions within and around the site;

In terms of design:

- To encourage sympathetic landmark buildings at gateway locations;
- To respect the character, setting and built form of the Old Town; and
- To respect the New Town heritage and other heritage features including the Bury, the Carey Baptist Church, the listed villas on the Marlowes and the Water Gardens.

8. Development Guidelines

8.1 This section sets out the broad development principles that the Council will take into account when considering planning applications in the Gade Zone. It provides guidance which the Council considers to be appropriate for the Gade Zone. Development proposals will be expected to follow the principles established within this document.

8.2 Figure 2 sets out the context of the Gade Zone and the key opportunities related to its redevelopment. Figure 3 maps out the key constraints that will impact upon development options, design and layout.

Figure 2

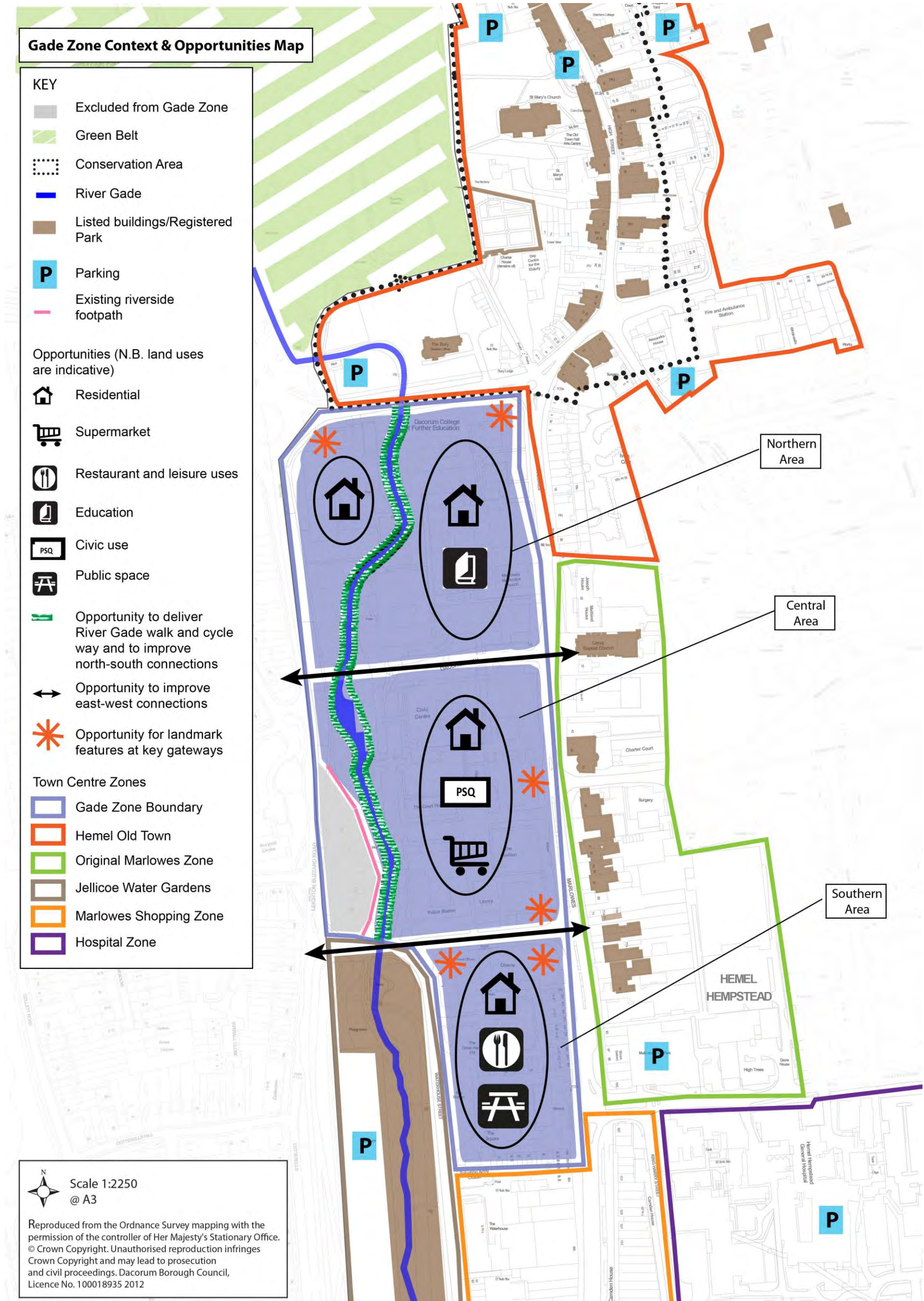
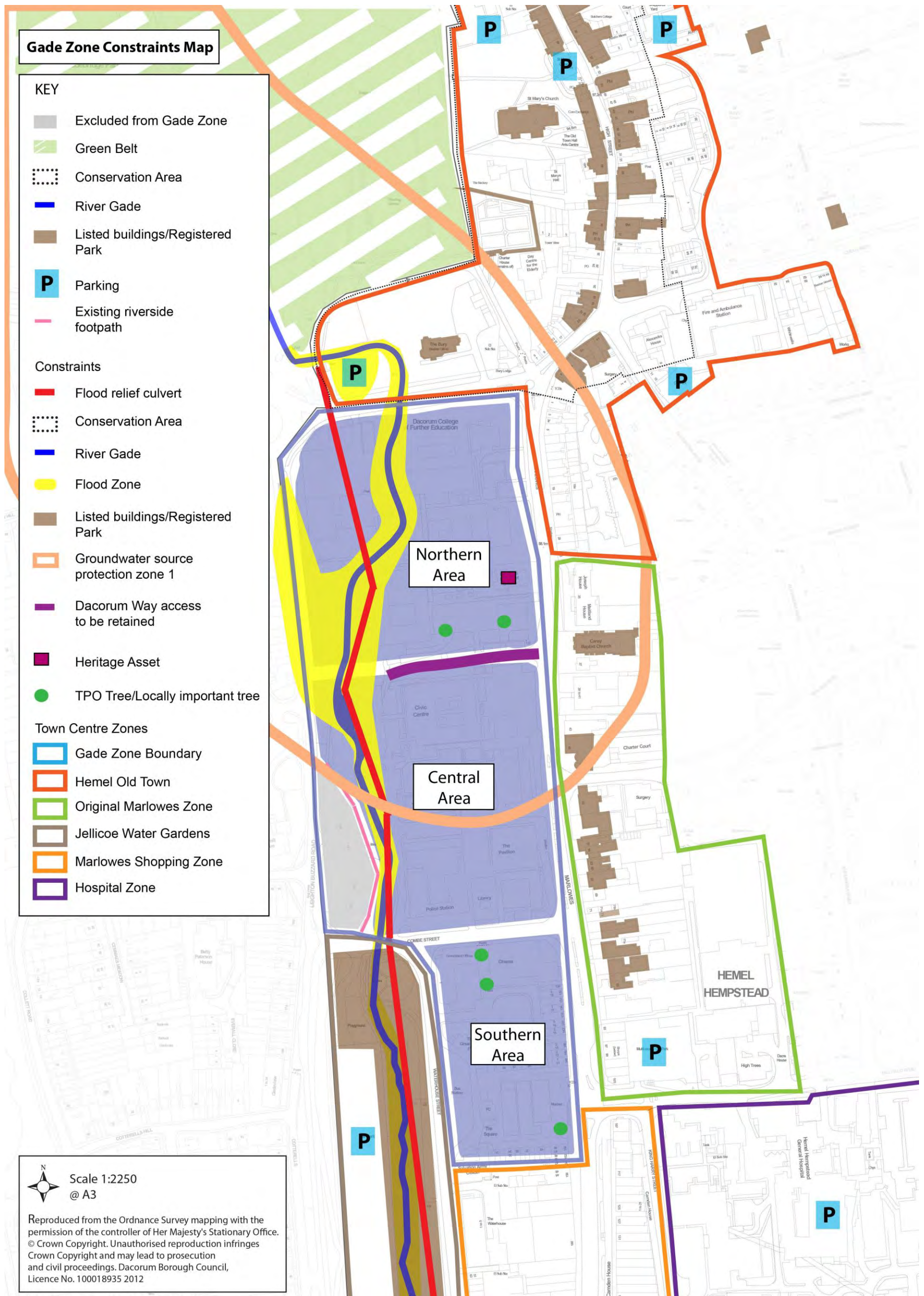


Figure 3



Constraints and Opportunities

8.3 Development will need to be planned around the River Gade taking into account the channel itself, local habitat, the floodplain and the nearby flood relief culvert. There must be no development within eight metres of the top of the river bank. The north-western edge of the site is at risk of flooding during a 1 in 20 year event and as such is classified as Flood Zone 3b. In addition there is a limited area within the site (opposite Bury Road) which is classified as Flood Zone 3a and Flood Zone 2. All non-water compatible development will need to be steered away from these areas. Building over the culvert is not usually permitted especially when it is of a large diameter. Building should ordinarily be at least 3m away from the culvert but if this cannot be achieved then a build over agreement would need to be sought submitted and approval sought based on the proposals.

8.4 There is, however, the opportunity to continue the riverside walk and cycle way in the floodplain thereby extending the natural green corridor through the town centre and improving north-south connectivity. Development will have to be set back from the waterway and heights of buildings will also need to be restricted near the waterway to prevent overshadowing.

8.5 A Groundwater Source Protection Area covers the northern half of the Gade Zone. The inner Source Protection Zone will limit the type of development that is appropriate in the area. It will exclude developments that include, for example, waste sites, petrol stations, deep drainage boreholes and non mains foul drainage. This is because these types of development bear too high a risk on the sensitive groundwater below.

8.6 The utilities located within the central area of the Gade Zone will also constrain development. Due to the need to maintain these facilities and the high cost of relocating them it is proposed that the Dacorum Way access from the Marlowes is retained as part of any redevelopment of the central and northern areas of the Gade Zone.

8.7 Development must respect the Old Town Conservation Area and other listed buildings and heritage assets within and surrounding the Gade Zone. However, there is a significant and valuable opportunity to deliver high quality, sustainable buildings that are sympathetic to, and complement, the local heritage context. It may be possible to provide landmark buildings at key gateways to the Gade Zone. This will assist in legibility and wayfinding for users of the town centre, and may help with the design transition between zones.

8.8 Important trees also pose a constraint to development. There are two TPO groups in the northern area of the Gade Zone. These are located to the north of Dacorum Way and have amenity value as a mature tree screen between the college and Council sites. There are no TPO trees in the central areas but two in the southern area just off of Combe Street. There is however potential for removal and

replacement of these. The Sycamore tree at the south-east corner of the market square does not have TPO status however it has high local significance. The waterside trees are of significance but are not protected.

8.9 An additional opportunity exists to provide enhanced east-west pedestrian and vehicular linkages through the Gade Zone. Key pedestrian and cycle crossing points will also enhance linkages to the wider town.

Development Principles

8.10 The following are considered to be appropriate town centre uses in both local and national guidance:

- Civic uses
- Retail
- Leisure and Catering establishments
- Residential
- Offices
- Education
- Car parking

8.11 The section below addresses these particular uses in the context of the Council's preferred approach, which is set out in Figure 2.

8.12 The Council will encourage mixed uses as this will maximise the use of land within this urban location.

Civic Uses

8.13 The Council will encourage, where appropriate, the re-provision of various public uses within the Gade Zone.

8.14 It is currently exploring the possibility of providing a new Public Service Quarter facility in Hemel Hempstead town centre. Following the November 2011 Cabinet Report on Major Regeneration Proposals for Hemel Hempstead Town Centre, two options are being pursued in relation to the location of this facility. These are either to locate it in the central area of the Gade Zone on the site of the library and former Pavilion, or on the northern end of the decked car park in the Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone. The intention is that the Public Service Quarter will incorporate the functions of various other public services, in addition to the Borough Council offices.

8.15 The primary motivations for a new Public Service Quarter are its regeneration potential and the benefits to the public of the co-location of services. Its location must therefore maximise the improvement it can make to the town centre as a whole. The optimal location for the Public Service Quarter within the Gade Zone would be its southern most point. Locating a strategic Public Service Quarter adjacent to the core shopping area will encourage higher footfall through the northern end of the

Marlowes Shopping Zone and linked trips between these destinations. The complex ownership arrangements of land between Combe Street and the Market Square means that this area of the Gade Zone will take longer to regenerate and is unlikely to be available to deliver comprehensive development. Land to the north of Combe Street (in the central area of the Gade Zone) therefore represents the closest alternative in terms of re-anchoring of the town centre northwards.

Retail

8.16 The Pre-Submission Core Strategy (informed by the October 2011 Retail Capacity Update Study) identifies a demonstrable need for additional convenience goods floorspace in Hemel Hempstead. In accordance with local and national policy, the Gade Zone – as a key town centre site - is a preferable location for retail development.

8.17 In order to secure the greatest benefit to the town centre as a whole, a new supermarket should be positioned in the south of the Gade Zone. The core retail shopping area is located at the south of the Marlowes and is the main footfall attractor in the town centre. The addition of an anchor to the north of this in the form of a supermarket will help increase activity between the two footfall attractors. The shorter the distance between the two anchors the greater the potential for linked trips and the more movement between the two attractors there will be.

8.18 A supermarket would ideally be located at the southern tip of the Gade Zone. However, as stated previously, land ownership arrangements between Market Square and Combe Street, which were a serious issue during the Waterhouse Square Project affecting the deliverability of the project, mean that it is unlikely that the supermarket will be located there. The next best option is the land immediately north of Combe Street (in the central area of the Gade Zone). It is noted that market drivers may also affect the location since supermarkets require a sizable site with direct access and views from the main vehicular route.

Leisure/ Restaurants/Cafes/Drinking Establishments

8.19 There will be opportunities for restaurants, cafes and drinking establishments within the southern area of the Gade Zone (between Combe Street and the Market Square) to support a key leisure facility such a cinema. Uses which increase activity in and around the public square and enhance lunchtime and evening cafe culture activities will be encouraged. The bus station services will be relocated in order to create a central bus interchange in the town centre and promote sustainable transport (additional information on this will be provided in the town centre Masterplan).

Residential

8.20 The Pre-Submission Core Strategy has the strategic objective of providing a mix of new homes to meet the needs of the population. As part of this, it seeks to deliver 1,800 homes in Hemel Hempstead town centre by 2031. The Gade Zone offers significant regeneration opportunities for residential uses and will therefore be critical to the achievement of this target.

8.21 The Council will encourage residential uses within the Gade Zone to support the Council's overall aims and objectives.

8.22 Due to the highly accessible central location of the site the Council will consider high densities favourably, provided that they do not have adverse effects on the character and appearance of the area, the environment, or the amenity of existing residents.

8.23 The northern area of the Gade Zone is a transitional and a sensitive location making it a preference for residential-led development. The provision of new homes in this area will help to support and strengthen the economy of the Old Town and consolidate its position as a standalone commercial centre. Furthermore, it is an ideal location to build a high quality mix of housing to complement the historic character, setting and built form of the Old Town Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings.

8.24 The western section of the northern area of the Gade Zone is bordered to the west by Leighton Buzzard Road, to the north by Queensway and to the east by the River Gade. Housing is considered most appropriate in this location. Development here will be impacted by the flood relief culvert which intersects the area. As such, development will require a very considered design and layout.

8.25 The Council will encourage residential development throughout the rest of the Gade Zone which either wraps around other uses or is located above them. The latter will maximise the use of land and further support the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Offices

8.26 The Council will encourage a range of viable commercial uses within the central and southern areas of the Gade Zone in order to add to the vitality of the town centre.

Education

8.27 The Council will consider favourably proposals which involve the consolidation of the college site within the Gade Zone, wider town centre or other well-connected location. The loss of the educational facility through redevelopment proposals will be resisted unless the college can satisfy the Council that the site is no longer appropriate/or needed for education use, and/or appropriate alternative provision has been made.

8.28 Should the consolidation result in any surplus land becoming available for redevelopment the Council's preference would be that this comes forward for residential. As noted previously, the provision of new homes in the northern area of the Gade Zone will help support and strengthen the economy of the Old Town.

Car Parking

8.29 The Council will require that an appropriate amount of parking is delivered as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of the Gade Zone.

8.30 Large scale uses will be expected to meet the majority of their parking demand on site.

8.31 Car parks north of the core shopping area have some degree of spare capacity. Development schemes will be expected to take account of underutilised car parks and methods that could be employed to increase their use.

8.32 A Parking Strategy will be included in the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan. This will be the key document for developers to consider in relation to town centre parking.

9. Urban Design Principles

9.1 The following urban design principles are set out in Figure 12 of the Pre-Submission Core Strategy. They are informed by CABE's 'By Design' principles and mutually reinforce the principles set out in the Urban Design Assessments, the Residential Character and Conservation Area Appraisals, Policies CS10-13 on design and Policies CS28-32 relating to using resources efficiently. They will apply to all future development within the Gade Zone.

Urban Design Principles

1. **Character** - a place with its own identity that respects the local history, geology and landscape, and the Urban Design Assessment character zones and Residential Character and Conservation Area Appraisals.
2. **Defined layout and enclosure** - a place that is defined by buildings, structures and landscape made up of public and private spaces.
3. **Making connections** - a place that is easy to get to and move around.
4. **High quality of public realm** - creating places with attractive environmental quality.
5. **Legibility** - a place that has a clear image and identity and is easy to understand.
6. **Adaptability** - a place that can respond to changing uses easily and is robust over time.
7. **Diversity** - a place that offers a mix of activities to the widest choice of users
8. **Safe and welcoming** - creating places that feel safe, secure and welcoming for everyone.

Character

9.2 A sense of identity needs to be created by delivering high quality design that respects local distinctiveness. In order to achieve this all new development should:

- respond positively and sensitively to different influences on and around the site including:
 - the River Gade;
 - Gadebridge Park;
 - the Bury;
 - the Old town;
 - the Marlowes;
 - the Water Gardens
 - the retail edge
- take advantage of opportunities to open up the River Gade, making it more attractive and more accessible;

- recognise the need to conserve and enhance the historic character and setting of the Old Town Conservation Area;
- complement the historic and natural assets located within and adjacent to the Gade Zone;
- maintain key views towards the River Gade, St Mary's Church and the Water Gardens;
- emphasise gateways around the Gade Zone through new landmark buildings; and
- achieve an articulation and finish that contribute to design excellence.

Defined layout and enclosure

9.3 The Gade Zone should be redeveloped with place-making in mind. The principles to achieve this are as follows:

- ensure buildings addressing the public realm, particularly the River Gade walk and cycle way, create attractive and active frontages along pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes;
- ensure there is an 8 metre buffer both sides of the River Gade and that the route is framed with appropriate uses, landscaping and vegetation;
- exploit opportunities for landmark buildings of strategic visual importance
- ensure all servicing and parking for new developments, particularly a supermarket, is designed as an integrated part of the development and does not create visual intrusions or large empty voids;
- reinforce the building line along the Marlowes bringing it forward where appropriate
- ensure building heights and massing relate well to buildings along the Marlowes, Queensway and Leighton Buzzard Road;
- ensure buildings adjacent to the River Gade do not overshadow the River corridor.

Making connections

9.4 The Gade Zone needs to be better linked to surrounding areas of the town centre and the open spaces and neighbourhoods beyond. This will include better connections and better pedestrian and cycle links to adjacent areas. The principles are as follows:

- accommodate safe and convenient connections for pedestrians and cyclists ensuring all routes are accessible for disabled users;
- create a linked hierarchy of public green spaces along the River Gade corridor forming a riverside walk and cycle way improving north-south connections through the Gade Zone;

- provide interlinked public spaces throughout the Gade Zone which encourage movement;
- ensure the layout of the Gade Zone is legible and permeable and connects with adjacent areas of the town centre and nearby residential neighbourhoods with a particular focus on east-west links;
- retain the existing Dacorum Way access as a key vehicular route through the Gade Zone;
- create a better pedestrian/cycle environment along Leighton Buzzard Road and on Queensway;
- ensure car parking does not dominate the development.

High quality of public realm

9.5 High quality public spaces where people can meet, sit and walk, in comfort and safety (actual and perceived) needs to be enhanced and maximised. The principles that will guide this are to:

- create a public realm which is designed to encourage walking and to be accessible to everyone;
- ensure that development has an appropriate level of open space and that this is suitably linked to other public spaces;
- explore opportunities to enhance the existing public square;
- consider provision of a new square further north in the Gade Zone, possibly linked to the building of a new Public Service Quarter;
- design streets, spaces and surrounding buildings together to encourage activity to take place in the public realm. The form, mix of uses, pedestrian movement, street furniture and lighting will all help generate opportunities that could help build the evening economy;
- introduce high quality, coordinated street furniture, materials and designs in public areas that are durable, easy to maintain and appropriately transition between the Historic Old Town and the modern New Town. Design guidance set out in the Improvement Strategies for the Marlowes Shopping Zone and the Old Town Zone should be recognised and considered as should guidance provided in the Heritage Improvement Strategy, which covers the entire town centre;
- encourage re-planting of street trees along the Marlowes;
- take account of existing good quality trees within the area
- provide enhanced landscaping around the River Gade which is in keeping with the chalk stream environment ensuring that only native species are planted adjacent to the river.

Legibility

9.6 The principles to create a place which is easy to understand and navigate are as follows:

- encourage landmark developments at key gateways to the Gade Zone that assist the orientation and „wayfinding’ of people;
- retain and improve key views towards the River Gade, St Mary’s Church and the Water Gardens;
- provide direct connections between key areas along recognisable routes such as the River Gade walk and cycle way;
- provide adequate and clear signposting for ease of navigation.

Adaptability

9.7 The principles which will support a development that can respond to a diverse range of conditions are as follows:

- encourage flexibly designed buildings that can accommodate a variety of uses;
- seek the highest possible standard of sustainability in all development;
- encourage innovative approaches to car parking. The topography of the site allows for the use of changes of levels especially from the Marlowes, which could facilitate the use of undercroft parking.

Diversity

9.8 The objective is to create a cohesive and comprehensive development that will create a more viable town centre and respond to local needs. The principles to achieve this are as follows:

- create a high-density mixed-use development that will strengthen the viability and vitality of Hemel Hempstead town centre;
- ensure large developments provide a mix of uses that will encourage street activity throughout both the day and evening;
- encourage different uses on different floors of a development in order to make the most of this urban location;
- provide a range of homes in all residential developments. This will include larger family properties. 35% of homes should be affordable (in line with Policy CS19 of the Pre-Submission Core Strategy).

Safe and Welcoming

9.9 The objective is to create a safe and pleasant environment in which to live, work and visit. The principles to achieve this are as follows:

- encourage clear, welcoming and active frontages along all pedestrian and vehicular routes, particularly the River Gade walk and cycle way;
- provide enhanced lighting along pedestrian routes (this should be sensitively implemented around the river corridor to ensure that its natural diurnal cycle is not disturbed);
- consider public safety and security as a key factor in the design process of all development.

10. Developer Contributions

10.1 As part of redevelopment of the Gade Zone, on-site delivery or developer contributions will be sought for the following:

1. Affordable housing in schemes involving residential development (refer to the Planning Obligations SPD for more information)
2. The riverside walk and cycle way
3. Landscaping in the vicinity of the development (plus ongoing maintenance support)
4. Pedestrian and cycle crossings
5. Appropriate traffic calming measures, pedestrian and cycle improvements and highway enhancements within and adjacent to the town centre
6. Paving wrapping around the Gade Zone (along Queensway and the Marlowes)
7. Street furniture
8. The Water Gardens
9. Improvements to Waterhouse Street and the Market Square

10.2 The Council may also seek additional contributions as appropriate.

”

Annex 1 Detailed Planning Policy Context

The policy context for the site is set by national and regional policy guidance, the Dacorum Borough Local Plan, associated supplementary planning documents, and emerging policy.

National and Regional Policy Context

(a) National Policies

The most relevant to this site are considered to be:

- PPS 1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS 3: Housing
- PPS 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
- PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment
- PPS 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- PPG 13: Transport
- PPS 25: Development and Flood Risk

PPS 5 sets out that promoting the vitality and viability of town and other centres is one of the Government's key objectives for planning. To do this the Government wants:

- new economic growth and development of main town centre uses to be focused in existing centres, with the aim of offering a wide range of services to communities in an attractive and safe environment and remedying deficiencies in provision in areas with poor access to facilities
- competition between retailers and enhanced consumer choice through the provision of innovative and efficient shopping, leisure, tourism and local services in town centres, which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community (particularly socially excluded groups)
- the historic, archaeological and architectural heritage of centres to be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced to provide a sense of place and a focus for the community and for civic activity

The main town centre uses to which the town centre policies in PPS 4 apply are:

1. retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres)
2. leisure, entertainment facilities, and the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls)
3. offices, and

4. arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities)

PPS 5 sets out the Government's overarching aim that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to current and future generations. It recognises that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource and has the objective to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance by ensuring that the positive contribution of such heritage assets to local character and sense of place is recognised and valued and consideration of the historic environment is integrated into planning policies, promoting place-shaping.

The objectives of PPG 13 are to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional, strategic and local level to promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight, promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling and reduce the need to travel, especially by car. Local authorities should seek to make maximum use of the most accessible sites, such as those in town centres and others which are, or will be, close to major transport interchanges. They should be pro-active in promoting intensive development in these areas and on such sites. They should develop a clear vision for development of these areas.

PPS 25 outlines that the aims of planning policy on development and flood risk are to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas at highest risk. A sequential risk-based approach to determining the suitability of land for development in flood risk areas should be applied at all levels of the planning process. PPS 25 sets out appropriate development for flood zones in table D.1.

(b) Regional policies

The East of England Plan was published in May 2008 and identified Hemel Hempstead as a key centre for development and change. Following an unsuccessful attempt to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies in 2010, the Government took a firm step towards this with the passing of the Localism Act in November 2011. Whilst the East of England Plan remains a material consideration the weight attached to it has been substantially reduced.

Local Policy Context

(c) Existing policy

Dacorum Borough Local Plan

The Dacorum Borough Local Plan (adopted 21 April 2004) is the statutory Local Plan covering the whole of the Dacorum Borough. It forms the basis for decisions on land use on the site. All policies within the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (with the exception of Policy 27 – Gypsy Sites) are saved by direction of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The supplementary planning guidance prepared under earlier planning legislation and guidance, and the supplementary planning documents which are linked to the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 are saved with that.

The key policies in the Local Plan which relate to the site are as follows:

- Policy 9: Land use division in towns and large villages
- Policy 11: Quality of development
- Policy 39: Uses in town centres and local centres
- Policy 49: Transport planning strategy
- Policy 107: Development in areas of flood risk
- Policy 119: Development affecting listed buildings

Policy 9 divides towns and large villages in the Borough into residential areas, General Employment Areas, town centres and local centres, and open land areas.

Policy 11 states that a high standard will be expected in all development proposals. Development will not be permitted unless it meets criteria (a) to (g).

Hemel Hempstead town centre is designated in Policy 39. The Gade Zone falls wholly within the town centre area (see Local Plan Proposals Map sheet 4). In town centres:

- (i) A mix of uses, normally including housing and social and community uses, is sought
- (ii) Shopping (including financial and professional services and catering establishments) is encouraged
- (iii) Compatible leisure uses are encouraged
- (iv) Business use, including offices is normally acceptable
- (v) Shopping and business development will be controlled, however to enable a broad range of uses to be maintained or achieved
- (vi) A high density of development, linked to the achievement of transport objectives, is generally supported.
- (vii) The mixed of individual buildings is generally encouraged

The Local Plan also includes a strategy for Hemel Hempstead Town Centre (including the Old Town Centre). The strategy sets out overarching guidance and establishes a vision for the town centre. A series of town centre zones are identified with a strategy analysis and appraisal.

Policy 49 sets out the principles which apply with respect to the transport implications of new development proposals.

Policy 107 explains that a precautionary approach to flood risk will be taken when considering development based on the sequential approach set out in PPG 25 (since updated in the form of PPS25). The production of a Flood Risk Assessment will be required for all sites where the Environment Agency advise that the risk of flooding exists.

The central tenet of Policy 119 is a general presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Every effort will be made to ensure that any new development liable to affect the character of an adjacent listed building will be of such a scale and appearance, and will make use of such materials, as will retain the character and setting of the listed building.

Other key policies are listed in Annex 1.

Civic Zone Development Brief SPD

The Civic Zone Development Brief SPD (adopted in November 2005) supplements the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Strategy contained within the Dacorum Borough Local Plan providing a greater level of detail on Zones 2 and 3 (covering the area west of the Marlowes from Queensway in the north to Bridge Street in the south).

The SPD states that the Council will work with public and private stakeholders and the community in order to establish a Masterplan for the area. It explains that the Council will resist major planning applications before the Masterplan has been prepared if it is considered that they conflict with the SPD and/or may compromise the delivery of key objectives. It was the Council's intention that a Masterplan for the area be in place by 2006.

Key objectives for the Development Brief Area are set out on page 4 and include to:

- Be planned and developed as a comprehensive scheme
- Contribute towards the overall achievement of the town centre's regeneration and enhancement
- Be developed to its optimum potential

The development guidelines provide a framework of how the Council will aim to focus the future development within the Development Brief Area. The northern and central areas of the Gade Zone are identified for predominantly residential development. Mixed uses are encouraged in the southern area.

The adopted SPD is a material consideration in the preparation of a Masterplan and the determination of planning applications for the site. Although adopted in 2005, the principles it contains still reflect the Council's intentions for the area.

Excluding the land between Bridge Street and the Market Square, the development brief covers the same area as the Gade Zone.

(d) Emerging policy

Pre-Submission Core Strategy

The Council is currently preparing a new Local Planning Framework for Dacorum Borough. This will replace the existing Local Plan which was adopted in 2004. The Core Strategy is the central document in the Local Planning Framework. Consultation on the document began in 2005 with the emerging issues and options and has taken place at various subsequent stages. Most recently, a consultation was recently carried out in respect of the Pre-Submission Core Strategy. If no significant new issues are raised then the Core Strategy and associated documents will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for formal examination. It is hoped that the final Core Strategy will be adopted by the Council in late 2012/early 2013. However, a significant number of the policies contained within it already hold weight as material planning considerations.

The key policies in the Core Strategy which relate to the site are as follows:

- Policy CS4: The towns and large villages
- Policy CS8: Transport
- Policy CS16: Shops and commerce
- Policy CS26: Green infrastructure
- Policy CS27: Quality of the Historic Environment
- Policy CS31: Water Management
- Policy CS33: Hemel Hempstead town centre

Policy CS4 is very similar to Policy 9 in the Local Plan. It states that in town centres a mix of uses is sought. The following uses are encouraged:

- (a) Shopping uses (including financial and professional services and catering establishments)
- (b) Compatible leisure uses
- (c) Business uses, including offices
- (d) Residential uses; and
- (e) Social and community uses

A high density of development, linked to the achievement of sustainability objectives, is generally supported. The mixed use of individual buildings is also generally encouraged.

Policy CS8 states that all new development will contribute to a well connected and accessible transport system. Principles include giving priority to the needs of other road and passenger transport users over the private car, creating safer and continuous footpath and cycle networks, and strengthening links to and between key facilities (bus and railway stations, hospitals, main employers and town centres).

Policy CS16 states that in Hemel Hempstead opportunities will be given to provide capacity for up to 47,500 square metres of comparison floorspace and 6,000 square metres of convenience floorspace in the period 2009-2031. These figures are derived from a 2011 Retail Study Update provided by G L Hearn. Core Strategy policy dictates that most retail development will be directed to the town centre.

Development proposals that promote a diverse evening economy in town centres will be supported provided that their social and environmental impacts are controlled.

Policy CS26 states that the Green Infrastructure Network will be protected, extended and enhanced. Development will contribute towards the conservation and restoration of habitats and species; the strengthening of biodiversity corridors; the creation of better public access and links through green space; and a greater range of uses in urban green spaces.

Redevelopment should facilitate reached the Thames River Basin Management Plan and the Dacorum Chalk Rivers Action Plan targets.

Policy CS27 states that all development will favour the conservation of historic assets. The integrity, setting and distinctiveness of designated and undesignated heritage assets will be protected, conserved and if appropriate enhanced. Furthermore, development will positively conserve and enhance the appearance and character of conservation areas.

Policy CS31 dictates that development will be required to avoid Flood Zones 2 and 3 unless it is for a compatible use. Flood Risk Assessment must accompany planning applications for development in these areas, explaining how the sequential approach to development has been taken into account and outlining appropriate mitigation measures. Development will also be required to secure opportunities to reduce the cause and impact of flooding and to avoid damage to Groundwater Source Protection Zones.

The Core Strategy sets out overarching guidance for the town centre in much the same way as the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Strategy within the Local Plan. The local objectives for the town centre are to deliver around 1800 homes, a local general hospital, a primary school, a new library and college, new civic and cultural facilities, a supermarket and other shops, a bus interchange and a better footpath network.

The Core Strategy identifies 7 Character Zones (of which the Gade Zone is one) to guide regeneration in different parts of the town centre. The Town Centre Masterplan will provide further guidance and detail, particularly on the areas of greatest change and activity.

Policy CS33: Hemel Hempstead Town Centre sets out the guiding principles for development in the town centre. These are addressed in Section 6: Planning and Regeneration Objectives.

Other relevant policies are set out in Annex 2.

Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan and associated Cabinet Reports

At its meeting on 19 October 2010, the Council's Cabinet agreed a strategy of incremental regeneration based on a comprehensive Masterplan for the town centre. On 29 March 2011 the scope of the Masterplan was agreed and governance arrangements put into place. A focus on three sites in the following priority was agreed:

4. Civic Block – with an investigation of viability for new civic hub uses, food store and residential development
5. Market Square/Water Gardens – to examine development opportunities for civic hub, food store and leisure uses
6. Paradise/Hospital Zone – highlighting future opportunities for this part of the town centre for new local general hospital facilities, housing, primary school and other mixed uses

The purpose of the Masterplan is to provide a long-term vision for the future of the town centre, focusing on the need for regeneration and building upon the framework of the seven character areas set out in the Core Strategy. Once adopted, the Masterplan will provide strategic guidance for new investment and development in the town centre. Work is currently underway on the Masterplan and it is scheduled to be completed in November 2012 subject to approval by Full Council.

On 29 November 2011 Cabinet endorsed the first phase of major regeneration proposals for Hemel Hempstead town centre. Thirteen recommendations were approved in total. The following relate directly to the Gade Zone:

1. To proceed with the regeneration of the Civic Centre site in conjunction with those other parts of the Civic Block that partner organisations are prepared to include
2. To develop a new Public Service Quarter including space for public and voluntary sector partners where agreement can be reached. The preferred locations to be further considered are the Water Gardens and Marlowes/Library sites (former „Dacorum Pavilion’).
3. That development feasibility study work is carried out to consider regeneration options in the market square

(e) Technical work

Two key studies have been commissioned to help develop the Masterplan. These are the Access and Movement Study (JMP Consultants) and the Major Land Use Study (Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners). Other work has also been commissioned to help understand the historic significance of the Water Gardens and to help identify the new location for the Public Service Quarter.

Improvement Strategies for each of the town centre character zones are being developed and will sit underneath the Masterplan providing greater detail in relation to future development. To date only the Marlowes Shopping Zone Improvement Strategy has been completed (JMP Consultants). A Heritage Improvement Strategy will be produced alongside the Old Town Improvement Strategy to address the heritage assets of the Old town centre and the New town centre together.

A level 2 strategic flood risk assessment for Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead was published in June 2008 as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy. The level 1 assessment recommended a detailed assessment of the residual risk of failure or significant blockage of the Hemel Hempstead flood relief culvert potentially resulting in flooding of properties through the centre of Hemel Hempstead. The north-western edge of the Gade Zone was identified in the level 2 assessment as falling with Flood Zone 3b. In addition there is a limited area within the site (opposite the entrance to Bury Road) classified as Flood Zone 3a. The remainder of the site is classified as Flood Zone 1.

Annex 2 – Relevant Dacorum Borough Local Plan policies

- Policy 9: Land use division in towns and large villages
- Policy 10: Optimising the use of urban land
- Policy 11: Quality of development
- Policy 12: Infrastructure provision and phasing
- Policy 13: Planning conditions and planning obligations
- Policy 18: Size of new dwellings
- Policy 20: Affordable housing
- Policy 21: Density of residential development
- Policy 38: The main shopping hierarchy
- Policy 39: Uses in town centres and local centres
- Policy 40: The scale of development in town centres and local centres
- Policy 41: New shopping development in town centres and local centres
- Policy 49: Transport planning strategy
- Policy 51: Development and transport impacts
- Policy 54: Highway design
- Policy 55: Traffic management
- Policy 57: Provision and management of parking
- Policy 58: Private parking provision
- Policy 59: Public off-street car parking
- Policy 61: Pedestrians
- Policy 62: Cyclists
- Policy 63: Access for disabled people
- Policy 64: Passenger transport
- Policy 67: Land for social and community facilities
- Policy 68: Retention of social and community facilities
- Policy 69: Education
- Policy 99: Preservation of trees, hedgerows and woodlands
- Policy 100: Tree and woodland planting
- Policy 101: Tree and woodland management
- Policy 102: Sites of importance to nature conservation
- Policy 103: Management of sites of nature conservation importance
- Policy 104: Nature conservation in river valleys
- Policy 107: Development in areas of flood risk
- Policy 111: Height of buildings
- Policy 119: Development affecting listed buildings
- Policy 120: Development in conservation areas

This list is not exhaustive therefore other Local Plan policies may be applicable.

Annex 3 – Relevant Dacorum Borough Pre-Submission Core Strategy policies

Policy CS1: Distribution of development
Policy CS4: The towns and large villages
Policy CS8: Sustainable transport
Policy CS9: Management of roads
Policy CS10: Quality of settlement design
Policy CS11: Quality of neighbourhood design
Policy CS12: Quality of site design
Policy CS13: Quality of the public realm
Policy CS16: Shops and commerce
Policy CS18: Mix of housing
Policy CS19: Affordable housing
Policy CS23: Social infrastructure
Policy CS25: Landscape character
Policy CS26: Green infrastructure
Policy CS27: Quality of the historic environment
Policy CS28: Carbon emission reductions
Policy CS29: Sustainable design and construction
Policy CS31: Water Management
Policy CS32: Air, soil and water quality
Policy CS33: Hemel Hempstead town centre

This list is not exhaustive therefore other Core Strategy policies may be applicable.

