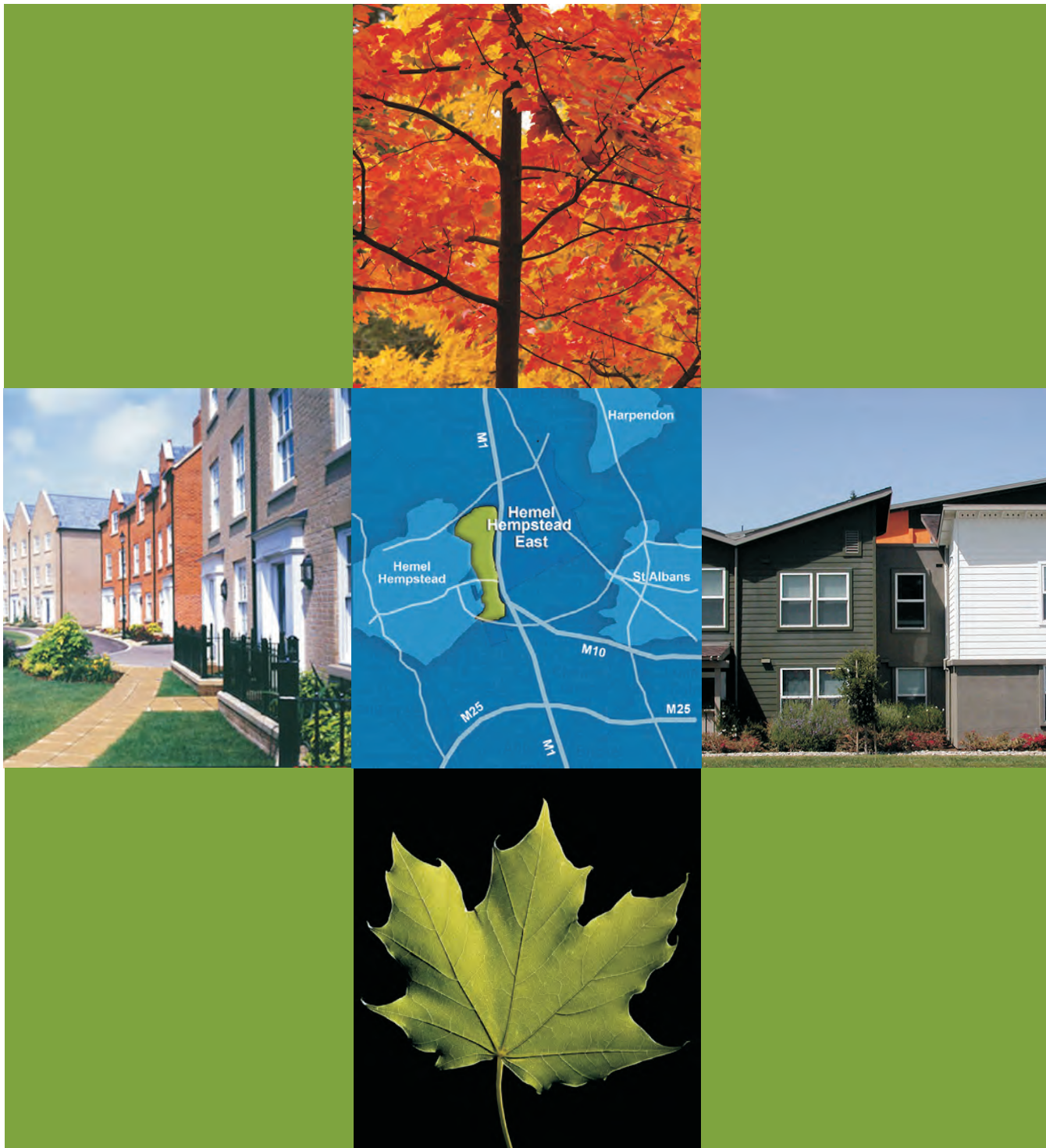


Proposed Development at Gorhambury: Hemel Hempstead East

Supporting Information

Entec

January 2008



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January 2008

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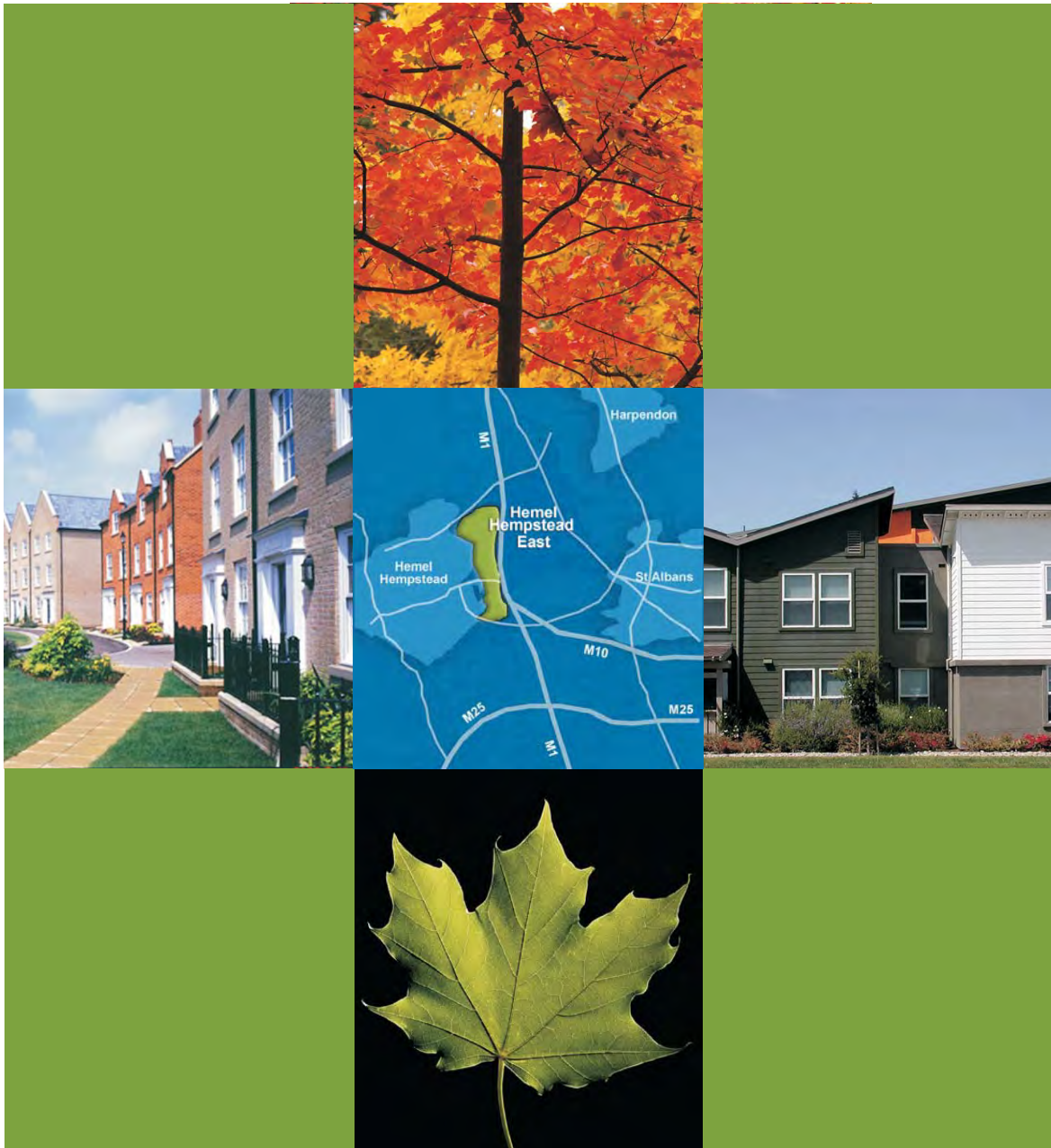
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Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this five part document is to build on the case already put forward for a major urban extension to the east of Hemel Hempstead. The aim is to set out the evidence base to support the identification of eastern Hemel Hempstead as a sustainable mixed use urban extension in the Dacorum and St. Albans Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and in anticipation of preparation of the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan (AAP). The supporting information in this document builds on the Gorhambury Concept that was originally produced in 2001 and updated in 2005.

The document sets out how the proposed development (also known as Gorhambury) is the most sustainable option for growth of the town and it explores how the proposed mixed use development can push the boundaries of sustainability, creating a highly sustainable mixed use extension which assists in the overall regeneration of the town. It demonstrates that this is a sensible way of assisting Dacorum Borough Council in meeting Hemel Hempstead's housing and employment needs, assuming that draft RSS14 incorporating the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes is carried forward. Development here has the potential to dramatically improve the gateway into Hemel Hempstead from the M1 and views of the town from the M1 and its removal from the Green Belt would not be detrimental as the land does not contribute to the objectives and purposes of the Green Belt.

The Crown Estate owns the land between the eastern edge of the built up area of Hemel Hempstead and the M1 motorway. This land, which is around 370ha, is shown in Figure A1.1(after page A2). Land to the east of the M1 is also owned by The Crown Estate, but is not proposed for development, although is available for use with the development.

The document sets out how the proposed development can be accommodated within environmental and other constraints, and how it can exploit key opportunities to meet community and environmental objectives. In particular the focus is on how the proposals can be developed in such a way that they respond to climate change and key issues such as reducing carbon dioxide emissions, waste arisings and water use. The Crown Estate is committed to the principles of sustainability and stewardship and, having the advantage of single ownership of this area of land there is a real opportunity to ensure growth of the town through development of an exemplar development which pushes the boundaries of sustainability whilst being well integrated with the town.



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The proposals set out in this document are not set in stone, but provide an indication of how The Crown Estate's land could be developed when taking into account key constraints and opportunities and best practice. It is acknowledged that as these proposals do not have any status at present, it has not been appropriate to undertake any public consultation, although discussions have taken place with some key stakeholders. Should the decision be made that growth at Hemel Hempstead will be to the east of the town, The Crown Estate will ensure that these proposals are the starting point for public and key stakeholder consultation.

This document is divided into five parts, as follows:

- **Part A** restates the outline of the Gorhambury Concept in its updated form. It then seeks to establish why Gorhambury is the right place to develop, with reference to historical growth of Hemel Hempstead, the regional context for growth, housing and Green Belt issues, and the available alternative sites/areas for development at Hemel Hempstead.
- **Part B** sets out a range of baseline information and explores how development at Gorhambury could contribute to the achievement of key local opportunities for employment and socio-economic issues, landscape and visual, transport, historic environment, ecology, utilities and infrastructure, informal recreation and public access, and air quality and noise. It seeks to show that development is capable of being accommodated with constraints identified through the baseline information.
- **Part C** relates to Climate Change and Sustainability and specifically explores how the proposed development could push the boundaries of sustainable development. It focuses on energy issues, including an assessment of the energy requirements of the development, what measures could be incorporated to ensure that the development works towards achieving zero carbon status. This section then considers the issue of water neutrality and water conservation and assesses the likely water demand requirements of the development before proposing measures that could be used to ensure that the water requirements of the development are minimised. It goes on to consider resource efficiency and waste reduction, assessing the likely waste arising from the proposed development and identifying ways in which the development can seek to reduce these.
- **Part D** brings together the findings of the baseline and opportunities work (Part B) and the technical work on climate change and sustainability (Part C) to set out how the land to the east of Hemel Hempstead could be developed. This focuses on our commitment to work closely with local authorities, key stakeholders and the public. It sets out options for how key design principles and concept, transport strategy, landscape strategy, community and stewardship, and delivery and phasing can be taken forward in more detailed discussions.



- **Part E** concludes the document, bringing together the key findings from the document and setting out the next steps for taking the proposals forward if the decision is made that the direction for growth at Hemel Hempstead is to the east.

Overview of the Proposals and Case for Growth to the East of Hemel Hempstead

Context

The Crown Estate has been aware of the potential of the area of land to the east of Hemel Hempstead between the edge of the urban area and the M1 motorway for a number of years. This land can assist in meeting the growing need for new homes and sustainable communities in the East of England and in Dacorum. The proposed development could accommodate up to around 6,000-7,000 homes up to 2021 and beyond, with employment uses, integrated new public transport routes, open space, recreational uses and community facilities and services in up to three new neighbourhoods.

Draft RSS incorporating the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes identifies Hemel Hempstead as a key centre for development and change and requires provision of a minimum of 12,000 new dwellings in Dacorum Borough between 2001 and 2021. This level of development cannot be provided on brownfield sites alone, and there is therefore a need for development of Green Belt land in the form an urban extension to the town.

Entec has considered the development history of Hemel Hempstead in order to establish how the town can best develop further to assist in the regeneration of the whole town. It will be critical that any development to the east of the town benefits the wider area and is seen as part of the overall growth of the town.

Technical Work

The baseline work undertaken demonstrates that land to the east of the town is the most logical and sustainable direction for the town to grow in. The Green Belt land at this location does not contribute significantly to the purposes of Green Belt land, and the location of the M1 provides a long term defensible new Green Belt boundary which will ensure that the town does not encroach into the open countryside or result in settlements merging in the future. Therefore if the decision is made by Dacorum and St. Albans to expand the town to the east, development at this location will not undermine the Green Belt here.

There are no major environmental constraints to development to the east of the town. The ecological work concludes that there are no statutory sites of nature conservation value and



the majority of the land is of negligible nature conservation importance. There are a number of opportunities for biodiversity enhancement in this area.

The land is not within an area at risk of fluvial or tidal flooding, and there are opportunities for incorporation of SUDs and creation of additional wetlands and water storage areas to ensure that surface runoff from the site to adjacent land is managed and minimised. The Crown Estate also owns land to the east of the M1. This land is not proposed for development, but does provide an opportunity to be used as a resource for the new development, for instance through use for storage wetlands and as a recreational resource.

An assessment of the historic environment in the area indicates that this scale of development can be achieved without significant adverse effects on the immediate historic environment, and that there is a significant opportunity to generate public participation in the wider historic environment and to manage the historic environment in a sustainable way.

The character and quality of the landscape has been a key element in shaping the proposed development to the east of Hemel Hempstead. Features such as valleys and plateaus, the agricultural landscape, the modern urban environment and retained ecology have influenced the shape of the proposed development.

Incorporation of sustainable transport measures will be key to development of land to the east of the town. The scale of the development proposed offers a number of opportunities for improving public transport in the area, and measures such as creation of bus only lanes, use of clean energy vehicles, new public transport links and a park and ride are explored. Further transport work will need to be undertaken, but this is very much dependent on transport modelling work being undertaken by Dacorum Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council.

In terms of the socio-economic environment, there has been slow take-up in the office market in Hemel Hempstead in recent years, and there is a need for a high quality office environment. Plans for the redevelopment of the Maylands area and Maylands Gateway are already being set out and there is a key opportunity for development of land to the east of the town to be linked to these proposals so that uses that compliment employment could be provided and so that real improvements can be made to the Hemel Gateway from the M1 Junction through to Maylands.

The facilities audit considers the proximity of key services and social and community facilities to the proposed development and identifies the types of services that are likely to be necessary as part of the proposed development. The scale of the proposed development means that there are significant opportunities to provide new services and facilities and to



consider provision of larger facilities that may currently be lacking in the town, possibly including a new town leisure stadium.

With regard to physical constraints which will affect the layout of the proposed development, part of the land to the east of the town is crossed by a high voltage overhead line. This in itself is not a constraint to development, but will require careful planning and design in this area. As part of the utilities and services work, initial discussions have taken place with infrastructure providers in this area to establish any constraints to development from the location of assets and any key supply issues that are likely to arise.

The proximity of Buncefield Oil Depot and the pipelines linking into this facility are a key consideration in developing proposals for the land to the east of Hemel Hempstead. The extent of The Crown Estate's land at this location means that the proposed development can take account of the HSE's (Health and Safety Executive's) new consultation zone around Buncefield which is 400m. The proposals are also flexible enough that they can be amended in light of any further guidance from HSE once it is published.

Climate Change and Sustainability

Part C of this document considers climate change and sustainability issues. If the proposed development is constructed in a phased manner, possibly starting in 2012, and the government's proposed timetable to zero carbon is adhered to, much of the development will be built to comply with building regulations that require zero carbon housing. The energy use of the proposed development has been estimated (based on a series of assumptions) and a series of technical options set out to identify how the required energy could be provided. From a practical perspective, a strategy based on large wind and biomass CHP is considered to be the most effective solution to achieving zero carbon, and an indication of the costs associated with the various options are set out. This is however dependent on the scale of the development, as economies of scale would not be achieved if the scale of the development was much smaller.

An estimate of the likely water requirements of the proposed development is set out, and a number of measures to ensure that the proposed development minimises water use and works towards being water neutral are identified. This includes consideration of offsetting the new demand by measures to reduce consumption in surrounding areas. A number of technologies which could assist in working towards water neutrality are considered, although it is recognised that at present some of these are still in the early stages, but are likely to have advanced and may be further proven by the time parts of the development are built.

An indication of the likely waste arising from the proposed development is set out along with a number of detailed measures that could be put in place to significantly reduce this level of



waste. This includes measures at the construction phase and once the land is developed and people are living and working in the area.

The Proposals

The Concept Plan, Figure A1.2 (after page A2) provides an indication of how the land to the east of Hemel Hempstead could be developed. This has been developed through consideration of the baseline technical work and key opportunities and constraints. Another key influence in developing this concept has been the urban structure and development history of the town. For instance, it is important to understand the previous settlement pattern, including the medieval village that pre-dates Leverstock Green at Westwick and the way in which the New Town neighbourhoods have developed over the years. This information has all been used to inform the development proposals which are described in detail in Section D of this document. These are illustrated in the Concept figure A1.2 and an overview of the proposals is set out below.

Northern Neighbourhood

- Approximately 3,000 new homes set out around two mixed use centres and village greens with two new primary schools. Open space at the core of each neighbourhood and to the north along the Nicky Line and along the M1 buffer strip.
- Possible northern gateway Park and Ride facility off Redbourn Road.
- Two new main streets connecting Redbourn Road to Green Lane and Three Cherry Trees Lane via the two new neighbourhood centres.

Maylands East

- B1 office development beyond the 400m HSE consultation zone.
- B2/B8 employment and warehousing between the inner and outer HSE consultation zone.

Hemel Gateway

- New Gateway to Hemel Hempstead from the M1 Junction with landmark buildings including a possible new stadium for the town.
- Central Gateway Park and Ride facility (possibly in conjunction with a new town stadium) off Breakspear Way along with improvements to the highways to facilitate priority public transportation within an urban 'boulevard'.



Southern Neighbourhoods

- Approximately 3,000 new homes set around the existing village of Leverstock Green with a new mixed use centre, village green and primary school centred on Westwick Row. Open space is at the core of the new neighbourhood.
- The layout of the neighbourhood respects the memory of medieval origins of settlement in the area and sensitively incorporates a series of listed buildings within their context and setting.
- Recreational routes link along the M1 buffer zone north and south to other resources such as Blackwater Wood and Bunkers Country Park.
- Southern Gateway and Park and Ride facility with improvements to the highway to facilitate priority public transportation within an urban 'boulevard'.

The Concept provides an indication of how the area could be developed. This is intended to form the starting point for joint working and involvement with the local authorities, other key stakeholders and the wider public to develop the proposals further. Public consultation will play a very important role in developing the proposals further. It has not been appropriate to undertake public consultation at this stage as the proposals currently have no status. It will however be appropriate to undertake widespread consultation and to work jointly and in partnership with key stakeholders should the decision be made that growth at Hemel Hempstead is to be to the east of the town.



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