

## 4 Development Guidelines

- 4.1 Moving on from the principles established within section 3, section 4 sets out the detailed development guidelines which the Council will take into account when considering planning applications for the DBA. It provides guidance, which the Council believes is appropriate for the DBA. Development proposals should follow the principles established within this document.
- 4.2 The following illustrative plan provides a framework of how the Council will aim to focus the future development within the DBA. The location of the civic uses will need to be identified as part of the masterplanning process.

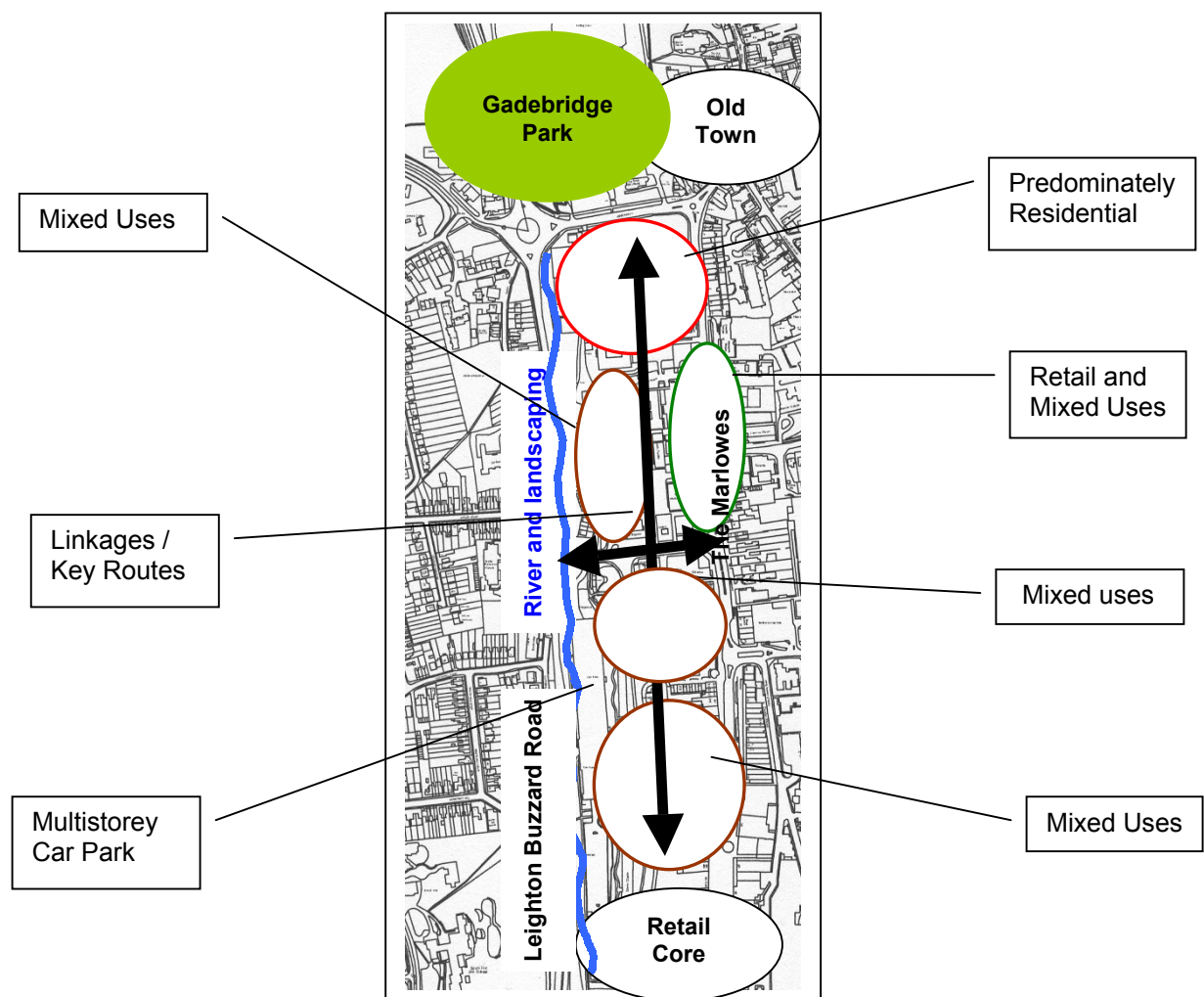


Figure 5  
Illustrative Land Use Plan

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## **Potential Uses**

- 4.3 The principle of the illustrative plan is that a main route dissects the DBA. This will provide a clear route between the old town and the town centre. Access to the various uses within the DBA will be gained via this route. It is possible that areas of this core route will be pedestrian and cycle only, with the main focus on providing a safe and quick route to the various uses within the DBA and beyond.
- 4.4 There is also a route running along the east-west axis. This too will be an important route within the DBA as well as providing access to the wider area.
- 4.5 The civic zone could be located in the southern part of the DBA to follow the centre of gravity / core of the town centre or another location identified as part of the masterplanning process. The broad location of this use needs to reinforce the link between the old town and the town centre.
- 4.6 A large food / non-food retail use could be located within the DBA, possibly adjacent to the main route through the DBA. The location needs to be accessible to the old town and the town centre, as well as promoting legibility to those people travelling through the DBA and support the town centre function as a whole.
- 4.7 It is Dacorum Borough Council's intention to maximise the potential of this key town centre site by encouraging an appropriate mix of uses, which are complementary to the existing environment. The following have been considered acceptable Town Centre uses in considering both Local and National Guidance:
- Civic Uses
  - Retail
  - Leisure
  - Residential
  - Offices
  - Education
  - Catering establishments

## **Civic Uses**

- 4.8 The aim is, as the name suggests, that a strong Civic Presence be retained within the DBA. In addition it is the Borough Council's aspiration to create a one-stop shop of front line public services. For the purposes of this SPD, the likely civic uses within the Civic Zone include:
- Library
  - Police Station
  - Performance and Conference Venue
  - Town Square
  - Education
  - Borough Council and County Council offices
  - Health Service links
- 4.10 The Council will encourage, where appropriate, re-provision (in new modern / upgraded accommodation) of various civic uses within the DBA.

- 4.11 The Council will encourage the establishment of a performance and conference centre within the DBA. It is considered that such a use could link and support the commercial activities proposed as part of the wider scheme.

### **Retail**

- 4.12 In accordance with both Local and National Guidance full consideration should be given to the guidance in Planning Policy Statement 6 Planning for Town Centres. This key Town Centre site is a preferable location for retail development and there is no requirement for any potential developer to demonstrate retail 'need'. However, to ensure that the vitality and viability of Hemel Hempstead is maintained all retail related applications within the DBA must provide full supporting information. The Council will assess retail proposals against the emerging Retail Capacity Study and other material considerations.
- 4.13 On behalf of the Council, Donaldsons has submitted its draft final report on the Dacorum Retail and Leisure Study. The report concludes that there will be both a forecast retail capacity and retailer demand for a new large food / non-food superstore in the DBA. It is therefore a key element of the proposals for the Civic Zone that there will be a significant retail element. The siting and function of this building will therefore be key to the success of the DBA.
- 4.14 The Council will encourage other uses on the upper storeys of retail units e.g. residential and offices. This will serve to maximise the use of land within this urban location.

### **Leisure / Restaurants / Cafés / Drinking Establishments**

- 4.15 In accordance with both Local and National Guidance full consideration should be given to the guidance within PPS 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002) and PPS 6 Planning for Town Centres.
- 4.16 The conclusions of Donaldsons' Draft Retail and Leisure Study indicate that there is a limited demand for substantial new leisure development in Hemel Hempstead, with the exception of some uses, which are too large and / or low density to be appropriate for the DBA. However, the study concludes that the provision for some Use Class A3 – A4 uses (restaurants and cafes / drinking establishments), associated with the proposed new civic and cultural facilities should be made within the DBA.
- 4.17 As a consequence the Council will encourage the establishment of Use Classes A3 – A4 uses to support the vitality and viability of the town centre. This will be important in enhancing the lunchtime and evening economy.

### **Residential**

- 4.18 In accordance with both Local and National Guidance full consideration should be given to the guidance within PPG 3 Housing (2000) which suggests that local authorities should plan to meet the housing requirements of the whole community, including those in need of affordable and special needs housing.

- 4.19 Development within the DBA for some residential use will provide wider housing opportunity for a better choice/mix of housing than is currently available. In keeping with the objectives of PPG3 the Council are seeking to create mixed communities and provide sufficient housing land giving priority to re-using previously developed land within urban areas. This key Town Centre site is critical to the overall vitality of Hemel Hempstead. Mixed use development will be key to linking proposed and existing residential properties with the commercial centre.
- 4.20 The Council will encourage residential uses within the DBA which support the Council's overall aims and objectives.
- 4.21 Due to the accessible location of the development, the Council will also consider favourably densities in excess of 50 dwellings per hectare provided that the development does not adversely affect the character and appearance of the DBA and the wider area. When considering the appropriate residential density within the DBA the Council will take into account the amenity of the occupiers of both existing residents adjacent to individual development sites as well as future residents of the development.
- 4.22 Commensurate open space should be provided alongside residential development. The open space should accord with the guidelines set out within the Local Plan until such time as the Council has carried out its open space audit.
- 4.23 Residential development shall make provision for play space in accordance with these guidelines; all play space should be overlooked.
- 4.24 Proposals within the DBA should provide for an accessible link between Gadebridge Park and the Water Gardens.
- 4.25 The Council requires that the developer will submit a viable management scheme for the long-term maintenance of open space.

### **Offices**

- 4.26 The location of commercial properties in close proximity to residential properties has the potential to reduce the need travel to work. The reuse of urban land for commercial purposes and local authorities and statutory undertakers purposes has a major part to play by releasing under-used or vacant sites from their own land holdings. PPS6 suggests that a sequential test should be adopted in selecting appropriate sites for allocation within town centres, demonstrating where a need can be met.
- 4.27 The Council will encourage a range of commercial uses within the DBA in order to add to the vitality and viability of the town centre.

### **Education**

- 4.28 As set out in the Local Plan, the Council will resist the loss of existing educational facilities. Consequently, based on Local Plan policies, unless it is demonstrated that the college campus site is no longer appropriate or needed for educational

use the Council will resist its loss. Furthermore, planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in the loss of viable social and community facilities, unless satisfactory alternative provision is made.

4.29 Notwithstanding the policy resistance to the loss of educational uses the Local Plan allows for new educational uses within town centre or other appropriate locations in the town. The Council will consider favourably proposals which involve the relocation of the college within the Civic Zone in order to complement other civic uses as well as support the Council's vision for the area. The Council will however resist the loss of the educational facility from the DBA unless the college can satisfy the requirements of the Local Plan policy i.e. that the site is not longer appropriate / or needed for education use.

4.30 Should the college relocate from their present site within the DBA as part of a comprehensive scheme, the college site will be considered appropriate for a range of uses (as those set out Policy 9 of the Local Plan). Due to the location of the existing college site and its proximity to the Old Town, development will be expected to take into account the adjacent conservation area and listed buildings.

#### **Transportation Issues**

4.31 Redevelopment within the DBA provides the opportunity to review the wider traffic circulation within the Town Centre to improve its functioning. Any review of the traffic circulation within the DBA should give improved priority to pedestrians, cyclists and passenger transport. A key priority within the DBA is to improve the permeability and legibility of the area, in particular town centre for example Hemel Old Town, Gadebridge Park and the Water Gardens.

4.32 In order to encourage passenger transport, the Council will promote the relocation of the bus station within the DBA or the wider town centre to provide more up-to-date facility.

4.33 Developers will be expected to prepare detailed transport assessments to accompany planning applications. Furthermore contributions will be sought from developers through planning obligations to be secured through legal agreements towards transport improvements required as a result of development proposals.

#### **Open Space**

4.34 The Council will encourage the retention and improvement of existing public open spaces within the DBA. In particular the Council wishes to see improvements to the Chalkstream which runs through the site.

#### **Community Uses**

4.35 The Council will encourage appropriate community uses within the DBA. These facilities should be appropriate and flexible. Consideration should also be given to the provision of facilities for the Salvation Army and the Methodist Church.