



Shaping
growth in
Dacorum



Dacorum Local Plan (2020 - 2038) Emerging Strategy for Growth

November 2020

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Foreword

This consultation is the next step in creating a new Local Plan that looks ahead to 2038. It will be a key document in shaping the future of our Borough and will affect us all. We are therefore keen to encourage as many people and organisations as possible to get involved.

The Local Plan is dealing with many challenges and is being prepared during a period of unprecedented uncertainty. Not only are we meeting the growth challenge set down by the Government, working to support recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic but also dealing with potentially radical reforms to the planning system that the Government has recently consulted on.

Dacorum will see significant growth and investment over the coming decades, particularly in housing and employment. The Plan outlines the preferred locations for this development and how we can secure the necessary infrastructure to support the growth. The Borough hasn't experienced any similar level of growth since the expansion of Hemel Hempstead during the development of the New Town. This time around our main towns and villages will need to expand if we are to meet such ambitious housing levels.

All of this needs to be done in a way that maintains and enhances the outstanding qualities of Dacorum – its vibrant communities, high quality countryside and being a great place to live, work and enjoy.

This process is exciting. It gives us the chance to grasp opportunities and build for the future, while seeking to tackle some of the many challenges we face in our Borough today. Development will happen – in jobs, homes, retail, and other infrastructure – but if we don't act to shape it, we can't be sure that the best interests of the Borough are being addressed.

Responding to, planning for, and managing change requires us to engage with our residents, businesses and with the Government and our partner organisations. This allows us to act in the best interests of our residents as the Plan is progressed and be aware of all views and latest opinions. In 2017 we consulted on the issues and options facing the Borough in the future. Wherever possible, we have responded positively to previous representations whilst recognising this process has not been easy - as we will have to make hard and often unpopular decisions.

Over the past three years we have developed evidence, engaged with key stakeholders and partners as well as landowners to develop this document. Using this evidence, alongside responses from the previous consultation we have developed an Emerging Strategy for Growth for Dacorum.

It is an important time to get involved and tell us what you think. We have set out what we believe to be the best option for growth, but have yet to make a final decision on this matter and would like to know your views.

Please respond to this consultation and encourage others to do so too – your responses will all be considered and will help us to develop our new Local Plan.

Councillor Graham Sutton

Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure



INTRODUCTION



1 Introduction

What is this document?

- 1.1** This document is the next stage in the development of the Council's Local Plan - the Emerging Strategy for Growth (2020 - 2038).
- 1.2** This document has been published for consultation under Regulation 18 of the Local Plan Regulations (England) 2004 (As Amended) and is an opportunity for the local community, other stakeholders and developers to provide feedback on the emerging approach to development.
- 1.3** The consultation comes at a time of unprecedented uncertainty. The world continues to change rapidly in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and when the impact of climate change is being seen more across the globe. The UK is also facing potential changes to our international economic relationships which could have wide reaching and long terms implications. Added to this the Government has recently published the Planning White Paper setting out a number of potentially significant changes to the planning system. All of which come at a time when the Borough is having to accommodate a significant increase in development, the likes of which have not be seen since the height of the Development Corporation. At no other time has it been more important to have a Local Plan in place to shape our Borough to respond to these challenges.
- 1.4** Sitting alongside this document are several Topic Papers that have been published. These provide a key source of information supporting the proposals contained in the Plan. They set out the evidence base for particular issues, how the responses to previous consultation(s) and other stakeholder feedback has informed the emerging Plan and how we have developed the approach set out in this document.
- 1.5** We have also published the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which sets out the infrastructure required to support growth, where and when it is required and the costs of this. Whilst this work is ongoing the Council has decided to publish this to enable respondents to have as much information as possible to inform consultation responses.

How does the Planning White Paper consultation affect this Plan?

- 1.6** This consultation comes at a time when the Government is considering a number of potentially significant reforms to the planning system. These include both short term changes as well as more fundamental ones.
- 1.7** At the time of writing the reforms are out to consultation and it is unclear which of the proposals will be carried forward, when these will come into force and what transitional arrangements will be put in to place for those authorities that have reached an advanced stage in preparing their current round of Local Plans.
- 1.8** What is clear is that if all the proposals are taken forward it would have a significant impact on the Plan we are preparing but until planning legislation or guidance changes we must prepare the Plan against current guidance. However, we are mindful that the changes could mean the look and feel of the Plan we eventually adopt could be quite different to what we have envisaged up to now. Although it is unclear how the Government will respond to the consultation we have already taken some steps to reflect some of proposals. These include:
- introducing the simplified zoning categories;
 - reflecting the interim housing requirement calculations but recognising that further adjustments may be made;
 - strengthening our local design policies and guidance; and
 - incorporating reference to First Homes (the Government's new proposals for affordable home ownership).

1.9 Other proposed changes could be more fundamental to the Plan. Indeed, the Government is keen to replace many policies in Local Plans with national ones. We will need to take forward all relevant proposals in the final version of the Plan.

What are we consulting on and why?

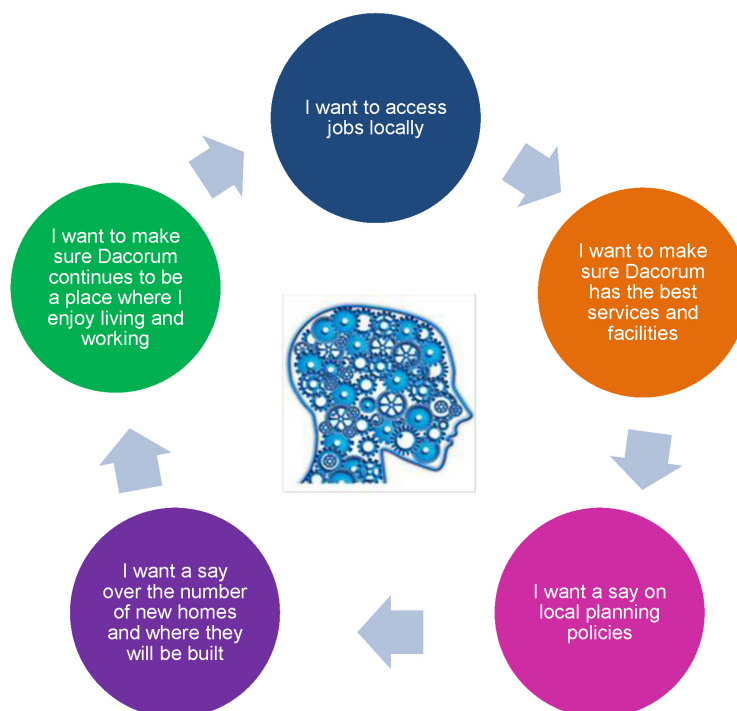
1.10 Despite the uncertainty arising from the potential changes discussed above, there remain a number of 'constant' factors. We have known for some time that the level of growth we need to plan for will be significantly higher than before (up from 430 dpa in the Core Strategy) and whilst the final figure from the Government may be adjusted again we expect this to remain a substantial number. To manage this scale of development we do need an up to date Local Plan in place to ensure that development is provided in the right places and met with the timely delivery of the required infrastructure.

1.11 We also know that the scale of growth will require the Council to make some very difficult decisions about the amount of growth to be provided in different locations and will require some of the towns and villages to grow significantly. It is important that the community have an opportunity to shape these decisions before the Plan is finalised.

1.12 We are now asking for your views on **the Emerging Strategy for Growth** for Dacorum. This includes our approach to accommodating growth across Dacorum, the sites that have been suggested as well as some of the specific planning policies that will deliver this.

1.13 This document is not a final plan with every detail or future policy set out; this will come later in the process. This document also does not contain every item of infrastructure that is required to support development, again this will come later. However, we have published our emerging IDP setting out the broad requirements of future growth (and timings). As the Plan develops we will incorporate more of the infrastructure requirements into the Plan. These will be located in the proposals and sites section of the Plan

Why should I get involved?



Why do we need a Local Plan?

- 1.14** A Local Plan is required to guide new development so that it comes forward in a coordinated manner. It is also a key tool in delivering our priorities set out in other plans and strategies, including the Growth and Infrastructure Strategy and the Climate Change emergency adopted in July 2019.
- 1.15** Our existing Core Strategy (adopted in 2013) and the 'saved' policies from the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (adopted in 2004), are more than five years old and the weight we can give the policies in these documents is reducing as time goes by. The Core Strategy Inspector did identify that a whole scale review of the Plan would be required and although we adopted the Site Allocations Document (2017) this does not provide a comprehensive planning framework for the Borough.
- 1.16** There have been a number of changes to the planning system since these documents were adopted and it is important that we have Local Plans in place which reflect national policy and guidance, otherwise we will lose control of decision making.
- 1.17** When adopted the the Local Plan will be the main planning document guiding development but it will be supported by a number of other important documents. These include Supplementary Planning Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues. The Council has consulted on the Dacorum Strategic Design Guide SPD and will be preparing further SPDs in due course.
- 1.18** Once adopted these documents, alongside the Minerals and Waste Local Plans for Hertfordshire and any adopted Neighbourhood Plans (currently Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan (May 2018), will replace the following documents:
- Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted July 2017);
 - Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted September 2013);
 - “saved” parts of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (adopted May 2004); and
- 1.19** The Development Plan is the basis upon which planning applications are determined, unless there are material planning considerations that indicate otherwise.

What have we done to get here?

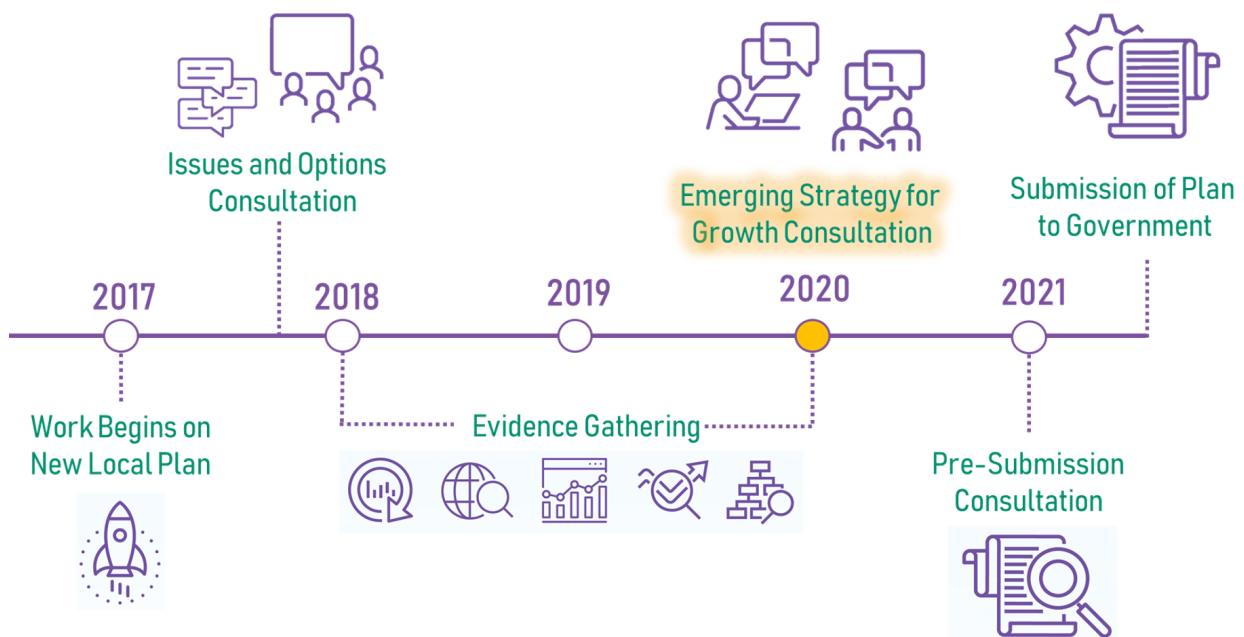
- 1.20** In November 2017 we published the Issues and Options (Regulation 18) consultation seeking comments on the key issues facing the Borough. We received more than 22,000 responses to this from over 2,000 individuals and organisations. These comments are publicly available alongside this consultation document.
- 1.21** Since this time there have been a number of changes to the planning system, including revised housing figures and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the supporting Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). In response to these changes we have undertaken an extended period of plan development, options generation and testing and have sought input from statutory bodies such as the County Council, adjoining authorities and developers promoting land across the Borough.
- 1.22** We have been updating our evidence base to better understand the needs and constraints in the Borough. This extensive catalogue of assessments has informed our emerging Plan and include the following:
- assessing land availability and suitability in our towns and villages and considering existing and new sites as part of an updated housing land availability assessment;
 - forecasting housing and employment need / and undertaking housing and economic development needs assessments;
 - assessing reasonable alternatives for the Plan's strategies, policies, proposals and sites via the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) /Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA);
 - undertaking a review of the Green Belt;

- preparing evidence to look at future retail needs;
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Water Cycle Study;
- Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople site assessment;
- transport modelling and Sustainable Transport Plans
- an Infrastructure Delivery Plan and viability assessment.

1.23 Further evidence will be required to support the final Plan and the Council will continue to keep its website up to date as these assessments are produced.

1.24 Figure 1 illustrates the process to date and the key next stages that we will go through. More information can be found in our Local Development Scheme (2020).

Figure 1 Timeline for the Local Plan



1.25 The preparation of the Plan involved the reviewing and testing of a range of growth options and scenarios. Alternative options were developed and presented early in the preparation stage of the Plan and developed and refined over time as evidence emerged. It was also subject to further testing and targeted engagement to develop a preferred strategy. This process has been informed by a number of iterations of the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment to assess emerging proposals against a number of economic, social and environmental objectives and to identify what measures could be included to offset adverse impacts.

1.26 In addition, the Plan is being subjected to an Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) which considers (amongst other things) the impact of the Plan on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and taking into account any further mitigation that may be required in the Plan.

1.27 As already mentioned a significant contributor to the emerging Plan has been the separate, but closely linked, IDP. This has helped inform decisions on where growth can be accommodated or not. In the case of the latter we have sought to identify what infrastructure is required and what solutions are available. The IDP is an iterative assessment and will continue to be updated as we move towards the next stage of the Local Plan.

Considerations for the Local Plan

- 1.28** The Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with current Government guidance. To be found "sound" the Local Plan needs to comply with the NPPF, specifically paragraph 35, which requires Plans are:
- Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
 - Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
 - Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
 - Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework.
- 1.29** However, we are a very constrained area with significant amounts of our Borough in the Green Belt. We also have a considerable amount of high quality landscape as part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which is a national landscape designation shared only by relatively few other authorities across the country. We are also home to parts of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is an ecological site of international importance. These are significant constraints which influence the locations for new development in the Borough.

Working with others

- 1.30** Dacorum does not exist in isolation and interacts with other nearby local authorities. We are required to develop a strategy that is informed by agreements with other authorities so that 'strategic matters' are appropriately considered and planned for where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development. This is required by both Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and supporting Planning Practice Guidance.
- 1.31** There are a number of cross boundary matters which we need to have regard to when developing our own Plan and we have been engaging with adjoining authorities (and other stakeholders) throughout the preparation of this Plan.
- 1.32** The engagement has been on strategic matters such as housing and employment requirements and also infrastructure provision needed to support growth. These discussions have been underway for sometime and we have a comprehensive picture of development needs across South West Hertfordshire, including the potential unmet needs of Watford. This position has been informed by a number of key evidence studies that have been commissioned jointly across South West Hertfordshire authorities (Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers and Watford). We have also engaged with a variety of other organisations including Hertfordshire County Council, Highways England, Natural England, the Chilterns Conservation Board, Historic England and the Environment Agency.
- 1.33** Some of the Strategic Planning Matters which have been identified through this process are listed below:
- The potential for unmet housing need arising from Watford;
 - Looking to our neighbours to deliver some of our own employment needs;
 - The delivery of Hemel Garden Communities which is a joint growth initiative between Dacorum, St Albans, Hertfordshire County Council and the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership;
 - Supporting the Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter Enterprise Zone at Maylands;
 - Strategic transport movements along 'A' roads and motorways;
 - Secondary school capacity and cross county flows, including secondary schooling needs stemming from Dacorum;

- Growth impacts upon the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC;
- Continuing to protect the Chilterns AONB;
- Household waste capacity in west Hertfordshire; and
- Acute service provision in west Hertfordshire.

1.34 Engagement has taken various forms including consultations, meetings and exchange of correspondence and has informed the preparation of this consultation. Dacorum will be preparing Memoranda of Understanding and Statements of Common Ground which set out the identified strategic matters, how options for addressing these have been progressed and what conclusions have been drawn as a result.

1.35 More information on the conclusions we have drawn are set out in this consultation and supported by our evidence studies and separately published Topic Papers. We will continue to work closely with other organisations as the Plan develops, particularly across South West Hertfordshire, to explore strategic matters further, including the issue of unmet needs - and undertake any further work that may be required. What is clear is that Dacorum is uniquely constrained amongst the five South West Hertfordshire authorities in that a large part of the Borough is within the Chilterns AONB as well as containing the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.

1.36 Our evidence is currently telling us that we are unable to meet our full future employment land needs over the Plan period and we require the assistance from neighbouring St. Albans City and District to meet this as well as several items of infrastructure linked to the growth of Hemel Hempstead which cannot be met in the Borough. The assessments we have completed to date indicate that Dacorum is unlikely to be in a position to provide for unmet housing needs arising from the South West Hertfordshire area in this Plan period whilst still ensuring the Plan is consistent with the provisions of the NPPF and wider sustainable development objectives.

1.37 Nonetheless, Dacorum is preparing a positive plan that is seeking to meet as much of our objectively assessed needs as we can. For housing, we are making a bold commitment to significantly increasing the supply of land to deliver 922 dwellings per year, more than double the number (430 dwellings per year) in the previous Core Strategy. In addition to this, we are releasing additional land from the Green Belt around Hemel Hempstead (as part of the Hemel Garden Communities programme) to meet longer term development needs.

1.38 We will continue to work constructively with adjoining authorities as our Plan develops to find solutions to barriers to development that exist in Dacorum as well as in both the 'host' authority (where unmet needs arise) and in those other authorities which may also be suitable locations for delivering unmet needs. We maintain that unmet needs arising should be met as close to the source as possible and all options should be explored before authorities that are more constrained and farther afield are asked to contribute.

The South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan



- 1.39** To respond to longer term growth challenges we have joined the other four authorities in South West Hertfordshire (St Albans, Three Rivers, Hertsmere and Watford) in preparing the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan. This provides the opportunity to couple growth and infrastructure at a strategic level, enabling more coordinated planning of growth and infrastructure provision.
- 1.40** The South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan will be a 'boundary - off' strategic plan that will set out the vision and map the context for the Local Plans to 2050. It will focus on:
- A Spatial Strategy including any Strategic Areas of Opportunity;
 - Strategic housing need and provision;
 - Strategic employment need and provision;
 - Strategic infrastructure need and provision; and
 - Strategic approach to the Green Belt and the Chilterns AONB.
- 1.41** Joint strategic plans are supported by the Government and the five authorities have received funding to prepare this. The Joint Strategic Plan will be prepared over the next couple of years and it is anticipated that it will come into force across all the five authorities by the end of 2023. We will work with the other authorities to accelerate the preparation and adoption of this document to ensure that such development needs are met.

How this document is structured

- 1.42** This document is split into the following parts:
1. **Vision, Strategic Objectives** - this sets out the context, challenges and overarching aims of the Local Plan including responding to climate change, safeguarding the natural and built environment and reducing carbon emissions.
 2. **The Sustainable Development Strategy** – this sets out the overarching development strategy for housing, employment, retail and infrastructure.
 3. **Guiding Development** – this section contains a number of our planning policies to influence development across the Borough. These are split into relevant sections which deal with housing delivery, employment development, retailing and other town centre uses, climate change and sustainability, environment and biodiversity, managing development in the countryside, delivering great places, sustainable transport and connectivity, and healthy communities.
 4. **Delivery Strategies** – this section focuses on Dacorum's places and how these will change over the period.
 5. **Proposals and sites** - this section contains site specific policies for each of the key growth and renewal areas identified in the delivery strategies.
 6. **Appendices** - this contains a list of strategic policies, identified small housing sites and a glossary.

What happens next?

- 1.43** Once the consultation closes we will carefully consider the responses we receive. Our current intention is to use these responses to help inform the next stage of Local Plan preparation. We will make these comments public together with our response when the Local Plan is published before being submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in public.
- 1.44** We will need to continue to develop our evidence further and take into account the findings from these. This includes the work underway on the Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) which considers (amongst other things) the impact of the Plan on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and taking into account any further mitigation that may be required in the Plan.

- 1.45** A key further area of work will be the continued development of our IDP. A draft of this has been published but requires refinement as more information becomes available. We will also be using this to develop our work to test the viability of the Plan. Whole Plan Viability is the process of assessing whether the Local Plan (and the policies and sites included) are financially deliverable.
- 1.46** If further evidence suggests that the proposals currently in the Plan are no longer consistent with national policy or are no longer considered deliverable (eg if solutions to required infrastructure are not forthcoming), then this may lead to changes to certain policies or sites that are currently included in the Plan.
- 1.47** We will also continue with discussions under the Duty to Cooperate to ensure that we have discharged our obligations appropriately and the conclusions from our engagement are reflected in the Plan.
- 1.48** **We will also need to consider any changes to legislation and/or Government guidance arising from the Planning White Paper consultation. At present we do not know how any changes could impact on the content of the Plan and this will need to be kept under review.**

VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



2 The Plan Context and Challenges

Opportunities and Challenges of Growth

- 2.1** The Local Plan needs to respond to a number of significant challenges over the period, including:
- managing a step change in housing supported by the necessary infrastructure;
 - securing employment growth;
 - changes to our international trading relationships;
 - supporting local recovery from Covid-19;
 - adapting to climate change and moving towards a low carbon economy; and
 - delivering the regeneration and transformation of Hemel Hempstead.

Climate Change Emergency

- 2.2** Our climate is changing as a result of human activity and this will have substantial implications for society and our environment if we do not act. The scientific evidence indicates that we will experience hotter and drier summers, milder winters, and more extreme weather events such as drought and flooding. Dacorum's Full Council passed a motion declaring a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and has since prepared a Climate Change Strategy. The Local Plan will play a central role in delivering a number of the aims set out in both. A central thread of the Local Plan is to plan for a low-carbon future in which carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases are reduced and we adapt to the new climatic norms. The growth offers real opportunities to deliver significant and meaningful measures to combat the effects of the climate change emergency.

Housing Growth

- 2.3** One of the major challenges for the Borough is delivering a step change in the level of housing growth as required by the Government. This will be far above what has been delivered in the past and will require us to allow innovation in new ways and approaches. We will need to work in close partnership with the development industry, bring forward publicly owned land and make effective use of its planning powers to ensure growth can be appropriately delivered.
- 2.4** In addition, the Borough's high average house prices means that buying market housing is increasingly difficult for many households. The dream of owning a home is now out of reach for the majority of young people with the average age of house purchase currently being 32 years old. We need to significantly increase the number of affordable homes that are genuinely affordable to local people. This in turn should also aid households to live in adequately sized accommodation where they may have outgrown their current home.
- 2.5** This growth brings with it a significant number of challenges for our local communities, infrastructure, and the natural and built environment. The right type of housing should be provided in the right location, and at the right time to meet the changing housing needs of all members of our communities, particularly the ageing population. We will ensure that the new homes are delivered sustainably, that we use land efficiently, and that developments acknowledge local character and context without frustrating innovation or compromising design quality.

Economic Prosperity and Strengthening the Role of Maylands Business Park

- 2.6** Whilst the future poses a number of significant economic challenges we have big ambitions for our local economy driven by the continuing success of the Maylands Business Park as a key local and sub-regionally important employment centre. Great progress has been made on regeneration, inward investment and expansion since the Buncefield explosion in December 2005, including the creation of the Heart of Maylands (a new local centre to support the role of the business area), the completion of environmental works, and the broadening of its commercial uses.

- 2.7** Regeneration and continued diversification of the Maylands Business Park will continue to form a key part of the strategy, given added impetus by the creation of the Herts Innovation Quarter, a designated Enterprise Zone. Dacorum needs to plan for a significant increase in employment floorspace over the Plan period. To meet the needs arising for new employment space the eastward expansion of Maylands is proposed, most of which will be into St Albans City and District Council. This will meet a significant portion of Dacorum's needs as well as contributing to meeting the needs from St Albans.
- 2.8** Further investment is needed to resolve congestion and employees, visitors and HGV parking problems in the Maylands Business Park, including the delivery of a multi-modal transport interchange, as part of a wider network of such facilities, providing easy and rapid interchange between different modes of travel.
- 2.9** The strategy will also include safeguarding other existing employment areas that are key to the local economy, including delivering space for start-up businesses and established small and medium enterprises. We will balance the pressure of competing land uses, and look to encourage and support opportunities for inward investment through working in partnership with the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, the business sector, and other key stakeholders. We will also seek funding from the Government and work with other agencies to secure high speed and high capacity digital connectivity for businesses and residents.

Securing the Vibrancy of our Town Centres

- 2.10** Alongside housing and employment we anticipate continued rapid changes in retailing over the Plan period as our economy evolves and habits change. These changes are likely to have profound implications for our town centres, particularly Hemel Hempstead. This centre has undergone significant regeneration in recent years ranging from environmental improvements to the pedestrianised area of the Marlowes, the creation of a new bus interchange and the award winning restoration of the Jellicoe Water Gardens.
- 2.11** Our high streets are going to be reshaped by a number of factors including continuing changes to retailing patterns brought on by the growth in online shopping and potentially accelerated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the changes to the Use Classes Order which came into force in September 2020 could also have implications for the changing face of our town centres. It is important that our town centres remain vibrant, resilient and attractive in the face of a volatile retail environment and changing shopping patterns.
- 2.12** We do not believe this will lead to a significant requirement for new floorspace over the lifetime of the Plan. Nonetheless we will take opportunities to support existing retailing and to also encourage a wider variety of uses, promote more leisure and social engagement, and embrace town centre living and the evening economy. We will encourage significant increases in the residential presence in and around our town, district and local centres, to help sustain them over the longer term.

Transport and Movement

- 2.13** Dacorum currently experiences peak period congestion problems in many of its main urban areas leading to delays and consequential air quality issues in some locations. The strategic road network crossing the Borough (M1/M25/A41/A414) is already heavily used and high car ownership means that parking can be difficult in certain areas. Passenger transport, walking and cycling are not currently as attractive an alternative as they could be. The hilly nature of parts of the Borough can deter walking and particularly cycling. There is also currently limited charging infrastructure capacity available to support electric vehicles.
- 2.14** Our residents have told us of their concerns over the ability of the roads to accommodate high levels of housing growth and to tackle climate change we need to significantly reduce harmful emissions and particulates from transport and at the same time greatly improve local air quality. Therefore, new development will need to be located in places which have excellent access to jobs, shops, services, can quickly and easily be reached by sustainable public transport and benefit from high quality walking

and cycling infrastructure. Even where journeys are made by sustainable methods it is important to minimise journey lengths, reducing demand on transport infrastructure and delivering greater health and wellbeing.

- 2.15** We are developing detailed Sustainable Transport Plans for our main towns to identify the transport interventions that are required to deliver growth, and ensuring development is well connected and less reliant on the car over the long term. Growth will deliver attractive opportunities to travel by bus, foot or on a bike. Future technology will be promoted to deliver and support low-carbon transport. Electric vehicles of all types (including electric bicycles) will feature strongly in this, and necessary infrastructure will be provided to ensure the usability of such vehicles.
- 2.16** We will actively work in partnership with the County Council, bus and train operators and other agencies to deliver investment, and improvements in passenger transport. Although it must be recognised the effectiveness and timing of delivering 'modal shift' will be dependent upon the degree of change in 'mindset' towards those local trips generated.

Infrastructure

- 2.17** Providing new infrastructure to support development is essential. This includes new transport infrastructure, schools, health care and open spaces. Residents have told us that new and upgraded infrastructure must keep pace with the delivery of new homes. Our IDP shows that major investment is required across the Borough to deliver our growth strategy. New development must contribute its full share of the new infrastructure required to deliver growth.
- 2.18** Supporting the significant long term growth at Hemel Garden Community - which as one of few flagship growth schemes supported by the County Council - will require prioritised funding. In addition, our other towns will also be experiencing significant growth and will also require investment in infrastructure. When our IDP is complete we will be confirming the scale of funding required, how much of this can be met by the development industry and how much will require public investment, drawing on our partner organisations and central Government.

Natural Environment

- 2.19** The combined effects of climate change, population growth and development needs will increase pressure on the natural environment. As already mentioned we have a particularly sensitive environment in Dacorum in the shape of the quality of our protected landscapes (including the Chilterns AONB) and the presence of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC. The impacts of growth will be reduced through:
- the prudent use of natural resources;
 - encouraging renewable energy production;
 - the effective recycling of waste;
 - the sustainable design of new development;
 - careful land management.
- 2.20** Making effective use of urban land can also help reduce the pressure on the natural environment by limiting the overall scale of greenfield development. New developments can also play their role by: linking to existing green networks, creating new and varied green spaces, and promoting opportunities for biodiversity and nature conservation.

Managing this Change

- 2.21** The planned levels of housing growth will signal significant changes to the towns and large villages over the lifetime of the Plan. While there are many benefits to growth, including the regeneration of our settlements, providing much needed new homes, new employment land and jobs, improvements to and renewal of infrastructure and help to support existing and new services and facilities, it needs to be managed and planned for carefully.

- 2.22** The following pages set out the strategy in more detail, particularly setting out how our towns and villages will grow in a way that delivers the required level of growth but also does so in a way that balances other priorities, particularly our environmental objectives.
- 2.23** Government policy requires that we make effective use of urban land, and minimise development pressure on the Green Belt. Similarly, many of our residents are telling us that they prefer to see us prioritise the use of urban land for development over greenfield land. However, our evidence demonstrates that we cannot meet all the housing and employment need in urban areas and there will need to be some development of greenfield sites, including sites within the Green Belt.
- 2.24** The main elements of our strategy are to:
- Optimise the use of previously developed land as far as possible by increasing heights and densities in key locations across the Borough;
 - Update our planning and design guidance to allow more contemporary and innovating approaches to development, including supporting offsite construction and other forms of Modern Methods of Construction (MMCs) to increase delivery;
 - Deliver growth in Hemel Hempstead that will support the regeneration of the town and support it as a key employment, shopping and cultural location;
 - Ensuring the important market towns of Berkhamsted and Tring play a much greater role in delivering growth in the Borough and help balance growth and development opportunities in the Borough;
 - Allow the larger villages of Kings Langley, Bovington and Markyate to grow to meet more local needs; and
 - Protecting the character of the wider countryside and the value of protected / important sites as far as possible (such as important landscapes, heritage and biodiversity and avoidance of areas at high risk of flooding).
- 2.25** To manage this growth we will need to be forward looking and embrace growth and opportunity to draw in the best of the public and private sector resources and skills. The reward for our communities is significant investment in infrastructure, new schools, improved health care, more open spaces, more affordable housing and exemplar developments to help fight the impact of climate change.

Covid-19 Recovery

- 2.26** Underpinning these challenges is the need for the Plan to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the short term its impact has been unprecedented in terms of the way we live, work, shop and travel, and how we socialise and use our local places and spaces. It has severely affected our local businesses and damaged our communities in many ways. Unfortunately, it is uncertain as to the medium to long-term consequences and depth of the health and economic emergency will have on our way of life but this will become clearer as a road map to recovery develops.
- 2.27** The Council is committed, with the support of the Government and other agencies, to put recovery plans in place to allow our communities and businesses to rebound and thrive.
- 2.28** Through our Plan we will:
- Maintain momentum in getting the Plan to adoption to provide a clear framework for future decisions on new development;
 - Coordinate investment strategies for businesses and jobs and place-based solutions;
 - Ensure policies are flexible to support growth and recovery;
 - Work positively with landowners, developers and agents to bring forward new development, and support economic activity and ensure necessary infrastructure can be delivered;
 - Promote accelerated use of technology to make our businesses and communities more flexible and resilient to change;
 - Help our shopping centres to evolve and find a new role;
 - Build on the positive impact Covid-19 has had on carbon emissions and air quality;

- Ensure that high quality, accessible green space / outdoor space is an integral part of all new development; and
- Support good quality, well designed and connected homes, spaces and places and access to essential services.

2.29 The following graphic provides background information on Dacorum and a context for the vision and objectives of the Plan. These statistics represent the most recent figure up to 2018.



DACORUM'S HOMES

DACORUM HAS
154,280
RESIDENTS

OVER NEXT 20 YEARS
60% INCREASE
65+ YEAR
OLD RESIDENTS

£453,950

AVERAGE
HOUSE
PRICE IN
DACORUM

5,500+
PEOPLE ON
HOUSING
REGISTER

DACORUM OWN
10,150
COUNCIL HOMES

AROUND
16,500
NEW HOMES
2020-2038



DACORUM'S ECONOMY

83,400
IN THE WORKING
POPULATION

£33,984
AVERAGE
INCOME

8,995
BUSINESSES
IN DACORUM

EMPLOYMENT
RATE

85%

TOURISM WORTH
£230M

MAYLANDS
ONE OF THE LARGEST
BUSINESS PARKS IN
EAST ENGLAND



DACORUM'S CLIMATE

54,479

TONNES
OF WASTE
COLLECTED
2018/2019

DACORUM
CO2 **4.5**
EMISSIONS
PER PERSON
TONNES

52%
RECYCLING
RATE

26 NEIGHBOURHOOD
RECYCLING
CENTRES

CARBON
NET ZERO
BY 2050



DACORUM'S ENVIRONMENT

3 CHALK
STREAM
HABITATS

230
WILDLIFE SITES

1/3 OF THE
COUNTRYSIDE
IS THE
CHILTERN
AONB

85%
OF THE
BOROUGH
IS RURAL

GREEN BELT
60%

3 AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
AREAS



DACORUM'S BUILT ENVIRONMENT

OVER 30
SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

1947 HEMEL HEMPSTEAD DESIGNATED AS A NEWTOWN

2000+

LISTED BUILDINGS

25
CONSERVATION AREAS

4 HISTORIC GARDENS



DACORUM'S CONNECTIVITY

CAR OWNERSHIP

83%

21 MILES

OF CYCLE PATHS

90% ADULTS IN THE UK HAVE ACCESS TO INTERNET

4 MAINLINE STATIONS

AIRPORTS **20** MINS LUTON

30 MINS HEATHROW

45 MINS STANSTEAD



DACORUM'S COMMUNITIES

81% HAVE RECOGNISED QUALIFICATIONS

68%
DESCRIBE THEMSELVES AS ACTIVE

LIFE EXPECTANCY 84 FOR WOMEN 80 FOR MEN ABOVE UK AVERAGE

96%
SAY THEY ARE IN VERY GOOD GOOD OR FAIR HEALTH



DACORUM'S INFRASTRUCTURE

CIL INCOME
£6,687,065

64 CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS

9 FAMILY CENTRES

12 COMMUNITY CENTRES

7 LIBRARIES

19 NHS GP PRACTICES

51 PRIMARY SCHOOLS

8 SECONDARY SCHOOLS

4 SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS

WEST HERTS COLLEGE

3 Borough Vision to 2038

- 3.1** This section of the Local Plan sets out the Vision for Dacorum and strategic outcomes. In developing the vision we have had regard to the issues discussed in the previous section, including the scale of the growth challenge across the South West Hertfordshire Authorities, the infrastructure requirements, environmental constraints, the input from public and stakeholder engagement and new and emerging government policy and guidance.

Dacorum Growth and Infrastructure Strategy to 2050 "Shaping the future of Dacorum"

- 3.2** The Dacorum Growth and Infrastructure Strategy to 2050⁽¹⁾ sets out how we will make the growth that the Local Plan is required to deliver, benefit the existing and new communities in the Borough. This means being clear how we, in partnership with other organisations where appropriate - will ensure that the right type of housing is delivered, infrastructure is provided on time, open space is available and properly maintained, and services are provided for a considerably larger population.
- 3.3** The Strategy has informed the early stages of developing the strategic objectives of the Local Plan. It guides how we can meet the challenges of future growth, and covers six over-arching themes:
- Theme 1: *Building Dacorum's future with homes for everyone.*
 - Theme 2: *Generating a vibrant economy with opportunities for all.*
 - Theme 3: *A happier, healthier and safer Dacorum.*
 - Theme 4: *Creating a clean, green and attractive Dacorum.*
 - Theme 5: *On-track for a better transport network.*
 - Theme 6: *Harnessing the opportunity of technology and digital connectivity.*

Dacorum Corporate Plan 2020-2025 "Delivering for Dacorum"

- 3.4** This shapes the overall direction of what our priorities will be and what it will deliver over a five year period and provides a focus to the wide range of services and statutory plans that add more detail to enable focus upon and delivery of these priorities.
- 3.5** The vision for Dacorum was adopted in 2020: **"working in partnership to create a borough which enables communities to thrive and prosper"**. The Vision shapes the key corporate priorities and informs all our strategies and plans. The priorities have been set by our Councillors, taking into account the vision and what is most important to the Borough's residents:
- A Clean, safe and enjoyable environment
 - Building strong and vibrant communities
 - Ensuring economic growth and prosperity
 - Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need
 - Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
- 3.6** Alongside the five priorities, the Corporate Plan ⁽²⁾ includes the Medium Term Financial Strategy⁽³⁾, which sets out the key spending plans. The Corporate Plan is underpinned by a Corporate Action Plan, which identifies the different projects that are being delivered and monitors progress and targets against performance indicators.

1 <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/dacorum-growth-and-infratstructure-strategy-to-2050.pdf>

2 <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/recruitment/corporate-plan-2020-2025.pdf>

3 <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/finance-performance/medium-term-financial-strategy.pdf>

Overarching Vision for Dacorum's Growth by 2038

By 2038, Dacorum will have embraced the next phase of its development by having built on its strengths and the opportunities to deliver balanced communities with the homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure needed. As a result of having managed the change, Dacorum will have remained an attractive and desirable home for residents and for a wide variety of businesses.

New housing will have been provided in sustainable locations to a high standard of design. Affordable housing will have been provided and been genuinely affordable having had regards to local circumstances and new homes to have met the needs of older people, people with disabilities and those with specialist needs. New housing will have delivered our ambitious place-shaping objectives and secured high quality design and sustainability outcomes. All settlements will have retained their separate and distinctive identities informed by proposals that were shaped by a detailed understanding of place.

Growth will have been accompanied by supporting services and infrastructure which were delivered at the right time and benefited new and existing communities, particularly transportation, education and open spaces, to have created healthy and sustainable developments.

Environmental Sustainability

Growth in Dacorum will have been environmentally sustainable and have helped to reduce the Borough's contribution to climate change through the location and design of development, by having promoted energy efficiency and renewable energy and sustainable construction, by having facilitated a significant increase in sustainable travel modes and through having supported reductions in the use of finite resources.

The natural beauty of the Chiltern Hills and the varied character of the countryside will have been enhanced, and continued to be admired and cherished. The countryside will have been actively managed and enjoyed and will have continued to support a healthy local economy and diversity of wildlife. Water quality in the rivers and streams will be good. New woodlands will have been planted for future generations and the Borough will be even greener. Special features, such as the Grand Union Canal, remain an active part of the Borough's heritage. The wider historic environment remains valued and protected. The impact of growth on the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation will have been effectively mitigated.

Dacorum will have in place a network of cycle lanes and secure bike parks, that have encouraged greater levels of cycling and walking, while also having promoted the use of public and greener transport. Sustainable transport will be a real option as public transport has become more reliable, rapid, flexible, convenient and widely used. Places are better connected, and there are greater opportunities to walk and cycle.

Economic Growth

Dacorum will have taken full advantage of its strategic M1 - M25 - A41 location. The economy will be prosperous and the Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter will have delivered a new and dynamic Enviro-Tech business sector which will have attracted further growth and innovation. People and businesses will be served by excellent community, transport, and digital infrastructure. Dacorum's economy will be more competitive and innovative and will have adapted well to new markets and opportunities. The main town centre in Hemel Hempstead will have been enhanced and continued to be a focus for shopping while having evolved to become a more diverse place through its support for a range of other activities.

Health and Wellbeing

Health and well-being will have improved across all of the key stages in the life course. The social determinants of preventable ill health will have been addressed and local health inequalities reduced. Communities will be inclusive, sustainable and have embraced diversity. Development will have been

designed to a high quality and health impacts measured. Places will have encouraged social connections, incorporated green infrastructure, promoted active travel and overall created a high quality living environment.

A full range of social, leisure and community facilities and services will have been delivered in a coordinated way with new development in order to have promoted healthy behaviours and improved community cohesion. New development will have contributed to local and strategic infrastructure requirements. An active lifestyle will have been encouraged and supported through the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities. Opportunities for all people to increase their levels of physical activity will have been supported with improved provision of active travel.

The Vision for Dacorum's Places

Hemel Hempstead will have grown significantly and will:

- have a thriving centre, providing new housing, business and enterprise and opportunities for all. The Hemel Garden Communities programme will be delivering new homes, green spaces, green businesses, and community facilities and is a catalyst for transforming Hemel Hempstead and taking forward the legacy of the New Town;
- have seen the redevelopment and renewal of key sites within the town, particularly the key regeneration sites close to the Town Centre and Two Waters Area;
- have delivered a reshaped town centre that provides a focus for retailing but also other leisure, community and service uses that contribute to a vibrant public space, a well-developed evening economy and a significant increase in residential development;
- be recognised as a commercial hub, with a particular focus on green technology;
- be a key hub for public transportation and interchange offering a diverse choice of travel modes with stronger public transport links;
- have had significant transport improvements across the town with new link roads connecting the existing highway network and making provision for alternative routes linking key destinations across the town;
- have transformed the main railway station and adjoining land into an important and attractive transport gateway and interchange; and
- have secured new health care facilities and other community and residential uses on the regenerated hospital site.

Berkhamsted will have grown and will:

- be an inclusive market town that meets the needs and aspirations of existing and new residents and visitors;
- have delivered comprehensively planned new neighbourhoods to the south and southwest of the town in a way that takes account of sensitive views and landscape;
- have provided significant new investment into sustainable transport initiatives to increase passenger transport and improvements in walking and cycling connections throughout the town; and
- have delivered a mix of market and affordable housing, new community facilities, including two primary schools and a secondary school, and a hierarchy of open spaces.

Tring will have grown and will:

- be an inclusive market town that meets the needs and aspirations of existing and new residents and visitors;
- have delivered a comprehensively planned new neighbourhood to the east of the town in a way that takes account of sensitive views, landscape and protected environmental sites;
- have provided significant new investment into sustainable transport initiatives to increase passenger transport and improvements in walking and cycling connections throughout the town;

- have delivered a mix of market and affordable housing, new community facilities, a new business hub, two primary schools and a secondary school;
- have provided significant new open space and sports/leisure facilities to the east of the town; and
- have benefited from further investment in transport infrastructure with active and attractive transport links within the town including new and improved pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre and Tring Station.

Bovingdon, Kings Langley and Markyate will have grown and will:

- have provided increased levels of affordable homes;
- have strengthened their role in providing services and facilities to serve residents and the adjacent rural communities; and
- have secured additional and improved local community facilities.

The Countryside and other small villages will:

- be protected from development; and
- have diversified further to support changing rural and agricultural practices.

Delivering our aspirations through our identified Strategic Objectives

- 3.7** The vision is underpinned by a series of Strategic Objectives that will guide the direction of the detailed policies within it. These objectives will help focus action, meet the Borough vision and measure progress.



Delivering Dacorum's Future with Homes for Everyone

- To deliver the identified housing requirement between 2020 and 2038.
- To increase the number of new and truly affordable homes.
- To meet the needs of older people and other groups who need specialist housing.



Generating a Vibrant Economy with Opportunities for all

- To promote Dacorum as a prime location for inward investment.
- To strengthen Hemel Hempstead's role as a thriving business centre.
- To maintain commercial enterprise and employment opportunities in the market towns and large villages.
- To ensure town centres continue to evolve and flourish.
- To develop Dacorum as a great tourism destination.



Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

- To mitigate and reduce the causes of climate change.
- To adapt to the impacts of climate change and increase climate resilience.
- To promote the use of renewable resources, reduce carbon emissions, protect natural resources and reduce waste.



Conserving and Protecting the Natural Environment

- To minimise the effects of pollution on people and the environment.
- To reduce the impacts of new development on air quality.
- To protect and enhance Dacorum's distinctive landscape character areas, open land, biological and geological diversity.
- To protect people and property from flooding.
- To provide a biodiversity net gain.
- To maintain and enhance networks of habitats, green and blue infrastructure.
- To conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the Countryside and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Ensuring an Attractive and Valued Built and Historic Environment

- To ensure the effective use of existing land and previously developed sites.
- To promote the distinctiveness of each of Dacorum's towns and villages, reinforcing their role and character whilst not discouraging innovation in approaches.
- To create safe and attractive environments through high quality design.
- To protect and enhance Dacorum's distinctive historic environment.



Promoting and Facilitating Sustainable Transport and Connectivity

- To enable convenient access between jobs, homes and facilities, minimise the impact of traffic and reduce the overall need to travel by car.
- To ensure that passenger transport is reliable, integrated and accessible.
- To create environments where active travel is encouraged, safe, and enjoyable.
- To harness the opportunity of technology and improve digital connectivity.



Supporting Community Health, Wellbeing and Cohesion

- To promote healthy and sustainable communities and a high quality of life.
- To provide for a full range of social, leisure and community facilities and services.
- To promote social inclusion and cohesiveness, embrace diversity and reduce inequalities.
- To enable and support active lifestyles through the provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities.



Enabling the Delivery of Infrastructure

- To co-ordinate the delivery of new infrastructure with development.
- To ensure that all development contributes appropriately to local and strategic infrastructure requirements.

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



4 Sustainable Development in Dacorum

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 4.1** The principles of sustainable development are central to the planning system. As set out in the NPPF (paragraphs 11-16), all development has to accord with the central presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 4.2** Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and making economic, environmental and social progress for current and future generations. To achieve this, economic, social and environmental gains should be pursued in an interconnected way. The planning system performs a number of roles in this respect:
- **An economic role** – *contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places to support growth and innovation, including infrastructure provision;*
 - **A social role** – *supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing housing (including affordable housing), and by creating a high quality built environment with accessible local services; and*
 - **An environmental role** – *contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, historic and built environment, and as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change.*
- 4.3** Achieving these roles is a central focus of the Dacorum Local Plan to 2038.

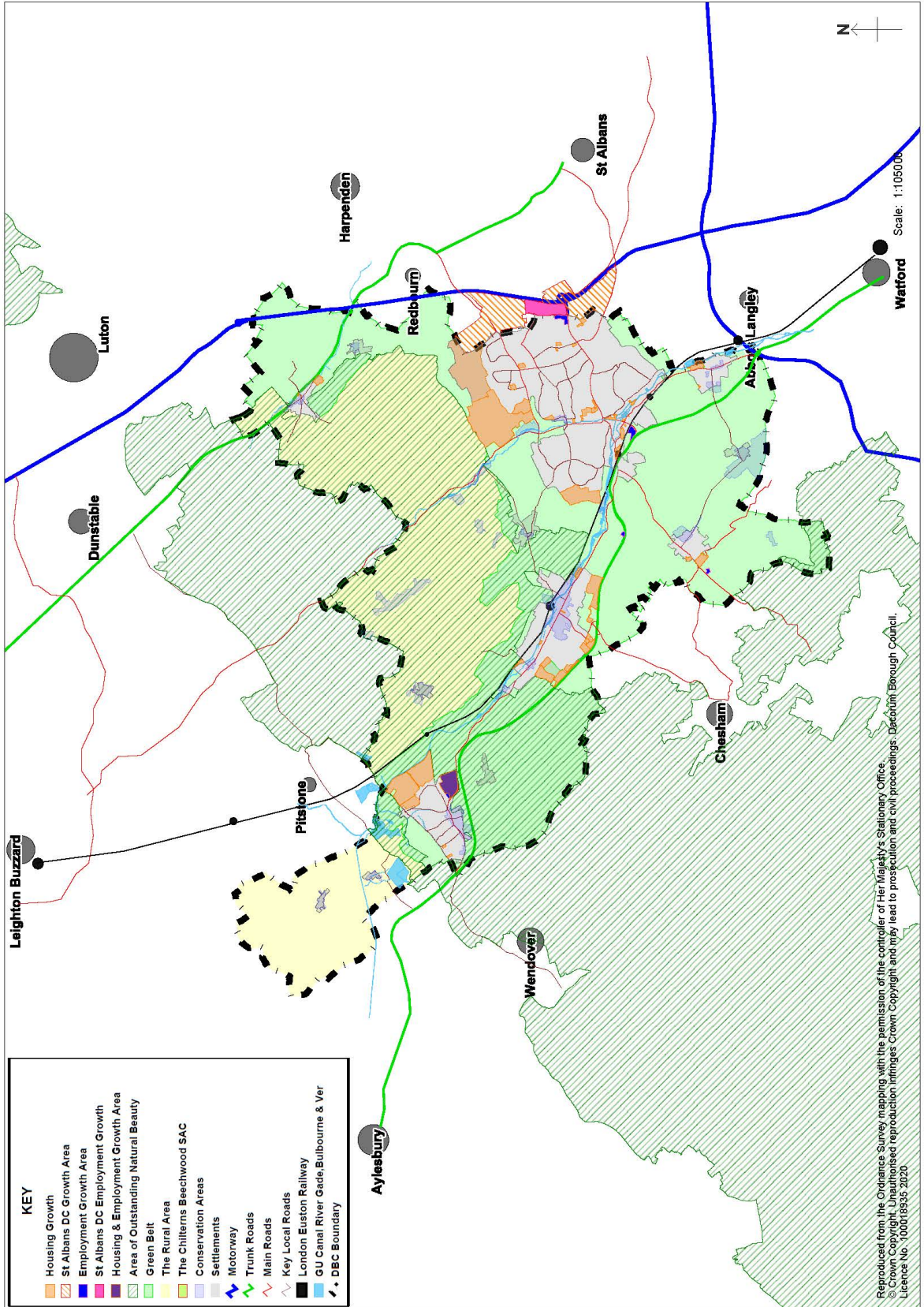
Policy SP1 - Sustainable Development in Dacorum

1. All development must contribute to the delivery of sustainable development objectives set out in the NPPF. In the local context of Dacorum this means that development proposals and neighbourhood planning documents should:
 - a. Contribute to meeting the vision and strategic outcomes for the Borough set out above, and fit with the 'guiding development', 'delivery strategies' and 'proposals and sites' policies of the Dacorum Local Plan (and policies within made neighbourhood plans).
 - b. Where there are no policies relevant to the application then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:
 - i. any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or
 - ii. specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.
2. Proposals that are in accordance with the development plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Council will work proactively with applicants to find solutions so that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- NPPF Paragraphs 11-16

KEY DIAGRAM



5 Spatial Strategy for Growth

- 5.1** To establish a framework for growth we have identified a strategy which has been guided by a number of considerations, stemming from well-established principles of sustainable development together with a number of local considerations.
- 5.2** The key principles behind the strategy include:
- Delivering our requirement to significantly boost the housing supply, and in particular, increasing the number of new and genuinely affordable homes in the Borough;
 - Delivering our economic aspirations by providing employment opportunities as well as supporting retail development;
 - Seeking out opportunities to maximise the amount of development on previously developed land within existing urban areas but taking this concept much further in Hemel Hempstead by proactively encouraging substantial increases in heights and densities in the most accessible locations;
 - Providing growth that will contribute to the transformation and regeneration of Hemel Hempstead and renewal of its New Town infrastructure;
 - Ensuring the important market towns of Berkhamsted and Tring play a much greater role in delivering growth in the Borough and complement Hemel Hempstead in providing more balance to the growth focus and help deliver housing, employment and infrastructure in these locations;
 - Providing growth in the villages that reflects their role and character;
 - Minimising and managing the requirement for development on Green Belt land and the impact on the Chilterns AONB and other protected sites; and
 - Ensuring that the preferred strategy is of such a form and scale to deliver the appropriate level and type of infrastructure such as schools, health and transport/movement.
- 5.3** The spatial strategy aims to deliver the significant uplift in growth in a sustainable way across the Borough, seeking out opportunities to regenerate Hemel Hempstead and to continue to act as a catalyst for its transformation. Elsewhere, we are looking to accommodate growth that supports the long term function of the towns and villages and that delivers sufficient growth to provide much needed investment in infrastructure. We know that we cannot accommodate all the growth within the urban area, so despite our approach to increasing densities and heights, we do need to release land in the Green Belt.
- 5.4** The strategy focuses growth in and around the most sustainable settlements in the Borough, principally Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring through utilising urban land as well as through extensions to each settlement. Hemel Hempstead's growth will be focused through much greater urban intensification reflecting the wider availability of development opportunities and the sustainability of the town and access to services, facilities and employment. The expansion of the town will be focused to the north and east of the Hemel Hempstead, with further land removed from the Green Belt to meet longer term needs.
- 5.5** The Growth Strategy for Berkhamsted and Tring will also seek to maximise urban capacity but will not pursue an urban intensification strategy that detracts from the character of these locations. Instead growth will be accommodated mainly through expansions to these settlements in a way that manages landscape and Green Belt impacts but also meets our aspirations for growth to be sustainably located close to passenger transport and other services, facilities and employment opportunities.
- 5.6** While the large villages of Bovington, Kings Langley and Markyate provide a reasonable level of services and facilities, they are relatively constrained in terms of local infrastructure. Therefore, the strategy proposes only modest levels of growth in these settlements.

- 5.7** The strategy avoids directing significant development to the smaller villages and wider countryside. We see these areas as being the least sustainable locations, as they are more sensitive to substantial change, access and public transport is poorer, and there is a general lack of employment opportunities, supporting services and facilities there.
- 5.8** Not all development needs and infrastructure requirements can be met in the Borough. We will continue to work closely with neighbouring districts on cross-boundary matters. Growth to the north and east of Hemel Hempstead necessitates joint working with St Albans City and District, Hertfordshire County Council, Herts LEP and the landowners to bring forward the Hemel Garden Communities project (see the 'Hemel Hempstead Garden Communities Delivery Strategy'). This will require the co-ordination of planning across local authority boundaries to ensure a consistent approach is taken within emerging plans and strategies, alignment to the overall objectives for the town as a whole, and delivery of key strategic infrastructure for Hemel Hempstead.

Policy SP2 - Spatial Strategy for Growth

1. Dacorum's Local Plan will make provision for the following in the period between 2020 and 2038:
 - a. A minimum of 16,596 homes.
 - b. No net loss of office floorspace from 2025 onwards.
 - c. A net floorspace increase of 116,500 sqm of industrial floorspace.
 - d. Additional retail floorspace to meet the main identified needs in Dacorum's towns focused on Hemel Hempstead and Tring town centres and, on a smaller scale, in the larger strategic Growth Areas.
 - e. Associated infrastructure to support the above.
2. The primary focus of strategic growth and investment will be at Hemel Hempstead, supported by growth at Berkhamsted and Tring and then the large villages of Bovington, Kings Langley and Markyate. Elsewhere large-scale development will be restricted outside of the towns and large villages.
3. The majority of new growth and investment will be concentrated in sustainable locations as follows:
 - a. Hemel Hempstead will grow by over 10,600 new homes and will deliver the majority of new employment space. A key feature of the strategy will be the intensification of sites within Hemel Hempstead through increased heights and densities. Key areas for redevelopment include sites across the Town Centre and Two Waters Areas. Smaller scale development within the existing urban area will also be provided to ensure previously developed land is optimised. The town will grow to the north by providing a minimum of 1,500 homes with further land to deliver an additional 4,000 homes released from the Green Belt but safeguarded to meet longer term needs. New urban extensions to the north of the settlement will be planned and developed drawing on Garden City principles, with development within and around Hemel Hempstead supporting the transformation of the town. These sites will provide or support delivery of identified strategic infrastructure requirements, and sustainable transport enhancements and improve connectivity across the town.
 - b. Berkhamsted will accommodate growth of at least 2,200 new homes. Development will enhance the town centre and strengthen its function as a key market town in the Borough and will provide significant new investment into sustainable transport initiatives, education, open space and sports facilities.
 - c. Tring will accommodate growth of at least 2,700 new homes. Development will enhance the town centre and strengthen its function as a key market town in the Borough and will provide significant new investment into sustainable transport initiatives, education, open space and sports facilities.
 - d. At the larger villages growth will be apportioned as follows: Bovington (240 homes), Kings Langley (275 homes) and Markyate (215 homes).
 - e. At smaller villages, there will be more limited housing growth coming forward through either 'windfall' applications or Neighbourhood Plan allocations rather than allocations in this Plan.

- f. Elsewhere in rural areas, housing development will be strictly limited. This is likely to be small-scale incremental development and should be principally in line with Policies SP11 - Development in the Green Belt and SP12 - Development in the Rural Area and other relevant policies in the Plan.
- g. An allowance for windfall development of around 2,400 dwelling over the Plan period.
4. Development that does not fit with the scale, distribution or requirements of this policy will not be permitted.
5. The Council will also support additional growth beyond what is outlined above where this comes forward through Neighbourhood Plans or other local development initiatives where this accords with the objectives and strategies of the Plan.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Settlement Hierarchy Study Main Report October 2017
- Settlement Profile Paper October 2017

6 The Settlement Hierarchy

- 6.1** In order to ensure that new development takes place in locations that have the best access to a wide range of services, facilities and employment opportunities, whilst minimising the need to travel, we have developed the settlement hierarchy. This is based on an assessment of population size, settlement connectivity, and the availability of employment and other services and facilities. Growth is to be focused on the main towns and large villages that are excluded from the Green Belt, and that have access to a greater level of supporting services, facilities and other local infrastructure.

Policy SP3 - The Settlement Hierarchy

New development will be primarily focused at Hemel Hempstead, the market towns, and large villages. The scale and distribution of development should broadly align with the settlement hierarchy set out below and in each settlement's Delivery Strategy policies and proposals and sites that arises from it. Development will be controlled in the countryside in order to protect its rural character.

Table 1 Settlement Hierarchy

Category	Settlement	Description
Strategic Settlement	Hemel Hempstead	The most sustainable location in the Borough and the focus for the majority of development and strategic and town-wide infrastructure. Hemel Hempstead acts as the primary service centre for the Borough. The town will also expand on its eastern side into St Albans City and District Council area.
Market towns	Berkhamsted	These market towns are sustainable locations and will be the focus for significant development. These settlements act as service centres for other villages around them.
	Tring	
Large Villages	Bovingdon	Growth in the large villages will be at a scale in keeping with their local character and setting. Sites are allocated to enable modest levels of expansion that reflects their role and function as well as other constraints to growth.
	Kings Langley	
	Markyate	
Small Villages within the Green Belt	Chipperfield	These are the least sustainable areas of the Borough, providing much lower level of facilities and where significant environmental constraints often apply. They offer restricted scope for development such as limited infilling within the selected small villages (although being more restrictive in the Green Belt than in the Rural Area), reuse of buildings, and the redevelopment of previously developed land. Such locations include areas of high landscape quality, such as the Chilterns AONB and the countryside gaps between settlements. This needs to be protected to ensure their rural character is retained and settlements keep their separate identities.
	Flamstead	
	Potten End	
	Wiggington	
Small Villages within the Rural Area	Aldbury	This needs to be protected to ensure their rural character is retained and settlements keep their separate identities.
	Long Marston	
	Wilstone	
Other small villages and the countryside		

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Settlement Hierarchy Study Main Report October 2017
- Settlement Profile Paper October 2017

7 The Housing Strategy

- 7.1** The housing delivery strategy seeks to bring forward a sufficient number, quality and type of housing to meet the needs for general market and affordable homes and other specific housing needs of the community. It delivers a substantial uplift in supply compared to the previous Local Plan. Policy SP4 - The Housing Strategy highlights the different sources of housing supply, their contribution to meeting identified housing need over the Plan period, and seeks to ensure a 5 year supply of housing from adoption of this Plan.

National Policy

- 7.2** In considering the delivery of homes, the NPPF requires that planning authorities:
- make every effort to meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area (paragraph 11);
 - determine the minimum number of homes needed which is to be informed by a local housing need assessment using the standard method in national planning guidance (paragraph 60);
 - should assess and reflect in planning policies the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community (paragraph 61);
 - demonstrate that they have a five year supply of “deliverable” sites in order to meet housing needs in the first five years of the plan period (paragraph 67);
 - identify a supply of specific “developable” sites or broad locations for growth for years 6 to 10 and where possible years 11 to 15 (paragraph 67);
 - can make an allowance for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, where there is compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply (paragraph 71); and
 - make provision for a variety of buffers, as appropriate, to take account of choice and competition in the market for land in the first five year period, any fluctuations in the market during that year, or to reflect persistent under delivery (paragraph 73).

Evidence base and other studies

- 7.3** As part of the evidence base to the Plan, we have undertaken a number of steps to understand the housing supply over the period 2020-38. We have:
- carried out regular monitoring of commitments, completions and existing Plan allocations through our Residential Land Position Statements and Authority Monitoring Reports ⁽⁴⁾;
 - 'Called for Sites' during the earlier stages of preparing the Plan to identify potential greenfield and brownfield sites;
 - prepared an Urban Capacity Study to assess what different sources of supply could come forward (incorporating sites from the 2016 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Brownfield Land Register⁽⁵⁾). These identified the suitability of such sites and appraised likely levels of contributions from windfall sites;
 - assessed opportunities to increase housing densities on urban sites, particularly in highly accessible locations and transport hubs;
 - completed an assessment of potential greenfield sites that could come forward and identified the suitability of such sites;
 - engaged with landowner, developers and agents to better understand the timing and delivery of their sites; and
 - engaged with key stakeholders, as well as relevant infrastructure and service providers over site-specific, settlement or Borough wide constraints, how they might affect bringing forward housing land and, where appropriate, how they might be overcome.

4 <https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/monitoring-reports-and-land-position-statements>
 5 <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/brownfield-land-register>

7.4 The South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment not only identified the overall local housing need for the Borough, but also the needs of different sectors of the community including for affordable housing, housing mix, and specialist accommodation. Therefore, in addition to the overall housing target, this Plan supports new bed-spaces to help meet the accommodation needs of older people needing residential or nursing care. Similarly, the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment explores the need for future pitches and other forms of accommodation over the lifetime of the Plan. Detailed discussion on both matters can be found in the 14 'Housing Delivery' chapter of the Plan.

Housing Land Supply

7.5 The Local Housing Needs Assessment has helped us understand what our housing requirement should be. However, the Government is proposing changes to the standard method in its recent consultations on the Planning Reform White Paper and related changes to the planning system. We have therefore progressed the Plan on the basis of this new housing need calculation of 922 homes pa (i.e. 16,596 homes over the period 2020-38). We recognise that there are uncertainties over using this as our housing figure, particularly as there may be a further refinement to the process of calculating housing need and other matters that may need to be factored in. We will keep this issue under review as we progress to the next stage of the Plan and make any necessary adjustments when we know more.

7.6 Irrespective of the final growth figure, the NPPF requires that we fully explore the potential to make effective use of urban land (paragraphs 118 and 137), especially before considering the exceptional circumstances needed for justifying Green Belt releases for housing purposes. We have thoroughly reviewed the scope for meeting our housing needs from urban land, particularly that from our main towns and larger villages. Such steps include:

- accounting for future commitments based on the most recently available monitoring data (as at 1st April 2020);
- bringing forward earlier and identifying new Plan (strategic and non-strategic) allocations in the existing urban areas;
- identifying development opportunities from sites in the Urban Capacity Study;
- exploring housing opportunities from former employment land;
- fully reviewing opportunities to increase delivery on allocated sites;
- making an allowance across the Plan period of 200 homes pa for windfalls (i.e. small to large sites not currently identified in the Plan; and
- identifying contributions from Neighbourhood Plans.

7.7 We have planned for around 16,900 homes to be built over the Plan period. This will result in a significant uplift in the supply of housing with a strong focus on delivery. It will also help satisfy the broad housing needs of our communities, support a mix of types and sizes of sites, provide for a modest contingency over the housing requirement, and ensure delivery across the Plan period. The table below summarises the main sources of supply.

Table 2 Sources of Housing Land Supply

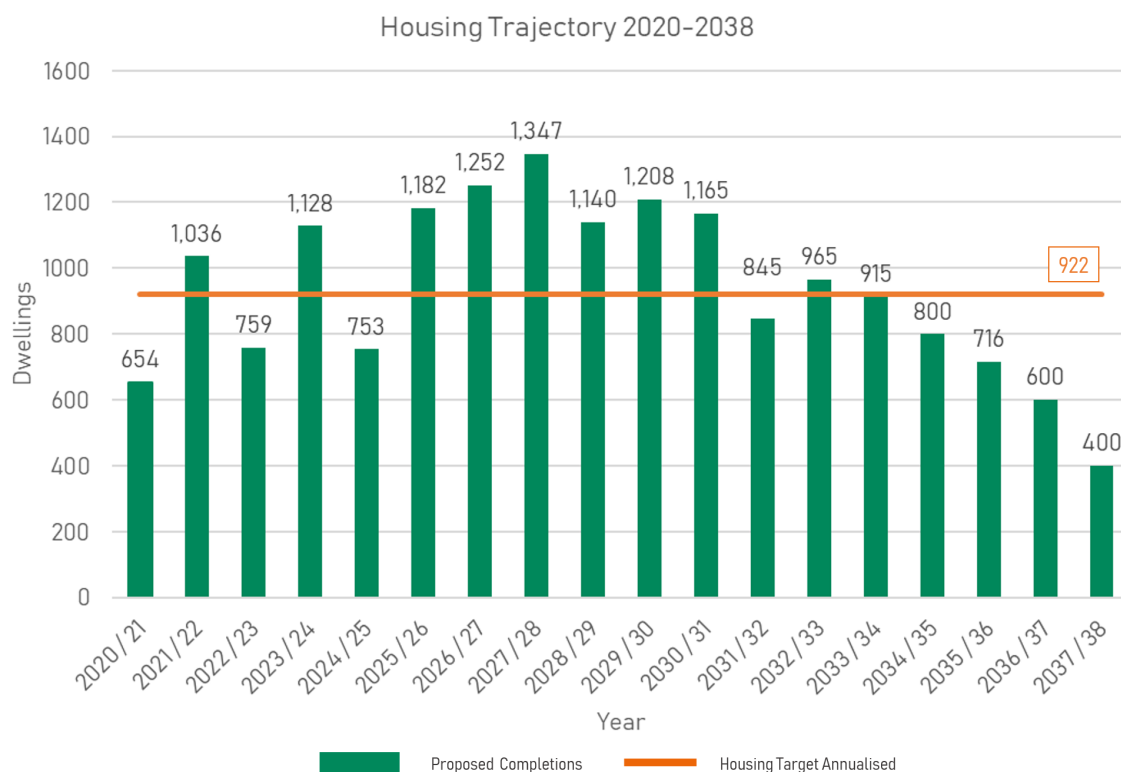
Housing Land Supply 2020 - 2038 as at April 2020	
Number of homes required to be built	16,596
Total existing commitments	2,708
Urban Growth Areas	5,638
Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan	200
Windfalls	2,408
Strategic greenfield Growth Areas	5,945
Total Housing Supply	16,899
Surplus over housing need figure (16,899 - 16,596)	+303

- 7.8** The table indicates that some of the housing supply is already committed through existing planning permissions, and a large proportion is identified allocations in the existing settlements. A modest contribution can also be made from the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan. However, we have not made any specific allowance for further growth coming forward through the emerging Bovingdon and Kings Langley Neighbourhood Plans, as these already form part of the identified urban capacity and allocations for these settlements within the housing supply.
- 7.9** Our analysis indicates that windfall sites will play an important part in the housing programme (at 200 homes pa). They are made up of a wide range of small to large sites from a variety of sources that have been calculated using historic delivery rates and expected future trends. We believe it is justified based on past local evidence and is a reliable source of supply across the Plan period.
- 7.10** Our evidence tells us that most of the new homes will come forward from urban sites in our main towns and large villages (chiefly over the short to medium term). Most opportunities will arise in Hemel Hempstead as our largest settlement, particularly in and around the town centre and within the Two Waters area. The policies in the Plan will also encourage a strong urban focus to the housing programme and appropriate levels of intensification/densification.
- 7.11** However, urban sites cannot contribute a sufficient number of new homes to meet full housing need. This means that we will have to rely on a range of strategic releases of Green Belt land to meet this need.

Housing Delivery

- 7.12** The graph below outlines the projected housing trajectory (as at a base date of 1 April 2020) in each year of the Plan period to secure delivery of the annual housing need of 922 homes and to ensure a modest additional land supply buffer.
- 7.13** While forecast delivery does vary against the annual housing need figure over the Plan period, there is a sufficient housing land supply of deliverable and developable housing sites to satisfy the requirement to 2038 and modestly exceed it by approximately 300 homes.

Figure 2 Housing Trajectory 2020 - 2038



7.14 In the short-term the housing programme is more dependent on the supply of existing commitments and previous Plan allocations carried forward into this Plan. Housing supply peaks over the mid-term of the Plan as the Growth Areas begin to be built-out (alongside a smaller contribution from windfalls). The latter half of the housing programme sees a steady fall in delivery as the Plan becomes more reliant on the larger greenfield Growth Areas.

7.15 The scale of housing necessary in this Plan means that the housing programme will provide for development in a variety of locations and ranges of site sizes, support a variety of house builders and allow for genuine opportunities for self and custom build housing. The larger scale Growth Areas at Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring will provide the greatest opportunities to secure a range of housing types, tenures and other types of specialist accommodation.

7.16 Further detail on the housing supply and anticipated rates of delivery for sites is provided in the Housing Topic Paper.

Small Sites

7.17 In accordance with National Policy, the Plan identifies sufficient sites that are less than one hectare in size which are capable of meeting at least 10% of the overall housing requirement. This is made up through a combination of Growth Area allocations and other sites with planning permission and where construction has yet to commence on the site. These sites are presented in Appendix 2.

Contingencies/Flexibility

7.18 Overall, the Plan sets out an approach to housing that will provide a significant uplift in delivery, particularly in the first half of the Plan period. Sufficient land has been identified so as to meet and modestly exceed the housing need figure of 922 homes pa. The modest projected over-supply allows for a small degree of flexibility if some sites are not implemented or there are other long-term delays.

- 7.19** However, the Plan must be sufficiently flexible to allow for uncertainties in the housing supply such as the economic cycle, changing market conditions, physical or planning constraints including the complexities of multiple landownership sites, and infrastructure difficulties leading to the stalling of individual sites. The Covid-19 pandemic has introduced further short term uncertainties into the housing market. Achieving this level of housing delivery will prove challenging, especially as it represents a very significant increase on past housing requirements.
- 7.20** We have avoided any formal phasing of sites as the sheer scale of housing that we are required to deliver does not warrant this. The larger sites are naturally constrained in terms of lead-in times, the need for site preparation and the timing of infrastructure. Therefore, the Plan does not seek to regulate sites and they are generally free to come forward providing necessary infrastructure can be delivered in a timely manner. The Plan provides for a range of sites in different locations which means that it is not dependent on delivery or market conditions in any one location.
- 7.21** Development to the north of Hemel Hempstead offers the opportunity for multiple house builders to deliver a mix of housing products. The scheme also forms part of a large and comprehensive development that extends east of the town into St Albans City and District, which is expected within their forthcoming Local Plan. However, its scale requires it to be infrastructure-led which in turn requires it to be phased. The first phase (North Hemel Growth Area (Phase 1)) can deliver around 1,500 homes in the Plan period. A second phase (North Hemel Growth Area (Phase 2)) will deliver an additional 4,000 homes from 2038 onwards. The latter will be identified as safeguarded land until released for housing.
- 7.22** The Plan allocates a number of small to medium sized strategic and non-strategic sites for housing development, particularly in the earlier years of the plan period. These will help provide short-term flexibility and contingency reducing the reliance on the larger Growth Areas as part of the major planned new growth.
- 7.23** The housing trajectory is based on discussions with house-builders, infrastructure providers, an assessment of previous delivery rates and other factors. This has helped minimise known risks and provide broad confidence over the timing and delivery of key sites. While the trajectory sets out when sites can reasonably be brought forward it does not prevent earlier or accelerated delivery where opportunities arise.
- 7.24** We will carefully monitor supply as part of our regular monitoring routines to ensure a steady delivery of homes. We will also be assessed annually against the national Housing Delivery Test that looks at housing delivery rates over a rolling three year period. This sets out a number of actions a local authority will have to take if housing supply falls below specified levels.
- 7.25** We can undertake a range of corporate actions, support the actions of other organisations and actively engage with the development industry in order to increase and speed up housing delivery should under-supply become persistent during the Plan period.

Policy SP4 - Delivering The Housing Strategy

1. The Plan will deliver a minimum of 16,596 net additional homes across the Borough over the period 2020-2038. Housing growth will be concentrated at the existing urban areas of Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring and the three larger villages of Bovington, Kings Langley and Markyate. New homes will be delivered in accordance with the delivery strategies through:
 - a. The completion of existing commitments.
 - b. The redevelopment of previously developed land, vacant or underused sites within the urban areas of the Borough.
 - c. An increase in the height and densities of urban sites across all of the main towns and large villages subject to character, with active focus on tall and taller buildings in the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre and the Two Waters areas.

- d. Bringing forward regeneration opportunities in Hemel Hempstead in and around the Town Centre, Two Waters and the Maylands Growth Areas.
 - e. The development of small to medium sized allocations in the urban areas as set out in the relevant settlements' Proposals and Sites schedule.
 - f. Bringing forward the windfall allowance for small and large sites not identified in the Plan.
 - g. The development of small-scale sites within the selected small villages in accordance with relevant countryside policies in this Plan.
 - h. The delivery of housing already identified in the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan, and through small to medium sized allocations in future neighbourhood plans.
 - i. 5,500 homes at the strategic urban extension of North Hemel, comprising of 1,500 homes in the Plan period at North Hemel Growth Area (Phase 1) and 4,000 homes beyond 2038 at North Hemel Growth Area (Phase 2). The later phase will be removed from the Green Belt and safeguarded to meet longer term housing needs.
 - j. The development of a series of strategic urban extensions on land on the south and western edges of Berkhamsted and up to the A41. These will chiefly be made up of a number of small and large developments to the south and south-west which will deliver around 1,870 homes in total, including land for new primary and secondary schools, and other facilities.
 - k. The development of a series of strategic urban extensions on land on the eastern and south eastern edge of Tring, that will deliver up to 2,200 homes, including land for new primary and secondary schools, and other facilities.
 - l. Small to medium scale strategic urban extensions on the settlement edge of Bovingdon (150 homes), Kings Langley (145 homes) and Markyate (150 homes).
2. The housing strategy will support, in accordance with the Local Housing Needs Assessment and other studies, the provision of a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes of homes, plots for self-build and custom housing, and specialist accommodation to meet the needs for care in the community and an ageing population.
 3. The Council will resist any net loss in the Borough's stock of homes, existing public and other authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites and the travelling showpeople sites, unless in accordance with other Plan policies or there are compelling and overriding reasons to do so.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Residential Land Position Statements
- Authority Monitoring Reports
- South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment (August 2020)
- South West Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2016)
- Dacorum Greenfield Site Assessment
- Urban Capacity Study
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment

8 The Employment Strategy

- 8.1 The employment strategy seeks to bring forward a sufficient amount of employment space in the right locations to deliver our wider economic objectives.

National Policy

- 8.2 The NPPF states that local planning authorities should adopt policies which support economic growth in their area. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Evidence base and other studies

- 8.3 Along with the other South West Hertfordshire authorities, we commissioned the South West Hertfordshire Economic Studies (2016 and 2019). These studies looked at employment land and floorspace requirements to 2036. They also reviewed some existing and potential future employment areas. The Dacorum Employment Land Availability Assessment (2017) provided more detailed advice on the quantity, mix and geographical spread of employment land in the Borough.
- 8.4 The Council's Enterprise and Investment Action Plan 2017-2020 aims to provide an environment in which businesses can flourish. It seeks to foster a reputation for the Borough being open for business and attracting businesses to the area.
- 8.5 The Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is responsible for a number of important initiatives and reports, including:
- Hertfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (2017)
 - Loss of Employment Space in Hertfordshire (2017)
 - Hertfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (draft 2019)
- 8.6 An important element of the LEP's strategy is the Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter Enterprise Zone (Herts IQ). Its aim is to attract a wide range of high value sectors linked to environmental technologies, such as off-site construction, 'agritech' and digital industries. The multi-site Enterprise Zone includes part of Maylands Business Park in Hemel Hempstead and the proposed 55 hectare East Hemel Hempstead employment site in St Albans City and District.
- 8.7 Key economic messages for Dacorum to address in the light of the Economic Study Update (2019) are:
- **Supporting the growth of established sectors is key to addressing productivity challenges:** South West Hertfordshire has established strengths in professional services, ICT and film and TV production, with significant growth potential. Science-based industries should also be supported.
 - **Supply of employment space is at critically low levels:** there are shortages across South West Hertfordshire, including a shortage of industrial space and space for small firms in Dacorum.
 - **High quality transport access is important for new employment development:** high value office occupiers require high quality amenities and good public transport access, particularly to London. However, connections to Maylands Business Park are unlikely to improve sufficiently to produce substantial office growth there. Large and medium sized industrial firms require access to the strategic road network. Maylands Business Park dominates the market, particularly for strategic warehouses. Smaller occupiers are more locationally footloose and need sites with affordable rents and flexible leases.
- 8.8 The South West Hertfordshire Economic Studies identified South West Hertfordshire as a Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA). This reflects evidence of strong commuting and migration relationships and shared leisure, retail and public sector catchment areas.

- 8.9** Given the complex relationship between housing and jobs growth and the uncertainty over total jobs growth, the Economic Study Update advised against setting jobs growth targets in Local Plans. Instead, it recommended planning for appropriate increases in office and industrial floorspace, which are more tangible and easier to monitor.
- 8.10** The study recommended that the South West Hertfordshire authorities should aim to provide additional employment space between 2018 and 2036, as follows:
- Offices: 188,000 sqm
 - Industrial: 481,500 sqm
- 8.11** Indicative district-level floorspace figures for the 2018-2036 period are set out in the study, to inform Local Plan preparation. Dacorum's indicative figures are 45,100 sqm (offices) and 196,500 sqm (industrial). However, the study advised that decisions on floorspace and land requirements in local plans should be informed also by duty to co-operate discussions, which take account of land availability for new development across the FEMA.
- 8.12** Office land supply in South West Hertfordshire exceeds the requirement by 76,000 sqm, but Dacorum has a shortfall of 68,000 sqm against its indicative floorspace figure. There are surpluses in Watford, Three Rivers and St Albans. The latter has an oversupply of 80,000 sqm, due to the capacity for 152,000 sqm of offices on the East Hemel Hempstead site.
- 8.13** With industrial land supply, the Economic Study Update indicated a shortfall of 211,000 sqm in South West Hertfordshire, including an under supply of 120,000 sqm in Dacorum. However, St Albans City and District has a surplus of 80,000 sqm, because of the potential at East Hemel Hempstead.
- 8.14** St Albans City and District Council's decision to include the permitted Radlett Aerodrome strategic rail freight interchange in its Local Plan means that there is now a surplus of industrial land in South West Hertfordshire against the Economic Study Update's indicative floorspace figure. However, the study stated that, although the rail freight interchange would enable all the strategic demand for industrial space to be met across South West Hertfordshire, there will still be a need for small and medium sized units in other locations to meet more local demand.
- 8.15** Future employment floorspace needs, particularly for offices, may be affected by the current Covid-19 pandemic. It is not possible to make an accurate forecast at present, but we will give the matter further consideration before publishing the next stage of the Local Plan. Our indicative floorspace figures may also be adjusted to reflect the 2020-2038 time horizon of our Local Plan.

The Proposed Strategy

- 8.16** Our economic strategy is based on the following approach:
1. accommodate Dacorum's indicative floorspace growth figures for office and industrial space as far as possible;
 2. enhance Maylands Business Park as Dacorum's premier business park, including support for green technological uses in Dacorum's part of the Herts IQ Enterprise Zone;
 3. give high priority to medium and small sized businesses in new employment development;
 4. retain existing employment sites unless there are overriding planning reasons to the contrary; and
 5. allocate additional sites to create employment areas that are commercially attractive, with good road and public transport access and high quality amenities such as local shops and cafes.
- 8.17** Accommodating the Borough's indicative floorspace growth figures for office and industrial space is very challenging, given the large shortfalls shown. Indeed, our shortfalls are now larger than stated in the Economic Study Update, as explained in the Economic Development Topic Paper.

- 8.18** Viability issues mean that the scope for new offices in our existing urban areas is very limited and there is no significant urban industrial land supply except at Maylands Gateway fronting the St Albans Road/Breakspear Way. Consequently, major Green Belt releases would be needed in order to meet our indicative floorspace figures.
- 8.19** Given this, we asked the other South West Hertfordshire authorities if they could take our unmet need. Dacorum and St Albans councils are working together to ensure that most of our unmet need will be accommodated on the East Hemel Hempstead site in St Albans City and District. This site is ideally located, as it will act as an extension to Maylands Business Park. It also forms the principal development opportunity in the Herts IQ Enterprise Zone.
- 8.20** We envisage that the East Hemel Hempstead site will accommodate around 84,000 sqm of our unmet office floorspace need and 80,000 sqm of our unmet need for industrial space. After taking this into account, we conclude as follows on employment land supply in Dacorum:
- **Offices:** there is still a small shortfall against the indicative floorspace figure. Indeed, we expect a further net loss of office floorspace up to 2025, due to existing commitments. Beyond 2025, the stock of office floorspace is likely to stay broadly unchanged. Despite this, we do not consider that land should be released from the Green Belt for office development, due to the lack of suitable and viable sites, and the overall floorspace surplus in South West Hertfordshire.
 - **Industrial:** there remains a substantial shortfall against Dacorum's indicative floorspace figure. There is also a severe shortage of land for small and medium sized firms. We consider that these factors constitute exceptional circumstances, justifying the release of some Green Belt land for industrial development.
- 8.21** In the light of the above, we consider that the appropriate indicative floorspace figures in this Plan (excluding any contribution from the East Hemel Hempstead site) are for no net change of office floorspace after 2025 and for an additional 116,500 sqm of industrial space between 2018 and 2036.

New employment sites

- 8.22** In selecting new sites for employment development (mainly industrial) sufficient to enable the indicative industrial floorspace figure in Policy SP5 - Delivering the Employment Strategy to be met, we have followed the Dacorum Employment Land Availability Assessment's advice that sites along the A41 are good locations for local businesses, as they are less attractive for strategic warehouses which need good motorway access.
- 8.23** The Plan releases land from the Green Belt for employment development next to the A41 junction in Hemel Hempstead (5 hectares) and at Dunsley Farm, Tring (7.4 hectares). It also proposes extensions to the existing employment areas in the Green Belt at Upper Bourne End Lane/Stoney Lane (Bourne End Mills) (1.1 hectares) and Bovingdon Brickworks (0.7 hectares). A total of around 47,000 sqm of industrial development can be accommodated on these sites.

Policy SP5 - Delivering the Employment Strategy

1. Over the Plan period the Council will seek to grow and develop Dacorum's economy by capitalising on the Borough's position near to the M25 and M1, its proximity to London and the wider Herts IQ Enterprise Zone aspirations.
2. The strategy for supporting economic needs will be delivered by:
 - a. The continued development of Hemel Hempstead as an important economic centre for the Borough.
 - b. Supporting the knowledge-based economy, including the development of green technological businesses at Maylands Gateway close to M1 Junction 8 in the Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter Enterprise Zone.

- c. Attracting new businesses, encouraging business start-ups and assisting businesses to grow, particularly on Employment Growth Areas, where provision for small and medium sized businesses will be required.
- d. Planning to meet the following indicative floorspace figures:
 - i. Offices: no net loss of space from 2025 onwards.
 - ii. Industrial: net floorspace increase of 116,500 sqm between 2018 and 2036
- e. Supporting the expansion of Maylands Business Park onto the East Hemel Hempstead site in St Albans City and District, to accommodate Dacorum’s unmet need for office and industrial floorspace.
- f. Retaining and developing existing employment sites that meet longer term needs for a wide range of office and industrial uses, and releasing sites that do not meet future requirements.
- g. Encouraging offices in town, district and local centres.
- h. Allocating 20 ha of office and industrial development land within use classes E, B2 and B8 at the following Employment Growth Areas:

Table 3 Employment Growth Areas

Settlement	Growth Area Allocation
Hemel Hempstead	Breakspeare Way/Green Lane/Boundary Way, Maylands Gateway (Growth Area HH20)
	Two Waters Road/A41 Junction (Growth Area HH16)
Tring	Dunsley Farm, London Road (Growth Area Tr01)
The Countryside	Upper Bourne End Lane/Stoney Lane (Bourne End Mills) (Growth Area Cy01)
	Bovingdon Brickworks (Growth Area Cy02)

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- [South West Herts Economic Study Update September 2019](#)
- [Dacorum Employment Land Availability Assessment - October 2017](#)
- [Hertfordshire LEP Website](#)
- [Enterprise and Investment Team Action Plan - 2017-20](#)
- [LEP Loss of Employment Space in Hertfordshire - February 2019](#)
- [LEP Key Documents](#)
- [Hertfordshire IQ - LEP](#)

9 The Retail and Leisure Development Strategy

- 9.1** The retail and leisure development strategy seeks to manage the long term resilience of town centres, making sure they can respond to continued and rapid changes to the way we shop on and offline and use our town centres and continue to thrive and be the heart of our towns.

National Policy

- 9.2** The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of their local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. A hierarchy of town centres should be defined. The NPPF recognises the importance of a diverse range of 'main town centre uses', including retail, leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (e.g. cinemas, restaurants, pubs, health and fitness centres), offices and the arts. It also recognises that a wide range of complementary uses and evening and night time activities can help support the vitality of town centres. The term 'town centres' in the NPPF also applies to district and local centres.

Evidence base studies

- 9.3** We, along with the adjoining authorities of Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers and Watford, commissioned the South West Hertfordshire Retail and Leisure Study (2018). This study provided us with an understanding of existing retail and leisure issues across the area, together with an objective assessment of future needs and possible strategic responses.
- 9.4** More recently, we commissioned the Further Dacorum Retail Study (2020) to update the retail aspects of the 2018 study. The Further Study takes account of changed circumstances, including greater clarity on likely future housing development and revised forecasts of future retail expenditure. It also assessed potential sites for retail development in the town centres and advised on its potential distribution.
- 9.5** The evidence defined a retail hierarchy with Hemel Hempstead as a sub-regional centre, Berkhamsted and Tring as town centres, Hemel Hempstead Old Town and potentially Apsley as district centres, and a number of local centres.
- 9.6** The forecasts in the 2020 study reflected various assumptions, including estimated increases in population, retail expenditure and internet shopping. After taking existing commitments into account, the study identified capacity for 13,200-16,500 sqm net of additional convenience (food) floorspace by 2032. Conversely, no additional comparison (non-food) floorspace was required, assuming existing commitments are implemented. However, there may be scope for some new comparison floorspace, once substantial housing growth has been delivered across Dacorum.
- 9.7** Although there is capacity for a substantial increase in convenience shopping floorspace, the 2020 study is cautious about translating this into provision on the ground, given the structural changes underway to the way we shop. Furthermore, over half the identified convenience capacity is to address 'over-trading' in existing foodstores. The study advised that out of centre retail schemes which are harmful to designated centres should be resisted, irrespective of the capacity identified. However, appropriate retail schemes that would increase the vitality and viability of existing centres should be permitted, even if there is no capacity identified.
- 9.8** Another factor referred to in the 2020 study is the current Covid-19 situation. The study stated that this will have consequences which will not be fully understood for some time. Some re-basing of consumer spending patterns is likely, but accurate forecasts are not yet possible. Therefore, the study advises us to closely monitor and regularly update the position on capacity, need and strategy.

- 9.9** The 2018 study assessed the need for a range of leisure uses, namely, indoor sports and health and fitness; cinemas; restaurants; bars, pubs, social clubs and nightclubs; ten pin bowling; bingo; and theatres, galleries and museums. It concluded that existing provision together with commitments is sufficient to meet most of the identified future needs. Therefore, no additional allocations are required for specific major new leisure facilities over the Plan period. Nevertheless, additional facilities should be permitted in sustainable locations. In addition, the loss of existing facilities should be resisted, if it would reduce choice in a sector with long-term demand.

Scale and location of new retail development

- 9.10** Policy SP6 below sets out our strategy for future retail and leisure development. It defines a hierarchy of centres in Dacorum as recommended in the 2018 Retail and Leisure Study, except in relation to Apsley. The study raised the possibility of elevating Apsley from local to district centre status, by including the adjoining retail parks. We consider this change is justified, as this area plays an important role in meeting Hemel Hempstead's retail needs.
- 9.11** National guidance and our evidence base point to new retail floorspace being located as far as possible in the town, district and local centres, in accordance with the hierarchy. Where it is not met in these centres, any additional retail provision should be directed mainly to the larger strategic sites. Given the uncertainties in retailing mentioned above, we will reconsider retail floorspace needs before the next stage of the Local Plan is published.
- 9.12** In the light of the evidence, we have concluded that rather than set a floorspace target for convenience floorspace, it is better to concentrate on meeting the main identified needs in our towns. Therefore, Policy SP6 facilitates a substantial increase in convenience space, although considerably lower than the floorspace capacity identified in the 2020 retail study.
- 9.13** For comparison floorspace, this Plan does not set a floorspace target given the evidence base findings. However, small scale comparison floorspace will be encouraged in Hemel Hempstead and Tring town centres and on the larger strategic Growth Areas.
- 9.14** There are few realistic opportunities available for retail development in our town centres, but the evidence shows that the most appropriate sites are located at Market Square in Hemel Hempstead and High Street/Brook Street in Tring. Whilst this Plan proposes retail development on these sites, this still needs to be fully tested and it is uncertain whether such development will be delivered. If not, we consider that no alternative provision is needed in Hemel Hempstead, given recent and proposed future supermarket developments elsewhere in the town. However, a new out of centre supermarket in Tring would be justified. We regard the Dunsley Farm Growth Area as the best alternative location.
- 9.15** Housing development on the larger strategic Growth Areas at Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring will take place over an extended period of time and the Plan should not be prescriptive over the size, location or timing of future retail provision. Policy SP6 does, however, indicate the broad nature of retail facilities required, taking account of the evidence.
- 9.16** No new out of centre retail parks are proposed. However, it would be prudent to retain the vacant land at Jarman Park, Hemel Hempstead as a Retail Growth Area, with potential for convenience and comparison floorspace. This reflects the shortage of potential sites to meet the town's retail needs, although the position should be reviewed through the next Local Plan.

Policy SP6 - Delivering the Retail and Leisure Strategy

1. The Council will support retailing and leisure by:
 - a. Fostering the retail and leisure base of Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring, by encouraging main town centre uses of an appropriate scale and nature in the town, district and local centres in accordance with the hierarchy below:

Table 4 Retail/Leisure Hierarchy

Type of centre	Centres	Role of centre
Sub-regional centre	Hemel Hempstead	Main destination for comparison and convenience goods shopping, services such as banks, leisure and cultural activities.
Town centres	Berkhamsted	Provision of main convenience and comparison shopping facilities, services and leisure uses for the town and nearby rural area.
	Tring	
District centres	Apsley, Hemel Hempstead	Provision of local convenience and comparison shopping floorspace, services and leisure uses. Also meets some town-wide needs for retail warehouses (Apsley) and speciality shopping and eating and drinking (Old Town).
	Hemel Hempstead Old Town	
Local centres	Adeyfield, Hemel Hempstead	Contain a limited range of shops (often including a supermarket), services, community uses and food and drink uses for the local community.
	Bennetts End (Bennettsgate), Hemel Hempstead	
	Maylands, Hemel Hempstead	
	Woodhall Farm, Hemel Hempstead	
	Bovingdon	
	Kings Langley	

- b. Focusing new retail floorspace in the town centres and to a lesser extent the larger strategic Growth Areas in accordance with the delivery strategies.
 - c. Accepting further retail development outside of the centres defined above and the larger strategic Growth Areas only if justified under Policy DM21 - Main Town Centre Uses Outside Existing Centres.
 - d. Promoting tourism and other industries in key locations.
 - e. Supporting the evening economies within the town centres.
2. In **Hemel Hempstead** the Council will:
 - a. Promote and support the continued diversification of the town centre to ensure it retains its role as a sub-regional centre.
 - b. Support proposals for retail led mixed use development including a supermarket or local convenience store at the Market Square site (Growth Area HH05).
 - c. Continue to support retail development, including a medium sized supermarket, at Jarman Park (Growth Area HH27).
 - d. Support the delivery of new retail facilities in the Hemel North Growth Area, involving a new district or local centre with a medium or large supermarket and also smaller scale local or neighbourhood centres (Growth Areas HH01 and HH02).
 3. In **Berkhamsted** the Council will:
 1. Reinforce the role of the town centre and support proposals which will maintain its vibrancy.
 2. Support the delivery of the permitted supermarket at Gossoms End (Growth Area Bk13) and small scale retail provision in the South Berkhamsted Growth Area (Growth Area Bk01).

4. In **Tring** the Council will:

- a. Reinforce the role of the town centre and support proposals which will maintain its vibrancy.
- b. Explore and if appropriate bring forward a mixed use retail led development including a medium sized supermarket at the High Street/Brook Street town centre site (Growth Area Tr06), or encourage a supermarket on the Dunsley Farm Growth Area (Growth Area Tr01) if the town centre site cannot be delivered.
- c. Seek the delivery of a new neighbourhood centre in the East Tring Growth Area (Growth Area Tr03).

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- South West Hertfordshire Retail and Leisure Study (2018)
- Further Dacorum Retail Study (2020)

10 Delivering the Infrastructure to Support Growth

- 10.1** A key requirement of the Dacorum Local Plan is to ensure that there is sufficient and appropriate infrastructure in place to meet the planned growth. This needs to consider both the individual requirements arising from developments and also address the cumulative impact of growth across the Borough. Our consultation on the Issues and Options, has highlighted that this is a fundamental concern of our residents.
- 10.2** In order to identify the infrastructure need we are producing an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The IDP will identify the essential infrastructure required to deliver our growth aspirations and requirements, prioritise these according to their importance to delivering the growth strategy and set out when infrastructure is required and how it will be funded.
- 10.3** The term infrastructure covers a wide variety of services and facilities provided by private and public bodies and includes:
- transport infrastructure (rail, roads, cycle routes, buses, footpaths/pedestrian links);
 - utilities and flood management infrastructure – water supply and treatment, flood prevention and drainage, waste disposal and energy;
 - telecommunications infrastructure including high-speed broadband;
 - community infrastructure – schools, sport, cultural and recreation facilities, healthcare, public transport, emergency services, social care facilities, community buildings, places of worship and associated facilities, and community recycling facilities; and
 - green infrastructure including multi-functional green spaces, ecological enhancements, open green spaces (e.g.parks, allotments, and country parks).
- 10.4** Our IDP will take forward previous work prepared as part of the Hertfordshire Infrastructure Funding Prospectus (HIFP) 2018-2031 which provided a snap-shot in time from September 2018. Across Hertfordshire the infrastructure requirements amounted to at least £5.7 billion. The HIFP also identified key projects for Dacorum, which remain relevant now. These include (but are not limited to):
- capacity improvements to J8 of the M1 and further enhancements to the M1;
 - capacity improvements to J20 of the M25;
 - a new transport corridor to the north of Hemel Hempstead through the North and East Growth Areas;
 - a package of interventions across our towns and villages alongside growth that focus on promoting movements by means other than than car;
 - new primary and secondary schools throughout the Borough; and
 - the provision of new health care facilities across the Borough.
- 10.5** The production of an IDP is an iterative process as infrastructure is continually being delivered through the development management process. A draft IDP has been produced following extensive consultation with stakeholders and infrastructure providers. We will continue to update this right up to the point where we submit the Plan for Examination. By publishing a draft IDP alongside this Plan we will be able to ensure that the required infrastructure is known at an early stage. The IDP is also a key tool in the assessment of development viability, which the Council is continuing to develop to ensure that the required infrastructure can be delivered and development remains viable. As the Plan moves forward the infrastructure requirements will be further refined and will continue to be subject to comprehensive viability testing at the whole plan level but also through the testing of individual sites as required.
- 10.6** The Government expects a viability assessment of likely contributions towards affordable housing and other infrastructure to be undertaken up-front as part of preparing the Local Plan. This is to demonstrate that they do not undermine deliverability of planned development and to avoid the need for further assessments at the later planning application stage. Thus, planning applications are generally assumed to be viable. However, we acknowledge that there may be changes in circumstances that alter the viability position of a development and negatively impact on delivery. The NPPF and

PPG set out a clear and transparent methodology for developers to evidence such change and identify suitable mitigation, although they make clear that it is up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for a further viability assessment.

10.7 Infrastructure should be delivered in a timely manner and be integrated alongside new development, with the specific phasing to be determined in agreement with the local planning authority. Wherever possible and especially on larger developments, infrastructure should be provided on-site as part of the development to contribute towards creating sustainable development, to offset its impact on local infrastructure, and to ensure that new developments are attractive places to live.

10.8 The precise mechanism for securing infrastructure is being reviewed and will need to take into consideration the outcome of the White Paper consultation. Subject to this, we intend to produce a supplementary planning document to guide delivery.

Policy SP7 - Delivering Infrastructure

1. All new development will be required to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal in order to:
 - a. meet the needs arising from the development so as to avoid placing additional burden on the existing infrastructure;
 - b. avoid or mitigate adverse social, economic and environmental impacts arising from the proposed development; and
 - c. make good the loss or damage of social, economic and environmental assets arising from the proposed development.
2. Infrastructure requirements will be delivered directly by the developer and/or through an appropriate financial contribution prior to, or in conjunction with, new development. Where appropriate, developers will be expected to collaborate on the provision of infrastructure which is needed to serve more than one site.
3. The timing of the provision of the infrastructure should be linked directly to the phasing of the development to ensure that infrastructure is provided in a timely and comprehensive manner to support new development. The phasing will be determined in relation to the needs of each development and the overall requirements to mitigate growth in that settlement. In ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure requirements, development proposals must demonstrate that full regard has been paid to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which will be updated over the Plan period to ensure project information remains up to date and relevant to all other policies of this Plan.
4. It will be expected that infrastructure requirements set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be delivered, however, where it can be demonstrated that the infrastructure requirements could render the development unviable, proposals for major development should be supported by an independent and transparent viability assessment that accords with Planning Practice Guidance. Where viability constraints are demonstrated by evidence, the Council will:
 - a. prioritise developer contributions for critical, essential and required infrastructure based upon the detail of requirements outlines in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and/or
 - b. use an appropriate mechanism to defer part of the developer contributions requirement to a later date; or
 - c. as a last resort, refuse planning permission if the development would be unsustainable without the inclusion of the unfunded infrastructure requirements taking into account reasonable contributions from elsewhere including the Community Infrastructure Levy.
5. A Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to provide more detail on the Council's approach to securing developer contributions.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan

11 Neighbourhood Planning

- 11.1** Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders have the potential to allow communities to develop a shared vision to shape their neighbourhoods and to work with landowners, developers and service providers to deliver new development and facilities.
- 11.2** A neighbourhood plan provides a mechanism for communities to bring forward development and for the community to have a significant say in its location and specification (providing local detail or distinct approaches), and to plan positively to support local development in meeting the strategic needs of this Plan. Neighbourhood plans must, however, be in general conformity with the strategic policies within this Plan. We set out relevant strategic policies in 'Appendix 1 - List of Strategic Policies'.
- 11.3** This Plan provides a framework for communities to shape their local neighbourhoods through community-led planning documents. Grovehill has already prepared and 'Made' their Neighbourhood Plan whilst Bovingdon and Kings Langley have commenced work on preparing neighbourhood plans. There have not, however, been any proposals for Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders.
- 11.4** Once approved, 'made' neighbourhood plans become part of the statutory development plan and the policies contained within them will be used, together with the Local Plan, in the determination of planning applications.
- 11.5** We have and will continue to take an active role in advising and supporting the community in the neighbourhood planning process, wherever possible, by sharing evidence and information and ensuring the neighbourhood plan fits with our strategic policies as well as national policy.
- 11.6** We are also expected by the NPPF (paragraph 65) to provide a housing requirement figure for the three designated Neighbourhood Areas in the Borough.
- 11.7** In the case of the Grovehill Neighbourhood Area, this is essentially part of the wider Hemel Hempstead urban area. It will contribute to the overall housing supply in the town. However, the two main housing schemes within this neighbourhood area are Marchmont Farm and Henry Wells Square. These together will contribute between 450 and 550 new homes over the Plan period.
- 11.8** With respect to the Bovingdon and Kings Langley Neighbourhood Areas we have based the indicative housing requirement figures on the relevant Delivery Strategy for each village. They cover the bulk of the Neighbourhood Area, reflect the overall local strategy for the pattern and scale of development in these areas and potential supply of homes there, and provide the most detailed and robust basis for making such allocations.
- 11.9** It should be noted that these homes requirement figures are minimums and count towards the overall housing land supply rather than being additional to it.

Policy SP8 - Neighbourhood Planning

1. To support neighbourhood plans and clarify their relationship with the Local Plan the Council will expect the following principles to be applied in the development of neighbourhood plans.
2. Neighbourhood plans should:
 - a. show how they are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan;

- b. clearly set out how they will promote sustainable development at or above the level of growth planned for through the Local Plan, having regard to information on local need for new homes, jobs and facilities for their plan area; and
- c. where additional growth is planned through new allocations, having regard to any existing or emerging evidence published by Dacorum Borough Council, including in relation to the Green Belt.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Further information on Neighbourhood Planning can be found on the Council's website at: <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/regeneration/neighbourhood-planning>

12 Monitoring and Review

- 12.1** Effective monitoring is essential to ensuring that the policies in the Plan remain relevant, up to date and are achieving their aims. As with previous Plans, we will prepare a yearly monitoring report which will measure and report on their effectiveness and establish a monitoring framework against which policy performance will be measured. Actions will be identified where policies are not achieving their aims and we will consider whether policies need adjusting or replacing either because they are not working as intended, or they need changing to reflect changes in national policy, guidance, emerging best practice or local circumstances.
- 12.2** As required by the Duty to Co-operate, we will give consideration (including through a review of the Plan where appropriate) to helping to meet the needs (such as housing, employment or infrastructure) of other local planning authorities where it is clearly established through the Plan evidence gathering process that those needs can only be met through provision in Dacorum. At the very least we will within five years of adoption decide whether we need to update the Plan, taking account of the outcome of the South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan.

Policy SP9 - Monitoring and Review

1. The policies in the Plan will be monitored at least annually to assess if they are fulfilling their aims.
2. The Plan will be subject to partial or complete review, or proposals for alternative sustainable sites considered favourably (subject to compliance with other policies in the Plan and national policy), in any of the following circumstances:
 - a. site allocations are not delivering new homes at the rate anticipated in the housing trajectory, leading to net housing development not being delivered at the rate set out in the Plan;
 - b. evidence established through another local planning authority's Local Plan process shows that its unmet need can only be accommodated in Dacorum;
 - c. significant changes in national planning policy and guidance that mean one or more of the policies in the Plan are out of date and in major conflict with National Guidance; and
 - d. evidence in the monitoring report shows that one or more of the policies in the Plan is frustrating the delivery of the Plan's objectives or is working contrary to effective planning in the Borough.

GUIDING DEVELOPMENT



13 Introduction to Guiding Development

Introduction to Guiding Development

- 13.1** This section of the Plan sets out our proposed policies for managing future development across the Borough. The Planning Reform White Paper makes clear that the Government is considering setting some policies at the national level but it is unclear which policies Government have in mind.
- 13.2** For the purpose of this consultation we have set out a full suite of policies which we consider necessary to deliver the proposed strategy for growth but we will review these in light of the outcomes to the planning reforms.

HOUSING DELIVERY



Delivering Dacorum's future
with homes for everyone

Shaping
growth in
Dacorum



14 Housing Delivery

14.1 A key objective of the Plan is to deliver balanced, mixed and inclusive communities, embracing a mix of dwellings sizes, tenures and types including provision for custom and self build and for an ageing population and delivering a minimum of 35% affordable housing. We want to ensure that Dacorum's communities have genuine access to a wide range and high quality of homes and other specialist forms of accommodation by planning for a sufficient quantity, quality and type of housing in new schemes.

National Policy

14.2 The NPPF alongside the PPG provide guidance on a wide range of housing matters and how these should be addressed through policies in the Plan.

14.3 In respect of affordable housing, the NPPF states that:

- the strategic policies of the Plan should make sufficient provision for housing (including affordable housing) (paragraph 20);
- Plans should set out the contributions expected from development including setting out the levels and types of affordable housing required (paragraph 34);
- the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies including those who require affordable housing (paragraph 61);
- there is a general expectation that, where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required and this is to be met on-site (paragraph 62);
- affordable housing should be sought only on sites for 10 or more homes or over 0.5 ha, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer) (paragraph 63);
- any affordable housing contribution can be reduced by a proportionate amount to support the re-use or redevelopment of vacant buildings (paragraph 63);
- subject to a number of exemptions, at least 10% of the homes should be available for affordable home ownership for major development where housing is proposed (paragraph 64); and
- other opportunities exist for affordable housing in the countryside (paragraphs 71 and 77) and in the Green Belt (paragraph 145).

14.4 The NPPF encourages opportunities to bring forward affordable homes on rural exception sites to meet identified local needs and where such housing will support local services and enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Such schemes could include an element of market housing if it would help to facilitate this. The NPPF also promotes the development of entry-level exception sites, suitable for first time buyers (or those looking to rent their first home) that offer one or more types of affordable homes. These need to be on suitably sized, designed and located sites outside of the Green Belt and Chilterns AONB. This would limit their location to Long Marston and Wilstone.

14.5 The NPPF states that councils should make effective use of land, and should include the use of minimum density standards for town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. These standards should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate.

14.6 Detailed national advice on travellers is provided separately from the NPPF through guidance in the Planning Policy for Travellers (PPTS). Furthermore, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers form an ethnic minority group and are legally protected from discrimination under the Equalities Act 2010, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

- 14.7** Further Government guidance can be found in the Planning Policy Guidance notes on Housing and Economic Needs Assessment, Housing Needs of Different Groups, Housing for Older and Disabled People, Housing: Optional Technical Standards, Housing Supply and Delivery and Self-build and Custom Housebuilding.

National Policy Reforms in the White Paper

- 14.8** The Government's Planning for the Future White Paper continues to place a strong emphasis on home ownership, increasing the supply of housing and supporting the regeneration of settlements, speeding up the delivery of new homes, securing a range of types and tenures of housing, and supporting small to medium sized house builders and self builders. Pillar One - Planning for development in the White Paper identifies a number of proposals including:

- defining a standard method for establishing housing requirement figures which ensures enough land is released in the areas where affordability is worst; and
- preparing masterplans and design codes for substantial development so that they include a variety of development types by different builders.

- 14.9** The Government is committed to the delivery of beautiful and well designed homes and places under Pillar Two - Planning for beautiful and sustainable places. It will seek to "fast-track" such schemes through the planning system where they accord with locally prepared site masterplans and design codes. Where these are drawn up for substantial development they should include a variety of housing types from different builders. Pillar Three - Planning for infrastructure and connected places seeks to reform the system of developer contributions, with a number of aims, to secure more on-site affordable housing provision.

- 14.10** The Government has also consulted on "Changes to the current Planning System" in parallel with the White Paper. This includes:

- details of how the revised standard methodology for assessing local housing need might operate;
- how the Government might deliver, operate and fund its First Homes scheme; and
- extending the threshold for securing affordable homes for a temporary period to sites of up to 40-50 homes in order to support small to medium sized house builders.

- 14.11** First Homes are homes that will be sold with a discount of at least 30% and will be prioritised for first-time buyers, serving members and veterans of the Armed Forces, and key workers. The discount will be passed on to future buyers so that these homes will always be sold below market price.

- 14.12** The Government are effectively seeking to prioritise First Homes over previous forms of affordable home ownership as currently defined in the NPPF. They do not rule out the latter but are anticipating that a minimum of 25% of the negotiated affordable housing will be First Homes. They also wish to see such homes replacing the entry-level exception homes approach in the NPPF (paragraph 71).

Evidence Base and other Studies

- 14.13** The South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment forms a key part of the housing evidence base. It assessed the need for affordable housing and helped to inform a variety of approaches to housing policies including:

- providing detailed conclusions on the required mix of market and affordable housing need by house type and size for this Plan period;
- setting out evidence on the need for accessible and adaptable housing in Dacorum; and
- assessing the local need for specialist housing for older people.

- 14.14** In addition to this, the Council's evidence on custom and self build housing identifies that annual demand outstrips the supply of such housing in Dacorum. It adds weight to the need for larger sites to provide for a proportion of custom and self-build housing.

14.15 We have undertaken an accommodation assessment of the future need for the travelling community which identifies a need for pitches for both those that do and do not meet the definition of a traveller in the Planning Policy for Travellers. However, it does not demonstrate any direct identified need for either new yards for travelling showpeople or permanent residential moorings for canal boats.

Mix of Housing

14.16 It is important that new housing development in Dacorum provides for a range of homes and other specialist accommodation. A variety of housing types and sizes are necessary to meet the needs of the local population, to enable households to more easily find housing which suits their life-stage needs, and that they can afford. Greater variety in the housing stock can also help contribute towards a more healthy and robust housing market. Our evidence and engagement has shown the need to secure the right mix of housing sizes in new developments, that delivering more affordable homes was a key priority of many, and the importance of meeting the needs of an ageing population.

14.17 Our evidence advises on the appropriate mix of market and affordable housing need by house type and size for this Plan period. These conclusions take into account projected changes in the population and estimates of future demand. They set out a broad range of housing mix that this Plan then seeks to achieve. The majority of the housing need is for houses, with a need for some flats identified. The modelling points to a greater need for smaller 1 and 2-bedroom affordable homes and larger (3+ bedroom) homes in the market sector.

14.18 These requirements may be varied on the basis of specific site circumstances or evidence with any variation in the mix being fully justified.

14.19 An Affordable Housing SPD will be prepared in the future to support the Plan. The SPD will guide any decisions to be made at a local level on the detailed split of the housing mix.

Policy DM1 - Mix of Housing

1. Developments of 10 or more homes are required to include a mix of housing types and sizes in order to:
 - a. meet the needs of all sections of the community;
 - b. provide a choice of homes; and
 - c. encourage sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.
2. This will comprise subject to any specific qualifying threshold(s) identified in the Plan:
 - a. a range of housing types, sizes and tenure;
 - b. affordable housing;
 - c. accessible and adaptable housing;
 - d. accommodation for older people;
 - e. custom and self-build housing;
 - f. Gypsy and Traveller Pitches;
3. The aim is to secure a housing mix across the Borough broadly as shown below:

Table 5 Housing Mix Across the Borough

	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4+ Bedroom
Market Housing	5%	20%	45%	30%
Affordable Home Ownership	25%	40%	25%	10%
Affordable Housing (Rent)	High proportion of 1 and 2 bedroom - further guidance will be provided in the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document			

4. The housing mix may vary between different sites, taking account of the location and nature of the site. In particular:
 - a. sites in highly accessible urban locations are more likely to provide mainly one and two bedroom properties;
 - b. larger sites are expected to be able to accommodate a wider mix of housing across the development commensurate with their greater potential to create and sustain inclusive mixed communities and help deliver the strategic objectives of the Local Plan;
 - c. the over-concentration of certain types of residential development will not be supported unless in highly accessible urban locations.
5. Decisions on the appropriate mix of homes within development proposals will also be guided by the latest Local Housing Needs Assessment, housing needs surveys, and informed by other housing market intelligence and site-specific considerations.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment (August 2020)
- South West Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2016)

Affordable Housing

- 14.20** A key priority of the housing strategy is to ensure sufficient affordable homes are delivered over the Plan period to meet identified housing need. However, this is not just about quantity, as delivering the right type of housing is of equal importance.
- 14.21** The NPPF (Annex 2) defines affordable housing as: "*housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers*"
- 14.22** Annex 2 in the NPPF also states that affordable housing must comply with one or more of the following definitions for affordable housing:
- affordable housing for rent, including social rent and affordable rent;
 - starter homes;
 - discounted market sales housing; and
 - other affordable routes to home ownership.
- 14.23** Affordable housing is mainly provided through requiring developers to include this on-site within their general market housing development as a part of planning permission. In Dacorum's case, we have also been directly involved in delivering sites as part of our New Build housing programme. Occasionally, rural housing schemes are delivered as an exception to normal policy. Furthermore, in a limited number of circumstances we allow a financial contribution towards affordable homes instead of on-site provision.
- 14.24** Policy DM2 - Affordable Housing seeks to secure this and a number of other key objectives including:
- delivering genuinely affordable housing to meet those in need;
 - optimising affordable housing contributions on all qualifying sites;
 - securing a minimum of 35% affordable housing on urban sites in Hemel Hempstead;
 - securing 40% affordable housing on all greenfield Growth Areas;

- securing 40% affordable housing on all new dwellings elsewhere in the Borough;
- giving priority to on-site provision; and
- resisting the subdivision of sites to avoid on-site contributions.

14.25 We will secure affordable housing on all qualifying sites bearing in mind that the NPPF advises that we should not be seeking this on smaller sites of below 10 homes (paragraph 63). However, we are allowed discretion to set a lower threshold in the defined rural area (i.e. in Dacorum this is the countryside covered by the Chilterns AONB). Consequently, we have been seeking a commuted sum for schemes of between 6-9 homes. The position on exemptions is complicated in that the Government has recently consulted on extending this threshold to cover schemes of up to 40-50 homes in order to support small to medium sized house builders albeit for a temporary period.

14.26 Affordable housing will be delivered in accordance with the housing mix under Policy DM1 - Mix of Housing.

14.27 Historically, we have found that a target of 35% - 40% affordable housing has been generally realistic and achievable in most locations across the Borough, when compared with past achievement, economic conditions and costs associated with new building. This is a reasonable starting point for levels of affordable housing in the Plan. We will continue to test this through development viability assessments of the Plan and in conjunction with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

14.28 The South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment is our main evidence base underpinning Policy DM2 - Affordable Housing. The evidence has identified that the estimated combined annual affordable housing need across the five authorities in South West Hertfordshire is considerable (at 3,188 homes pa). Our equivalent projected annual figure is 611 homes pa. The table below sets this position out across both forms of affordable housing.

Table 6 Affordable Housing Need across South West Hertfordshire (per annum)

	Dacorum	Hertsmere	St Albans	Three Rivers	Watford	SW Herts
Rented affordable housing	363	356	443	350	482	1,994
Affordable home ownership	248	147	385	162	252	1,194
Total	611	503	828	512	734	3,188

14.29 The need for affordable housing for rent is substantial. On this basis, our evidence recommends that we should seek to deliver as much affordable housing to rent as viability allows. Furthermore, it suggest that 87% of the affordable rented housing should be social rented based purely on the proportion of households able to afford an affordable rent (set at 80% of current lower quartile rents) and those who can only afford housing which is cheaper than that. However, the Local Housing Needs Assessment adds that the split is indicative only and that we are free if desired to choose an alternative split to reflect our own viability or local priorities.

14.30 We should also seek the maximum viable level of affordable private rental accommodation on build to rent schemes, with a minimum contribution of 20% expected.

14.31 The Local Housing Needs Assessment established that there is an estimated annual net housing need for 248 units per annum, of affordable home ownership. While the NPPF expects at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership, the study recommends that we should seek no more than this. This is because the need for rented affordable housing is so great, it involves households who cannot afford anything in the market without subsidy, and to exceed this would reduce the supply of affordable social rental homes.

- 14.32** In terms of low cost housing as currently defined in the NPPF, the Local Housing Needs Assessment suggests that Shared Ownership and Discount Market Sales are the most appropriate as these will reach those in the widest and lowest earnings population base.
- 14.33** However, the study recognises that there is effectively a trade-off between delivering more affordable homes to buy or delivering fewer affordable homes to rent (due to lower viability), but the latter should be given priority as it makes provision for those that are more in need.
- 14.34** Moreover, we are keen to ensure that any affordable housing for rent is genuinely affordable for those in need. That is why we are prioritising social rent over affordable rent. The Local Housing Needs Assessment has analysed the costs of different types of affordable housing in terms of what is genuinely affordable in the local context. It suggests that we should consider the rent levels for affordable rents and as measured against the Local Housing Allowance. The Local Housing Allowance is the maximum amount of housing benefit that can be claimed in each Broad Rental Market Area. Whilst affordable rents are not capped at Local Housing Allowance limits it is the case that government policy states that the relevant allowance should be a consideration when setting rent levels. The study suggests that we may also wish to reduce these further to ensure a greater number of low-income working families can access such housing. This means that, where appropriate, we will take opportunities to negotiate genuinely affordable housing over delivering a much larger number of other forms of affordable homes.
- 14.35** The Government is keen to promote the availability of affordable home ownership through its emerging First Homes scheme as an alternative to those identified in the NPPF. For the purposes of this Plan, we have had regards to this approach in Policy DM2. The proposed level of contribution from First Homes (at 25% of all of the affordable housing) is much greater than that currently sought for affordable home ownership in the NPPF and assessed through the Local Housing Needs Assessment. Therefore, this approach has potential implications for overall viability of schemes and thus the level and split of affordable rent and social rent we can secure in the future. Furthermore, the Government has not confirmed its approach on the remaining 75% of the affordable housing. We will keep this matter under review and confirm our broad position on this through the next stage of the Plan.
- 14.36** Policy DM2 seeks affordable housing contributions from specialist accommodation for older people. Our evidence does not rule this out but recognises that providing affordable housing on such schemes, will be less viable than in general housing, as they require more expensive fit-out and there are on-going costs. As a result, it concludes that a lower contribution than from general housing will likely be achievable. However, the Local Housing Needs Assessment does highlight the lack of new public sector care homes being built, and in the circumstance, it suggests that it may be appropriate to continue to seek the provision of some affordable bedspaces within private developments to meet social care needs.
- 14.37** In most cases we expect affordable housing to be provided on-site. Off-site provision or financial contributions in lieu will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances where properly evidenced as part of the planning application and to the satisfaction of the Council. This approach may be particularly relevant in respect of some specialist forms of accommodation for older people given potential practical difficulties of securing social units/bedspaces in such developments.
- 14.38** Furthermore, it is good practice to integrate affordable homes within a scheme through ‘pepper-potting’ and for them to be indistinguishable (“tenure blind”) from general market housing. This will better secure mixed and inclusive developments. Developers should avoid concentrating affordable homes in a particular area unless site-specific considerations warrant an alternative approach.
- 14.39** Given the number of above uncertainties, we are continuing to test policies and proposals through our viability work with updated infrastructure information, the costs of other policies to determine whether an adjustment to affordable housing is required.

- 14.40** Further, detailed guidance on the application of this policy will be provided in an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document once proposed national changes to affordable housing are better understood and consolidated.

Policy DM2 - Affordable Housing

1. The Council will require proposals to provide affordable homes as follows:
 - a. All developments of 10 or more homes, or 0.5 ha or greater will provide on-site affordable housing:
 - i. at 40% on the identified Growth Areas;
 - ii. at 35% of all new dwellings in the existing urban area of Hemel Hempstead, or
 - iii. at 40% of all new dwellings elsewhere.
 - b. Within the Chilterns AONB a commensurate financial contribution will be sought towards the provision of affordable housing from all developments of between 6 and 9 homes.
 - c. On rural exceptions housing schemes, 100% of all new homes will normally be affordable.
 - d. From all specialist housing for older people falling within the C2 (excluding care/nursing homes) or C3 use classes for age-restricted general market housing, retirement living/sheltered housing or extra care housing.
2. Affordable homes should be provided on-site, apart from in exceptional circumstances when agreed by the Council and subject to applicants providing full justification for any off-site provision or financial contributions.
3. Affordable housing provision will be expected to incorporate a mix of tenures taking into account the Council's most up to date evidence on housing need. No more than 25% of all housing will be First Homes. The rest of the affordable housing will provide rented accommodation, comprising social rented and affordable rented properties.
4. All affordable housing should be genuinely affordable, with the expectation being that the cost will need to be substantially more than 20% below local market prices and rents.
5. Vacant building credit will apply where appropriate.
6. Judgements about the level, mix and tenure of affordable homes will have regard to:
 - a. the Council's Housing Strategy, identified housing need and other relevant evidence;
 - b. the potential to enlarge the site to include adjoining land and thus cumulatively satisfy the threshold for affordable housing; and
 - c. the overall viability of the scheme and any abnormal costs.
7. The affordable homes should be designed so as to be fully integrated into the open market housing on a tenure blind basis and be 'pepper-potted' across the development.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment (August 2020)

Rural Exceptions

- 14.41** We support homes in the villages to enable people who are in housing need to stay locally. This in turn will help 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 Policy SP3 - The

Settlement Hierarchy. Where development is appropriately located and designed, villages are normally able to absorb modest scaled, well-planned schemes without significant harm to their character or the setting of the countryside.

- 14.42** All schemes must clearly demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council how they meet identified local affordable housing needs including against our Housing Register and other available up-to-date locally generated housing needs assessments. We will normally anticipate rural exception schemes to be for 100% affordable homes. Where applicants are considering including any proposed market housing within such schemes, we will expect this to be fully evidenced.
- 14.43** The normal expectation is that housing permitted as an exception to normal countryside policies continues to remain 'affordable' in perpetuity. Only tenures which can be guaranteed to remain affordable in the long term will be permitted in such schemes.
- 14.44** Parish Councils have been working with rural housing enablers to deliver community-led housing. The preparation of neighbourhood plans may offer another route to secure rural exception schemes where they meet the criteria set out below.
- 14.45** The NPPF (paragraph 71) currently allows for entry-level exception sites suitable for first time buyers (or those looking to rent their first home). However, the Government has recently consulted on replacing such schemes with a First Homes exception sites policy. This would apply in all cases except in designated rural areas (i.e. the Chilterns AONB) where a normal rural exception sites approach would be retained.
- 14.46** Details of the funding, delivery and management of rural housing will be set out in the Affordable Housing SPD.

Policy DM3 - Rural Exceptions

1. Schemes of up to 10 dwellings for local affordable homes⁽⁶⁾, will be promoted in and adjoining selected small villages in the countryside as established in Policy SP3 - The Settlement Hierarchy. Exceptionally such schemes will also be permitted elsewhere, with the support of the local Parish Council or through a Neighbourhood Plan.
2. Development will be permitted only if:
 - a. it meets an identified local need for affordable housing;
 - b. preference is given to offering the housing to people who have a local connection with the village or parish, through work, residence or family; the housing is for people who have a local connection with the village or parish through work, residence or family;
 - c. the scheme is of a scale and design that respects the character, setting and form of the village and surrounding countryside, including the Chilterns AONB;
 - d. any element of open market housing is fully justified as being essential to secure the delivery of the affordable housing⁽⁷⁾
3. Entry-level homes in accordance with the NPPF will similarly be supported as an exception in locations in the Rural Area at Long Marston and Wilstone.

6 A site that provides entry-level homes suitable for first time buyers (or equivalent, for those looking to rent), in line with paragraph 71 of the NPPF

7 This will be expected to comprise only a minor element of the total number of dwellings built.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Policies map
- Settlement Hierarchy Study Main Report October 2017
- Strategic Design Guide SPD
- Chilterns Building Design Guide

To be produced

- Detailed Design Guide SPD

Agriculture and Forestry Workers Dwellings

- 14.47** Agriculture and forestry are principal uses of the countryside. Occasionally new residential accommodation will be needed to sustain new or existing agricultural and forestry enterprises including changes in practice.
- 14.48** The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside. However, the special circumstances for new isolated dwellings in the countryside include if there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.
- 14.49** Safeguards are however important to ensure such accommodation is not readily sold as general needs housing that would result in unnecessary or inappropriate development in the countryside undermining its purposes.
- 14.50** Some of the factors we consider that may be relevant in assessing the need for isolated homes in the countryside include:
- evidence of the necessity for a rural worker to live at, or in close proximity to, their place of work to ensure the effective operation of an agricultural, forestry or similar land-based rural enterprise (for instance, where farm animals or agricultural processes require on-site attention 24-hours a day and where otherwise there would be a risk to human or animal health or from crime, or to deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or products);
 - the degree to which there is confidence that the enterprise will remain viable for the foreseeable future;
 - whether the provision of an additional dwelling on site is essential for the continued viability of a farming business through the farm succession process;
 - whether the need could be met through improvements to existing accommodation on the site, providing such improvements are appropriate taking into account their scale, appearance and the local context; and
 - in the case of new enterprises, whether it is appropriate to consider granting permission for a temporary dwelling for a trial period.
- 14.51** We do not consider that employment on an assembly or food packing line, or the need to accommodate seasonal workers, will generally be sufficient to justify building isolated rural dwellings.

Policy DM4 - Agriculture and Forestry Workers Dwellings

1. In the countryside, permission will be granted for agricultural and forestry workers dwellings where they meet the following criteria:

- a. it can be demonstrated that the dwelling is essential to the needs of the business;
 - b. it can be demonstrated that the enterprise has been established for at least three years and is, and should remain financially viable;
 - c. there is no other accommodation within the site/holding or in the locality which is currently suitable and available, or could be made available.
2. The proposed dwelling must be sensitively designed and be appropriate to the character, appearance and setting of the site and/or surrounding countryside.
 3. Where the viability of a new agricultural or forestry activity is being tested, permission will be given for the provision of temporary accommodation on the unit. The period for a temporary permission will be assessed on the application's own merits.
 4. The occupation of any agricultural, forestry or other rural worker's dwelling will be subject to an agricultural occupancy condition.
 5. Applications for the removal of an occupancy condition related to rural workers will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where:
 - a. there is no longer a need for the accommodation on the holding/business and in the local area;
 - b. the dwelling has been marketed for a reasonable period of time (at least 12 months) and at a price which reflects the existence of the occupancy condition;
 - c. the dwelling cannot make a contribution towards meeting local affordable housing needs in the area.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- South West Herts Local Housing Needs Assessment
- Landscape Character Assessment for Dacorum

Conversions and changes of use to housing

- 14.52** The conversion of houses to flats and non-residential properties to housing are a valuable source of new homes, and they can also add to the supply of private rented accommodation. Furthermore, the Government has been relaxing national planning policy to allow greater opportunities for the reuse of buildings for housing through permitted development and prior approvals.
- 14.53** However, we consider that their impacts do need to be appropriately managed through the planning system. In addition, the management, quality and standard of private flats are also covered by other housing acts and regulations. Implementation of this legislation and other licencing requirements will help deliver an appropriate quality and level of safety for occupants.
- 14.54** We expect converted flats to meet minimum space standards. In the case of new-build schemes that are subject to a planning application, the Plan will apply the Nationally Described Space Standards (See Policy DM12 - Nationally Described Space Standards).

Policy DM5 - Conversions and changes of use to housing

1. The conversion of houses to flats and non-residential properties to housing will be permitted, subject to conformity the Council's Design Guidance.
2. All conversions and changes of use must be designed to a high standard, taking full account of the character of the area and in particular should comply with the following:
 - a. access to sufficient outdoor amenity space;
 - b. provide internal living space in accordance with Policy DM12 - Nationally Described Space Standards;
 - c. be adequately insulated to limit the transmission of noise;
 - d. parking should be well landscaped, retaining established trees and shrubs to minimise the dominance of car parking to the frontage / street scene in accordance with Policy DM55 - Parking Provision in Residential Areas.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Strategic Design Guide SPD
- Parking Standards SPD
- Trees and Woodlands Policy Document

To be produced

- Parking Standards SPD
- Detailed Design Guide SPD

Residential Annexes

- 14.55** Many householders seek to extend their properties or use outbuildings as a self-contained annexe to accommodate ageing relatives, older children or staff. Annexes can help meet social needs whilst reducing pressure on other forms of accommodation. However, they need to be carefully controlled in terms of car parking, amenity space, and their impact on neighbouring properties, occupiers and the locality.
- 14.56** Where necessary, we may attach a condition to the planning permission to require that the annexe is occupied for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the host dwelling. Within the Green Belt and Rural Area, we would be unlikely to grant permission for later sub-division to two separate residential units, unless the proposal meets the planning criteria which would be applied to new proposals for a separate dwelling. In an urban setting there would be no in-principle objection to a new dwelling, subject to design and amenity issues.

Policy DM6 - Residential Annexes

1. The Council will support proposals for residential annexes (including conversion of existing residential accommodation or outbuildings to form an annexe) where:

- a. the accommodation forms an extension to the main dwelling and is capable of being used as an integral part of the dwelling or forms a separate outbuilding which is close to, and well related and have a clear functional link to the main dwelling;
- b. there is a functional connection with the main dwelling (e.g. the occupant should be a dependent relative of the residents of the main dwelling or employed at the main dwelling);
- c. sufficient space to park vehicles for both parts of the dwelling, in accordance with Policy DM55 - Parking Provision in Residential Areas, and is available and appropriately located in design terms within the curtilage.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Policies map
- Strategic Design Guide SPD

To be produced

- Parking Standards SPD
- Detailed Design Guide SPD

Houses in Multiple Occupation

- 14.57** Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) form a small part of the housing supply, but can provide a valuable and more affordable source of shared rented accommodation compared to self-contained dwellings and purpose-built flats. They can offer a cheaper and more flexible way for people to both live and work locally. Demand for such housing is likely to continue to grow given increasing affordability issues in Dacorum. This will place further pressure for the existing housing stock to be converted.
- 14.58** The Plan aims to enable a mix of households while protecting the interests of other residents. This can best be achieved by preventing the development of excessive concentrations of HMOs, maintaining a balance of housing types, and encouraging a more even distribution of HMOs across our settlements.
- 14.59** Any new HMOs will need to be reviewed/assessed and licensed by the Council's private sector housing team and be subject to ongoing monitoring to ensure compliance with regulations.

Policy DM7 - Houses in Multiple Occupation

Proposals to create or extend Houses in Multiple Occupation will be supported where they would:

1. not create an over-concentration of such accommodation in the local area;
2. not cause harm to residential amenity or the surrounding area;
3. not lead to any other significant adverse effects; and
4. ensure parking is well landscaped, retaining established trees and shrubs to minimise the dominance of car parking to the frontage / street scene.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Strategic Design Guide SPD

To be produced

- Detailed Design Guide SPD
- Parking Standards SPD

Custom and Self Build Housing

14.60 The Custom and Self Build Demand Assessment Framework (January 2020) identifies that the existing supply of custom and self-build homes in Dacorum is about 30 homes a year, whilst the annual demand for such housing is over 70 homes. Therefore, the inclusion of policy requiring the provision of a proportion of custom and self-build housing on larger housing sites in Dacorum is justified to boost the supply. The following policy ensures a broad balance can be achieved between the supply of and demand for this type of housing on appropriate sites.

14.61 We will encourage the provision of this form of housing across all site sizes, although the reality is it is the larger schemes that have the potential to deliver more of these homes. Currently the supply of custom and self-build homes is predominantly from small housing plots. However, we need to undertake further analysis on an appropriate threshold, based on likely split between houses and flats on the larger proposed housing sites, in preparing the next stage of the Plan in order to ensure we optimise delivery and viability.

Policy DM8 - Custom and Self Build Housing

1. The Council will support the principle of custom and self-build housing on sites of all sizes.
2. On housing developments with 40 or more new houses, 5% of the house plots should be made available on site as serviced building plots to enable the delivery of self and custom build properties. The provision will take account of the viability of the development.
3. Proposals will be controlled by the following means:
 - a. the Council may seek developments of more than 10 custom build dwellings in a single site location to be developed in accordance with an agreed design code; and
 - b. the Council will require developers to enter into a section 106 agreement that will cover issues including timescales and phasing of serviced plots delivery, appropriate marketing of these plots to self and custom builders and length of time after which unsold plots will be returned to the developer.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Custom and Self Build Demand Assessment Framework (January 2020)

Housing for Older People

- 14.62** The South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment has assessed the local need for specialist housing for older people. Dacorum currently has a good stock of rented housing with support (sheltered housing) and is anticipated to still have a surplus by the end of the Plan period. Thus there is no need to directly plan for this type of accommodation within this Plan.
- 14.63** Our evidence has identified the need for different forms of accommodation as the care and support needs of older people and their ability to live independently changes over their lifetime. There are many forms of such accommodation and whether they are defined as residential institutions (Class C2) or dwelling-houses (Class C3) within the Use Classes Order can be subject to interpretation. The "Housing for older and disabled people" PPG advises that it is for local authorities to decide based on the level of care and scale of communal facilities provided. We will generally seek a contribution towards affordable housing from such development where it falls within Use Classes C2 and C3, except in the case of residential care/nursing homes. Further detail on our approach will be provided in the Affordable Housing SPD.
- 14.64** Existing commitments and windfall sites are not expected to meet the identified need for housing for older people. Therefore, the policy below requires an element of such housing on some of the strategic sites.

Policy DM9 - Housing for Older People

- Specialist housing for older people will be encouraged and the amount of such housing over the Plan period should be broadly in line with the indicative figures in the tables below:

Table 7 Retirement and extra care housing

Retirement and extra care housing	Additional homes 2020 - 2038
leasehold retirement housing	726
rented extra care housing	366
leasehold extra care housing	248
total	1,340

Table 8 Residential care homes

Residential care homes and nursing homes	Additional bedspaces 2020 - 2038
	1,019

- The Delivery Strategies and Proposals and Sites sections of the Plan set out specific requirements for the inclusion on an element of housing for older people in some of the Growth Areas.
- Housing developments for older people will be encouraged on other sites located close to good public transport, local amenities, health services and town, district or local centres. Retirement villages providing a range of different types of housing for older people will be encouraged on suitable and well located sites.
- All schemes and associated healthcare and community facilities should be well integrated across the development and with existing communities through appropriate design, layout and landscaping.
- The Council expects that any scheme falling within the C2 and C3 Use Classes should provide affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM2 - Affordable Housing.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment

To be produced

- Affordable Housing SPD

Accessible and Adaptable Homes

14.65 It is important to support older people and people with disabilities to live independently through meeting their changing needs over their lifetime. Our evidence points to a projected increase in a range of disabilities in the population over the Plan period. Furthermore, new housing schemes should be inclusive, safe and accessible for all occupants. Policy DM10 - Accessible and Adaptable Homes provides for a proportion of accessible and adaptable homes in new development. The Local Housing Needs Assessment provides evidence for the growing demand for such housing built to various national technical standards set out in the "Housing: Optional technical standards" and "Housing for older and disabled people" PPGs. These comprise of the following standards:

- M4(1) Category 1: Visitable dwellings (the minimum standard that applies where no planning condition is given unless a plan sets a higher minimum requirement)
- M4(2) Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings
- M4(3) Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings

14.66 The M4(3) category can be further divided between: M4(3)(a) which is designed to require only simple adaptation and M4(3)(b) is ready for wheelchair use on completion.

14.67 It is more practical and cost-effective if compliant homes are readily usable at the point of completion rather than to try to retro fit such measures at a later stage. In the case of M4(2) housing, all new homes should be compliant, except where this is not possible for viability or other reasons such as built form, topography and flooding. In addition, such homes have the benefit of being suitable for any occupant, regardless of whether or not they have a disability at the time of initial occupation. However, the "Housing: Optional technical standards" PPG states that a policy requiring wheelchair accessible (M4(3)) homes should only be applied to those dwellings where the local authority is responsible for allocating or nominating a person to live in that dwelling.

14.68 Evidence on the need for accessible and adaptable housing in Dacorum is contained in the South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment. It identified a clear need to increase the supply of M4(2) accessible and adaptable dwellings and M4(3) wheelchair user dwellings. This evidence provides the justification for the percentage requirements in Policy DM10 - Accessible and Adaptable Homes.

Policy DM10 - Accessible and Adaptable Homes

1. In order to ensure new homes are readily accessible and adaptable to meet the changing lifetime needs of occupants, and to support independent living, the Council will require that a proportion of new housing should be designed to be accessible and adaptable, as stated in the table below:

Table 9 Accessible Homes

Housing category under the Building Regulations	Housing Type	Tenure	Percentage to be included in housing developments
M4(1)	visitable dwellings	All	100%
M4(2)	accessible and adaptable dwellings	social rented	100%
		other tenures	20%
M4(3)(a)	wheelchair user dwellings	All	5%
M4(3)(b)	wheelchair user dwellings	Where the Council is responsible for allocating or nominating a person to live in that dwelling.	10%

2. Where possible, M4(2) and M4(3) housing should be located close to good public transport, local amenities, health services and town, district or local centres.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment

Density of Development

14.69 Making effective use of land across Dacorum is a key element of the strategy for growth. Higher densities allow land to be used more efficiently and are considered to be more sustainable. We will seek to make the best use of urban land by supporting an uplift in densities within urban areas in accordance with national planning policy. We will give particular encouragement to supporting higher densities in the most accessible locations (such as near town, district and local centres and railway stations).

14.70 The table below sets out average (gross) densities for different areas in Dacorum.

Table 10 Average gross densities (dph) achieved 2006-18 (consolidated ward figures)

Hemel Hempstead Town Centre	122
Tring Town Centre	79
Berkhamsted Town Centre	44
Hemel Hempstead neighbourhoods	41
Kings Langley	43
Countryside	38
Average across Dacorum Borough (all wards)	51

14.71 Our approach is to actively encourage increases throughout the urban area. In addition, we will pursue substantial increases in density in a number of identified Opportunity Areas in Hemel Hempstead as these are the most sustainable locations for accommodating higher densities. This is followed by the other town, district and local centres within Dacorum as these locations typically have a concentration of services and facilities and are supported by better public transport.

14.72 Figure 3 below demonstrates how different designated areas can be intensified appropriately:

Figure 3

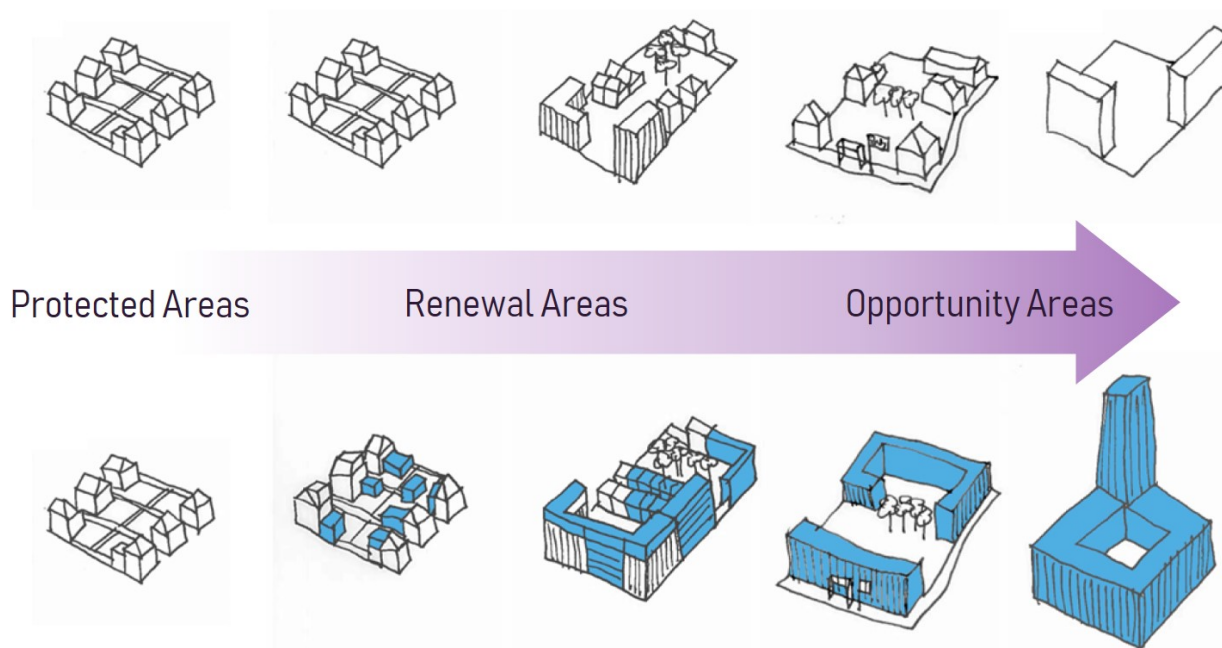


Image Credit: Figure 6.4 from Croydon Local Plan 2018 (27 February 2018)

Uplifting density

Density thresholds have been set in terms of a minimum target or percentage uplift on the surrounding average density, whichever is greater. The percentage uplift ensures that there is always a policy imperative to exceed surrounding average densities. The range of acceptable densities is illustrated within the policy.

To work out the surrounding densities - take the mean density of development within 100 metres of the proposed site boundary (in all directions).

We recognise that it may not be possible or desirable to achieve an uplift in density on every occasion, and applicants will need to justify this on a case-by-case basis.

Higher density secured through lower built form will be given priority: where built form achieves the required minimum density it does not necessarily need to be achieved through tall buildings.

Measuring density

14.73 Housing density is a measure of the amount of land used for development and there are a number of ways to measure it. Dwellings per hectare (dph) is used in the Plan as it is a familiar measure that is used and understood by the development industry.

14.74 Housing density can also be measured either in terms of a site's gross or net area. These are defined below:

- "Gross site area": the total land area of the development site.

- "Net site area": the land that is available for development (or developable land).
- "Net density": the number of residential units accommodated on the land that is available for development. It includes all areas that are directly associated with the developed dwellings, including access roads within the site, private garden space, car parking areas, incidental open space and landscaping, children's play areas, and the dwellings themselves. It excludes major distributor roads, schools, churches, shopping areas, open space serving a wider area or significant landscape buffer strips.

Policy DM11 - Density of Development

1. The Council will support appropriate densities as set out below:

Table 11 Density Thresholds

Place	Minimum density			
	Maintain density with any uplift considered on its merit	Whichever is greater:		
		40 dph (net) or 20% uplift	70 dph (net) or 30% uplift	100 dph (net) or >30% uplift
Opportunity Areas in Hemel Hempstead	X	X	X	√
Other Town Centres, District and Local Centres within Dacorum	X	X	√	X
Elsewhere in the Towns	X	√	X	X
Elsewhere in Dacorum	√	X	X	X
Allocated Growth Areas	Acceptable densities in Growth Areas will be guided by Masterplans and Design Codes to be informed by the site specific allocations and the Dacorum Design Guidance.			

2. Development will be supported if local circumstances indicate that the density of the scheme would not have an adverse effect on the:
 - a. character of the area;
 - b. residential amenity;
 - c. highway safety;
 - d. heritage assets; or
 - e. townscape.
3. Proposals which fail to meet any specified minimum densities will be refused permission unless there are robust reasons for accepting a lower density.
4. On allocated sites the net capacity of sites listed in 24 'Proposals and Sites' is expected to be met.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Strategic Design Guide SPD

To be produced

- Detailed Design Guide SPD

Nationally Described Space Standards

14.75 The Government approach to various standards has been to rely on minimum requirements in the Building Regulations for most matters, but to set a small number of 'optional' national standards which local planning authorities can choose to apply. These 'optional' standards cover internal space, water efficiency and accessibility. Local planning authorities cannot seek any additional, or higher, standards than those set out nationally for new housing.

14.76 Before we can formally use these standards, the Government advises that we will need to justify our approach based on evidence covering need, viability and timing. Therefore, we will be undertaking an analysis of recently permitted schemes to ensure these requirements do not undermine the viability and deliverability of development. We will review the evidence and the need for internal space policies for the next stage of the Plan.

Policy DM12 - Nationally Described Space Standards

1. Proposals for new build residential development or redevelopment should comply with the nationally described space standards, as set out below, unless it can be robustly demonstrated that this would not be feasible or viable.

Table 12 Nationally Described Space Standards

Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage					
number of bedrooms (b)	number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings (m ²)	2 storey dwellings (m ²)	3 storey dwellings (m ²)	built in storage (m ²)
1b	1p	39 (37)	-	-	1.0
	2p	50	58	-	1.5
2b	3p	61	70	-	2.0
	4p	70	79	-	
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5

Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage					
number of bedrooms (b)	number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings (m2)	2 storey dwellings (m2)	3 storey dwellings (m2)	built in storage (m2)
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

- Built-in storage areas are included within the overall gross internal areas (GIAs) and include an allowance of 0.5 sqm for fixed services or equipment such as a hot water cylinder, boiler or heat exchanger.
- GIAs for one storey dwellings include enough space for one bathroom and one additional WC (or shower room) in dwellings with 5 or more bedspaces. GIAs for two and three storey dwellings include enough space for one bathroom and one additional WC (or shower room). Additional sanitary facilities may be included without increasing the GIA provided that all aspects of the space standard have been met.
- Where a 1 bedroom, 1 person dwelling has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39 sqm to 37 sqm, as shown bracketed.
- Furnished layouts are not required to demonstrate compliance.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Nationally Described Space Standards

Existing Accommodation for Travelling Communities

- 14.77** We support a small but diverse range of travelling communities who live in and visit Dacorum. This includes:
- Gypsies and Travellers;
 - travelling showpeople; and
 - people living in boats on the Grand Union Canal.
- 14.78** Their needs should be met by retaining existing accommodation and, where fully justified, providing new sites. The majority of such existing accommodation is to be found in the open countryside where restrictive planning policies on new development and the use of land apply. This often makes it difficult to secure sites in the first place and to subsequently find and secure suitable alternative locations.
- 14.79** We have undertaken an accommodation assessment of the future need for the travelling community - Gypsy, Traveller (and travelling showpeople), and caravan and houseboat dweller accommodation needs (March 2019). The study has shown that there is no direct identified need for either new yards for travelling showpeople or permanent residential moorings for canal boats. Nevertheless, Policy DM15 - Residential Moorings provides more detailed guidance on residential moorings in the event such schemes should emerge over the lifetime of this Plan.

14.80 However, the assessment did identify a need for additional traveller pitches. Policy DM14 - Gypsies and Travellers explains the type and extent of this need and how this Plan intends to accommodate the growth.

Policy DM13 - Existing Accommodation for Travelling Communities

1. Existing travellers pitches, showperson plots and mooring basins (both residential and visitor components) will be safeguarded from alternative development unless:
 - a. a satisfactory replacement is provided; or
 - b. there is no further need for the facility.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (2019)

Gypsies and Travellers

14.81 Our evidence - the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (2019) takes into account the latest Government definition of Gypsy and Travellers, includes an assessment of existing provision, and sets out a forecast of future need. The evidence identifies the need for additional pitches to address natural growth for both those that meet the definition (nomadic) and those that do not (non-nomadic).

14.82 7 Gypsy and Traveller pitches are required from those who are known to meet the new definition and up to 73 pitches from those who do not meet the new definition (see table below). The evidence also identified significant over-crowding issues at the Three Cherry Trees Lane site.

Table 13 Pitch provision required in Dacorum to accommodate Nomadic Gypsies and Travellers

Status	Totals
Meeting Planning Definition	7

Table 14 Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in Dacorum that meet the Planning Definition by year periods

Years	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 19	Total
	2017 - 22	2022 - 27	2027 - 32	2032 - 36	
Pitches	5	0	0	2	7

14.83 The element of need for those that satisfy the definition (i.e. nomadic travellers) is small and is spread across the Plan period. This is currently best met as part of an existing housing-led allocation at West Hemel Hempstead (Growth Area HH21) which already sets aside land for 7 pitches. Currently there are two authorised sites in Dacorum, both of which are managed by Hertfordshire County Council:

- Three Cherry Trees Lane, Hemel Hempstead (30 pitches); and
- Cheddington Lane, Long Marston (6 pitches).

- 14.84** The number of pitches required for those that do not meet the definition of a nomadic lifestyle represents a far more challenging issue to address given the constraints to providing appropriate new sites in Dacorum. However, the NPPF sees their needs being met as part of the existing housing supply (i.e. via bricks and mortar accommodation).
- 14.85** We are mindful that the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equalities Act 2010 protect their cultural choice to live in mobile accommodation and therefore there is a need to plan for park homes within this Plan through an identified allocation at Marchmont Farm, Hemel Hempstead (which provides land for 5 pitches) (Growth Area HH22) and on the basis of a criteria approach to new sites.

Table 15 Pitch provision required in Dacorum to accommodate Non-Nomadic Gypsies and Travellers

Status	Totals
Unknown	0 - 4
Do not meet the Planning Definition	69
Total	73

- 14.86** No need has been identified for transit sites as there is little evidence of travelling through Dacorum.
- 14.87** New pitches will provide a more settled base for Gypsies and Travellers, giving them better access to health and education services, and employment. But it is important to ensure that development is located in the most appropriate locations to minimise their impacts, and that adequate on-sites facilities are provided. Government policy makes clear that Traveller sites are inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 14.88** We consider that new sites should be small in scale (up to 15 pitches) as this makes them easier to plan for, manage, assimilate in to an area, and integrate with the settled community.
- 14.89** Policy DM14 sets the strategy for how future Gypsy and Travellers needs will be accommodated in Dacorum, and provides a sequential and criteria-based approach for identifying suitable locations for new sites.

Policy DM14 - Gypsies and Travellers

The target for new pitches for nomadic and non-nomadic Gypsy and Travellers will be set according to the most recent Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment.

1. Nomadic-Travellers

- a. The target for nomadic Gypsy and Travellers will be met through the provision and management of a permanent new site as identified on the Policies Map in the following location:

Table 16 Allocated Sites for Nomadic Gypsies and Travellers

Settlement	Location	No. of pitches
Hemel Hempstead	Growth Area HH21 - West of Hemel Hempstead	7

- b. Should other accommodation needs for nomadic Travellers arise over the Plan period in additional locations for either permanent or temporary sites they will be assessed against the criterion set out in c below.

2. Non-Nomadic Travellers

- a. The most recent Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment identifies a future need for up to 73 pitches for non-nomadic Gypsies and Travellers. The target will be progressively met through: the provision and management of a planned new site; and criteria approach to other new sites.

- b. **Allocated sites:** A new park home site for those Gypsies and Travellers who have ceased to travel permanently (or if the need arises for Nomadic Travellers) will be brought forward in the following location

Table 17 Allocated Sites for Non-Nomadic Gypsies and Travellers

Settlement	Location	No. Of pitches
Hemel Hempstead	Growth Area HH22 - Marchmont Farm	5

- c. **Unallocated sites:** New sites (or the extension or intensification of existing sites) for those who have ceased to travel permanently on unallocated sites must be in accordance with the NPPF and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and should be:
- i. justified taking into account existing local provision and the availability of alternative sites,
 - ii. judged on the basis of the need for that provision;
 - iii. distributed in a dispersed pattern around settlements;
 - iv. located close to local services and facilities; and
 - v. not normally exceed a site capacity of 15 pitches.
 - vi. designed to:
 - A. avoid unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring land users;
 - B. provide safe and convenient access, particularly for pedestrians, to facilities and to the local/strategic highway network;
 - C. ensure landscaping or other physical features provide an appropriate setting and relationship to existing residential areas;
 - D. allow for suitable arrangements for drainage, sanitation and access to utilities; and
 - E. secure pitches of a sufficient size to accommodate trailers/caravans, parking, and storage and amenity space for the needs of the occupants.
3. New Traveller sites (whether temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development and will not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- [The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment \(March 2019\)](#)

Residential Moorings

- 14.90** The principal offline (i.e. not on the towpath) residential moorings and facilities in Dacorum are at the boatyard in Winkwell, the marina at Apsley, the marina at Cow Roast, and other minor facilities such as sanitary stations/water points.
- 14.91** Our evidence in the Caravan and Houseboat Dweller Accommodation Needs Assessment (2018) does not identify any direct need for additional permanent residential moorings in Dacorum to meet local demand. Any additional permanent residential moorings should be seen in the context of providing for a more diverse set of housing options and as part of the wider housing delivery, as opposed to meeting any identified local need. The Gypsy&Traveler Accommodation Needs Assessment suggests the role of additional moorings in meeting current housing needs in Dacorum is likely to be very small and this figure would form part of the existing Local Housing Need and is not in addition to it.

- 14.92** However, there has been some interest in recent years to convert leisure moorings to permanent residential moorings e.g. at Cow Roast and Apsley Marinas. Important issues relate to the availability of suitable and sustainable services and facilities to serve such developments. Proposals for permanent residential use can also conflict with the need to maintain the low key character and appearance of existing leisure mooring basins, in particular within the open countryside. Therefore, we consider it reasonable to restrict both the overall proportion of moorings that are converted as well as the impact of the residential use on the area through the control of storage, gardens, parking and external lighting.
- 14.93** All new proposals or schemes to expand existing facilities in the countryside will need to be carefully justified against Green Belt or Rural Area policies given these are normally areas of development restraint. Furthermore, the Chilterns AONB provides another potential level of constraint on development in such rural locations. If demand arises for additional moorings, this is best met in carefully controlled and planned sites which can also help reduce the problem of unauthorised moorings. However, the number and siting of permanent residential moorings or their expansion must be limited to avoid harm to the countryside or surrounding area and to safeguard the canal environment.
- 14.94** New permanent residential moorings should normally be offline. There should be space for essential facilities such as water and electricity supply and for refuse and sewage disposal. Any parking and other features should be unobtrusive. We do not consider that general storage and the erection of antennae on the land to be essential facilities.
- 14.95** The Canal and River Trust has a new approach to the definition of ‘continuously cruising’ to minimise the length of time houseboats can remain in one place, and are taking action against unlicensed residential boats.

Policy DM15 - Residential Moorings

1. All new proposals for residential moorings outside of urban areas will be considered against Policy SP11 - Development in the Green Belt and Policy SP12 - Development in the Rural Area taking into account the guidance for Policy DM27 - Landscape Character and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as appropriate.
2. New residential moorings on the Grand Union Canal adjoining the urban areas of Tring, Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead and Kings Langley, must satisfy the criteria below and other relevant policies of the plan.
3. Locations in the open countryside will only be acceptable where they are incorporated into a sustainably sited recreational mooring basin and their impacts are carefully controlled.
4. Proposals must:
 - a. in the case of development involving the loss or change of use of existing leisure moorings, ensure at least 50% of the moorings at the site are retained as leisure moorings;
 - b. integrate successfully with the surrounding landscape and/or townscape and make a positive contribution to the canalside environment;
 - c. be close to existing services and amenities and exploit opportunities to make the site more sustainable by, where feasible, promoting or improving alternative means of transport;
 - d. be served by an adequate road access and not result in a significant adverse impact in terms of traffic generation or highway safety and convenience, and
 - e. enhance the historic or visual character of the canal and its nature conservation value.
5. In addition they should:
 - a. not impede navigation and/or the use of the towpath;
 - b. only provide essential external lighting;
 - c. include sufficient amenity space at the site in a communal area for essential facilities such as bin storage, showers, laundry and WCs;
 - d. provide adequate pedestrian and service vehicle access;

- e. not have individual garden areas, sheds, storage units or parking areas adjacent to each mooring - car parking and other facilities should wherever feasible be provided in a communal area, or be designed out of the proposal, and
- f. include landscaping to a high standard.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- [Caravan and Houseboat Dweller Accommodation Needs Assessment \(December 2018\)](#)

EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT



Generating a vibrant economy
with opportunities for all

Shaping
growth in
Dacorum



15 Employment Development

- 15.1** The Employment Strategy seeks to bring forward a sufficient amount of office and industrial space in the right locations to deliver our wider economic objectives. To deliver the required floorspace requirement we have identified a number of Employment Growth Areas (see the Proposals and Sites section of the Plan). In addition, most existing employment sites should be retained.
- 15.2** Policy SP5 - Delivering the Employment Strategy, sets indicative floorspace figures for office and industrial development which reflect the above. As a result of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020, the indicative floorspace figures relate to the following land uses:
- Offices: office uses in use class E
 - Industrial: light industrial uses in class E; general industrial uses in class B2; and storage or distribution use in class B8
- 15.3** Other key ways in which the policy will be delivered are summarised below:
- Supporting the knowledge-based economy, including the development of green technological businesses at Maylands Gateway close to M1 Junction 8 in the Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter Enterprise Zone.
 - Requiring provision for small and medium sized businesses in Employment Growth Areas.
 - Retaining and developing existing employment sites that meet longer term needs for a wide range of office and industrial uses, whilst encouraging offices in the town, district and local centres.
 - Allocating 20 hectares of land for new office and industrial development in the Employment Growth Areas listed in the policy.

General Employment Areas

- 15.4** The General Employment Areas (GEAs) contain the majority of Dacorum's office and industrial floorspace. The GEA designation ensures that appropriate land is set aside and protected mainly for office, industrial and warehousing uses, to help ensure that the indicative floorspace figures in Policy SP5 - Delivering the Employment Strategy can be met. Maylands Business Park in Hemel Hempstead is the principal GEA and most of the other GEAs are located elsewhere in the towns of Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring. There are smaller GEAs in Kings Langley and Markyate. For historical reasons, there are also GEAs in the Green Belt at Bourne End and Bovingdon.
- 15.5** We have designated two new GEAs at Two Waters Road/A41 junction, Hemel Hempstead (Growth Area HH16) and Dunsley Farm in Tring (Growth Area Tr01). Maylands Business Park is now covered by one GEA, the boundaries of which have been extended to take in land permitted or allocated for employment development at Maylands Gateway and Spencer's Park. Furthermore, the Bourne End Mills and Bovingdon Brickworks GEAs have been extended. Finally, this Plan gives GEA status for the first time to Sunderland Yard's in Kings Langley, to help retain village jobs.
- 15.6** We have also reviewed the existing GEAs and other land designated for employment use. Given the overall shortage of employment development land, existing employment areas should be retained for employment uses unless there are strong reasons to the contrary. Despite this, we have decided to delete or reduce the size of a small number of employment areas, but only where:
- the area is no longer mainly in office, industrial or warehousing use;
 - the use(s) more appropriately sit within a district centre designation; or
 - the existing employment uses are of a low quality and there is potential for high density new housing within a highly accessible location that would increase the vitality and viability of a town, district or local centre.

- 15.7** We expect that the loss of floorspace from these changes is to be more than compensated for by the new and expanded employment areas included in this Plan.

Non-office and industrial uses

- 15.8** GEAs should be reserved mainly for office, industrial and warehousing uses, as explained above. However, we recognise that other uses should be accepted to a limited extent, where they are similar to office or industrial uses or would provide services to the businesses and employees located in the GEA.

Employment Article 4 areas

- 15.9** Between 2006 and 2018, Dacorum experienced a net loss of 75,000 sqm of office floorspace, despite the substantial increase proposed in the Core Strategy. Commitments exist for further losses, mainly from prior approval schemes for conversion of offices to residential (i.e. where there is no longer a formal requirement for planning permission). We have, therefore, introduced Article 4 areas to control changes of use to housing in the GEAs listed below:
- Maylands Business Park (most of the area)
 - Doolittle Meadows, Apsley, Hemel Hempstead
 - Whiteleaf Road, Two Waters, Hemel Hempstead
 - Park Lane, Hemel Hempstead
 - Bourne End Mills, Bourne End
 - Northbridge Road and River Park, Berkhamsted; and
 - Icknield Way, Tring

Waste uses

- 15.10** The Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations Plan (2014) defines some employment areas as suitable for certain types of waste uses. These areas are known as Employment Land Areas of Search (ELAS). Such areas in Dacorum are shown below:

Table 18 Employment Land Areas of Search in Dacorum as at 2020

General employment area	ELAS reference no.	Potential waste uses
Buncefield, Hemel Hempstead	ELAS168	Organic waste recovery facilities (excluding open-windrow composting) and other types of waste management facility that meet the capacity shortfalls in the Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management document are acceptable in principle.
Maylands Business Park (part), Hemel Hempstead	ELAS006, 007 and 168	
Whiteleaf Road, Two Waters, Hemel Hempstead	ELAS175	
Riversend Road, Two Waters, Hemel Hempstead	ELAS174	
Icknield Way, Tring	ELAS164	
Northbridge Road, Berkhamsted	ELAS167	Types of waste management facility that meet the capacity shortfalls in the Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management document are acceptable in principle.
River Park, Berkhamsted	ELAS169	

Policy DM16 - General employment areas

1. General Employment Areas (GEAs) are shown on the Policies Map. Within these areas, development and redevelopment will be permitted for the office, industrial and warehousing uses set out in the table below. Proposals should also comply with the planning requirements in this table and, for Employment Growth Areas, the site specific guidance in the Proposals and Sites schedule.

2. Non-office and industrial uses will be permitted if they satisfy one or more of the following:
 - a. are similar in nature to office, industrial or warehousing uses and will strengthen the economic role of the GEA,
 - b. will not undermine the particular role of the GEA as an employment and economic centre, or
 - c. will provide important services and facilities that would enhance the attractiveness of the GEA as an economic centre.
3. Depending on the size, character and location of the GEA, acceptable uses include the following:
 - a. Sui generis uses of a similar nature to office, industrial or warehousing uses
 - b. Public houses and takeaways
 - c. Hotels
 - d. Trade counter uses
 - e. Community uses, such as day nurseries and creches.
4. Applications for residential use in the General Employment Areas shown in the table below will be resisted:

Table 19 General Employment Areas

Table of General Employment Areas	Employment uses	Planning requirements
Hemel Hempstead		
Apsley	Light industrial	Small units to be retained.
Buncefield	Oil terminal	Development may be restricted due to the storage of a notifiable hazardous substance on this site: advice required from Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
Riversend Road, Two Waters	Offices, industrial warehousing	High quality well landscaped landmark buildings required fronting London Road and Two Waters Road, given the prominent location on the main approach into the town centre from the A41 bypass. Environmental improvement sought. Proposals must respect, and if possible enhance, the setting of the listed building.
Whiteleaf Road, Two Waters	Offices, industrial, warehousing	Within an Article 4 area, where good quality offices should be retained and changes of use from employment uses to housing will be resisted. Development may be restricted due to the storage of a notifiable hazardous substance on adjoining National Grid site, until the site is redeveloped for housing (see Growth Area HH09 in the Proposals and Sites schedule): advice required from Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
Doolittle Meadows, Apsley	Offices	Within an Article 4 area, where good quality offices should be retained and changes of use from employment uses to housing will be resisted.

		Existing landscaping should be maintained, particularly along the canal and the London Road frontage. Softening of boundary to the Green Belt will be sought if the opportunity arises (i.e. through additional planting).
Maylands Business Park	Offices, industrial, warehousing	<p>Most of GEA is within an Article 4 area, where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good quality offices should be retained, especially the Grade A offices at Breakspear Park and the Maylands Building. • Changes of use from employment uses to housing will be resisted. <p>Green technological uses meeting the aims of the Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter Enterprise Zone will be encouraged, particularly within the designated Enterprise Zone.</p> <p>Contains an Employment Growth Area in Maylands Gateway (see Growth Area HH20 in the Proposals and Sites schedule).</p> <p>Development close to Buncefield Oil Terminal and Three Cherry Trees Lane/Swallowdale Lane may be restricted due to the storage of notifiable hazardous substances: advice required from Health and Safety Executive (HSE).</p>
Two Waters Road/A41 Junction	Offices, industrial, warehousing	Employment Growth Area (see Growth Area HH16 in the Proposals and Sites schedule).
Berkhamsted		
Northbridge Road	Offices, industrial, warehousing	<p>Within an Article 4 area, where good quality offices should be retained and changes of use from employment uses to housing will be resisted.</p> <p>Canalside enhancement required.</p> <p>The household waste site is safeguarded under the Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy.</p>
River Park	Offices, industrial	<p>Within an Article 4 area, where good quality offices should be retained and changes of use from employment uses to housing will be resisted.</p> <p>Canalside enhancement required.</p> <p>Small and medium sized units to be retained.</p>
Tring		
Brook Street	Offices, light industrial	<p>The mill (listed building) to be retained and its enhancement encouraged.</p> <p>Small units to be retained.</p>

Dunsley Farm, London Road	Offices, industrial, warehousing	Contains an Employment Growth Area (see Growth Area Tr01 In the Proposals and Sites schedule). Also contains 2 ha of land partly in industrial/commercial use (including Tring Brewery), with scope for further small-scale employment development.
Icknield Way	Offices, industrial, warehousing	Within an Article 4 area, where good quality offices should be retained and changes of use from employment uses to housing will be resisted.
Kings Langley		
Sunderland's Yard, Church Lane	Offices, industrial	Small units to be retained.
Markyate		
Sharose Court, Hicks Road	Offices, industrial, warehousing	Small units to be retained.
Green Belt		
Bourne End Mills	Offices, industrial, warehousing	Contains an Employment Growth Area (see Growth Area Cy01 In the Proposals and Sites schedule). Elsewhere, new office and Industrial development is acceptable in principle. Landscaping should be strengthened, if necessary, to ensure that new development is not visually intrusive when viewed from the nearby countryside. Within an Article 4 area, where good quality offices should be retained and changes of use from employment uses to housing will be resisted.
Bovingdon Brickworks	Offices, industrial, warehousing	Contains an Employment Growth Area (see Growth Area Cy02 In the Proposals and Sites schedule). Elsewhere, new employment development is acceptable in principle. Landscaping should be strengthened, if necessary, to ensure that new development is not visually intrusive when viewed from the nearby countryside.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Policies map

Other Office and Industrial Sites

- 15.11** Outside the GEAs, there are many other sites in office and industrial use in Dacorum. Most of these sites are not very large, but in total they provide a significant number of office and industrial jobs. They also help ensure a good spread of jobs across the Borough. The Dacorum Employment Land Availability Assessment looked at several of these sites. The assessment recommended that most of them should be protected, with proposals for the loss of employment land on these sites considered through a criteria-based policy.
- 15.12** Policy DM17 - Other Office and Industrial Sites encourages offices in the town, district and local centres. Office development is, therefore, acceptable in principle on suitable sites in these centres.
- 15.13** An element of office development will also be sought or encouraged in the following Growth Areas in Hemel Hempstead:
- Paradise/Wood Lane (Growth Area HH04);
 - Market Square (Growth Area HH05);
 - Hemel Hempstead Station Gateway (Growth Area HH08); and
 - Two Waters North (Growth Area HH11).
- 15.14** Elsewhere, there is little scope for new office and industrial development. However, environmentally acceptable proposals within existing employment sites will be permitted.
- 15.15** As explained above, there has been a considerable loss of office floorspace. Furthermore, the Dacorum Employment Land Availability Assessment recommended that the remaining town centre office sites should be retained. Therefore, we have designated an Article 4 area covering part of Hemel Hempstead town centre, in order to require planning applications for changes of use from offices to housing. We will resist the further loss of town centres offices, unless a strong case to the contrary is demonstrated. Elsewhere in the towns and large villages, we will assess proposals for the loss of existing employment space on the basis of a criteria approach.
- 15.16** The NPPF (paragraph 83) states that planning policies should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of business in rural areas, through conversions and new buildings on suitable sites. It also encourages the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.
- 15.17** However, Dacorum's countryside is in the Green Belt, Rural Area and/or the Chilterns AONB, where restraint policies apply. Nevertheless, this Plan provides opportunities for rural businesses.

Policy DM17 - Other office and industrial sites

1. **Office and industrial development in towns and large villages:** In Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted, Tring, Bovington, Kings Langley and Markyate, new office development will be encouraged on suitable sites in the town, district and local centres. Office floorspace will also be sought or encouraged as part of mixed use or housing-led developments in Growth Areas HH04, HH05, HH08 and HH11 in Hemel Hempstead (see Proposals and Sites schedule). Elsewhere, in these settlements new office and industrial development will generally be limited to existing employment sites.
2. **Loss of existing office and industrial space in towns and large villages:** Planning applications for the loss of office and industrial land outside General Employment Areas will be permitted if there is no reasonable prospect of the site continuing in office or industrial use, or the existing use causes serious environmental problems. In deciding applications, the Council will consider whether:
 - a. There is a strong case to overcome the presumption against the further loss of town centre offices.
 - b. The proposed new use would meet an important local need or deliver other planning advantages.
 - c. The existing use causes serious environmental problems that cannot reasonably be resolved.

- d. The site is well suited for an economically important type of office, industrial or warehousing use that is in short supply in Dacorum, such as yards for storage purposes.
 - e. The existing buildings are of good quality and are suitable for modern business needs.
 - f. The site is in a commercially attractive location for office, industrial or warehousing uses.
 - g. The site has been marketed effectively for continued office, industrial or warehousing use and whether there is any viable interest in the property.
 - h. The site is vacant and, if so, for how long.
 - i. There are sufficient other employment opportunities available in the settlement.
 - j. The site is in a district or local centre, where the Council wishes to retain existing offices.
3. **Rural economy** proposals for office and industrial development in the countryside will be considered, as appropriate, against Policy SP11- Development in the Green Belt, Policy SP12 - Development in the Rural Area and Policy DM27 - Landscape Character and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Proposals for the loss of existing office, industrial and warehousing space will be assessed against bullet points a-j above.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Dacorum Employment Land Availability Assessment

Tourism

- 15.18** We have many popular destinations for day trips in the Borough. They play an important role in generating jobs for local residents and supporting our local businesses, particularly many rural enterprises. They provide leisure and recreational activities for our residents and those visiting the special landscape areas of the Chilterns Hills, the Grand Union Canal, or the many attractive walks crossing the Borough including the Icknield Way or Chiltern Way. Whether it's the Snow Centre or Frogmore Paper Mill in Hemel Hempstead, Ashridge House and Estate, Berkhamsted Castle, the Natural History Museum or Champneys both in the Tring area, or through visiting one of our many open, green spaces, reservoirs or parks, Dacorum provides a wealth of interesting places to visit.
- 15.19** Tourism and leisure development is generally welcomed, providing opportunities to enhance the visitor experience, additional employment and a means of supplementing and diversifying rural incomes. However, it can have negative impacts on the surrounding area, especially those in a countryside setting, if located insensitively, is out of scale with its context, or if it fails to take proper account of local character and appearance. Policy DM18 - Tourism seeks to locate most development within or close to defined settlements, where local shops and facilities are most accessible and stand to benefit the most. Sustainable development will be approved in accordance with 'Policy SP1 - Sustainable Development in Dacorum'.
- 15.20** We want to encourage visitors and investment in Dacorum whilst recognising that a balance needs to be maintained with regards to preserving the high quality environmental, historic, and cultural assets of the Borough i.e. new development and facilities should not detract or harm the very environment that attracts them. The re-use of existing buildings limits harm to the environment and may help farm diversification schemes.

Policy DM18 - Tourism

1. New tourism enterprises and extensions to existing tourism enterprises will be supported in principle where the facility meets identified needs which are not met by existing facilities, is appropriately located and does not conflict with other policies within this Plan, including the Green Belt and Rural Area policies (respectively Policies SP11 and SP12).
2. Planning permission for tourism-related development will be supported where it:
 - a. increases the attractiveness of the Borough as a tourist destination;
 - b. improves visitor accommodation; or
 - c. delivers sustainable tourism and visitor attractions in appropriate locations.
3. In the countryside outside settlement boundaries, proposals will need to evidence why they cannot be accommodated within or adjoining an existing settlement and how they will support the rural economy.
4. Proposals for touring caravan sites should, in particular, be:
 - a. located within reasonable walking distance of a settlement with shops, pubs or other facilities;
 - b. of an appropriate scale to the countryside location;
 - c. easily accessible from the primary road network and not result in highway safety issues;
 - d. unobtrusively located; and
 - e. effectively landscaped.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Growth and Infrastructure Strategy

RETAILING & OTHER TOWN CENTRE USES



Generating a vibrant economy
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Shaping
growth in
Dacorum



16 Retailing and Other Town Centre Uses

- 16.1** Our Retail and Leisure Development Strategy forms part of the Sustainable Development Strategy. This section provides more detail on how we will deliver this overarching approach.
- 16.2** The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should support the role of town centres and other centres such as district and local centres, in order to promote their long term vitality and viability and their role at the heart of local communities. Meeting anticipated needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses is emphasised. Planning policies should define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre.
- 16.3** The Government has introduced greater flexibility over changes of use in recent years, in order to support town centres. This was done initially, by amending the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order and more recently by revising the Use Classes Order. Permitted development rights now allow certain changes of use without planning permission, whilst others require only a prior approval process.
- 16.4** Various uses have now been grouped together in the Use Classes Order under new classes E and F1. Planning permission is not required for changes of use within a use class. The table below lists the main town centre uses defined in the NPPF by the use class they are covered by:

Table 20 Main Town Centre Uses

Main town centre uses	Use class
Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres)	E: commercial, business and service
Restaurants, drive through restaurants, health and fitness centres	E: commercial, business and service
Cinemas, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls	Sui generis (not within a use class)
Offices	E: commercial, business and service
Hotels and conference centres	C1: hotels, boarding and guest houses
Museums, galleries	F1: learning and non-residential institutions
Theatres, concert halls	Sui generis (not within a use class)

- 16.5** The key messages from our evidence are set out in the Retail and Leisure Development Strategy. In summary, a hierarchy of centres was recommended in the 2018 Retail and Leisure Study. This study also recommended town centre and primary shopping area boundaries for the town and district centres, and primary and secondary frontages for the town centres. The Further Dacorum Retail Study (2020) provided updated and additional guidance on retail issues.
- 16.6** The Retail and Leisure Development Strategy states that we will encourage main town centre uses of an appropriate scale and nature in the town, district and local centres in accordance with the hierarchy defined in the policy. In addition, the policy provides guidance on the scale and distribution of new retail development in Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring.

Mix of uses in Town, District and Local Centres

- 16.7** Policy DM19 - Mix of uses in Town, District and Local Centres, provides guidance on the mix of uses in town, district and local centres. In this policy, our definition of 'town centres' covers the sub-regional centre of Hemel Hempstead, as well as Berkhamsted and Tring town centres. The policy defines boundaries for every centre and primary shopping area boundaries for town and district centres. These boundaries reflect the Retail and Leisure Study's recommendations and further analysis by us

(see the Retail and Town Centres Topic Paper). We have concluded that it is no longer appropriate to define primary and secondary frontages in the town centres, given the flexibility for changes of use within use class E.

16.8 We recognise that the nature of centres is changing and that they will contain a wider range of non-shop uses than in the past. In particular, there will be more emphasis on food and drink and leisure uses, and a growing evening economy. Substantial housing development in and around Hemel Hempstead town centre is likely to increase the demand for such uses. However, shopping will remain very important, especially in the primary shopping areas.

16.9 Apart from the main town centre uses defined in the NPPF, there are various other uses that are appropriate in town, district and local centres. Such uses include:

Table 21 Appropriate uses in Town, District and Local Centres

Uses	Use class
Housing	C3: dwelling houses
Financial and professional services (including banks and estate agents), clinics and health centres	E: commercial, business and service
Libraries, places of worship, public halls	F1: learning and non-residential institutions
Hot food takeaways, amusement centres, betting offices	Sui generis (not within a use class)

16.10 Policy DM19, therefore, strikes a balance between protecting key shopping areas and encouraging other appropriate uses.

Policy DM19 - Mix of uses in Town, District and Local Centres

1. A wide range of ‘main town centre uses’ as defined in national guidance and other appropriate uses will be encouraged in the town centres (Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring), district centres (Hemel Hempstead Old Town and Apsley) and local centres (Adeyfield, Bennetts End, Maylands, Woodhall Farm, Bovingdon and Kings Langley), in order to protect and increase the vitality and viability of these centres. The evening economy will be supported.
2. The Policies Map shows the boundaries of the:
 - a. Town, district and local centres
 - b. Primary shopping areas in the town and district centres
3. Retail development will be concentrated mainly in the primary shopping areas.
4. Development in the primary shopping areas and in existing shopping areas in local centres should provide an active ground floor frontage and planning permissions will normally be subject to a condition to achieve this.⁽⁸⁾
5. The mix of uses in town, district and local centres should accord with the guidance below:
 - a. Ground floor level in primary shopping areas the following uses will be permitted:
 - i. Shops, financial and professional services, cafes and restaurants, gyms, but not other uses within use class E (commercial, business and service)
 - ii. Bars and pubs, hot food takeaways
 - b. Upper floors in primary shopping areas, elsewhere in town and district centres, and in local centres the following uses will be permitted:
 - i. Uses acceptable at ground floor level in primary shopping areas
 - ii. Leisure and entertainment uses, such as cinemas, theatres, concert halls and dance halls
 - iii. Class F1 uses (learning and non-residential institutions), including museums, libraries and places of worship

8 Includes those created as a result of the prior approval provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order amending or re-enacting that Order with or without modification)

- iv. Hotels, boarding houses and guest houses
- v. Medical uses, such as clinics and health centres
- vi. Offices
- vii. Other appropriate uses such as amusement centres and betting offices
- viii. Housing

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- South West Hertfordshire Retail and Leisure Study (2018)
- Further Dacorum Retail Study (2020)

Neighbourhood centres and scattered local shops

- 16.11** Small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance are not classified as ‘centres’ in the NPPF. Nevertheless, these centres fulfil an important role in providing local shops, services and community facilities, which merit protection where appropriate. Some scattered local shops are also important, particularly in the smaller villages. They should be given a degree of policy protection.
- 16.12** Policy DM20 - Neighbourhood Centres and scattered Local Shops, takes account of the introduction of class F2 (local community use) in the Government's 2020 changes to the Use Classes Order. Class F2 covers various uses, in particular:
- shops serving essential goods, including food, where the floorspace is no more than 280 sqm and there is no other such facility within one kilometre; and
 - halls and meeting places for the principal use of the local community.

Policy DM20 - Neighbourhood Centres and scattered Local Shops

1. In the following neighbourhood centres, as defined on the table below, the emphasis will be on shops to serve the local community mainly selling convenience goods. Other appropriate uses such as small scale food and drink uses and local community uses will also be encouraged.

Table 22 Neighbourhood Centre Locations

Neighbourhood Centre Locations
Boxmoor (St. John's Road), Hemel Hempstead
Chaulden, Hemel Hempstead
Gadebridge (Rossgate), Hemel Hempstead
Grovehill, Hemel Hempstead
Highfield (Bellgate), Hemel Hempstead
Highfield (The Heights), Hemel Hempstead
Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead
Nash Mills (The Denes), Hemel Hempstead
Warners End (Stoneycroft), Hemel Hempstead
Miswell Lane (and Western Road), Tring

Neighbourhood Centre Locations

Markyate

Northchurch

2. Existing shops within class F2 in neighbourhood centres and scattered shops elsewhere will be protected, unless marketing evidence demonstrates that the use is not viable.
3. Marketing evidence will also be required to justify the loss of other shops and premises providing local services in neighbourhood centres.
4. The loss of halls, meeting places and other community facilities in neighbourhood centres will be assessed against Policy DM64 - Community Facilities.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- South West Hertfordshire Retail and Leisure Study (2018)
- Further Dacorum Retail Study (2020)

Main town centre uses outside existing centres

- 16.13** There a number of existing or permitted out of centre retail locations in Dacorum. In Hemel Hempstead, some of these have now been incorporated into the Apsley district centre and Maylands local centre. Also, the B&Q store in Hemel Hempstead forms part of the proposed Two Waters North housing-led site (Growth Area HH11). In Berkhamsted, planning permission has been granted for a Lidl foodstore at Gossoms End (Growth Area Bk13).
- 16.14** The NPPF states that proposals for main town centre uses outside existing centres should be subject to the sequential and impact tests. Policy DM21 - Main Town Centre uses outside existing centres reflects the NPPF and the conclusion in the Further Dacorum Retail Study that no new out of centre retail development proposals can be justified in the Local Plan, except to serve the larger strategic Growth Areas.

Policy DM21 - Main Town Centre uses outside existing centres

1. Proposals for main town centre uses outside the centres listed in Policy SP6 and not in accordance with other policies in this Plan should follow a sequential approach to site selection in accordance with national guidance, except for proposals complying with the guidance on existing and permitted out of centre locations below.
2. Retail and leisure proposals outside defined centres for over 2,500 sqm floorspace should also be subject to an impact assessment, in accordance with national guidance.
3. Schemes which would result in a significant adverse impact on existing centres will not be permitted.
4. Edge of centre and out of centre proposals should be in accessible locations, well connected to an existing centre.
5. Where retail development is permitted outside existing centres, careful control will be exercised over the size of units and type of goods to be sold in order to avoid a significant adverse impact on these centres.
6. In the following locations, significant development above that already permitted will be resisted, except in the locations stated in the table below:

Table 23 Out of Centre Retail Locations

Location	Further significant development proposed
Aldi, London Road, Two Waters, Hemel Hempstead	-
Aldi, Redbourn Road, Hemel Hempstead	-
Jarman Park, Hemel Hempstead	Retail-led development, including a possible foodstore. Food and drink uses, leisure uses and a hotel also acceptable on part of the site (Growth Area HH27)
Lidl, Gossoms End, Berkhamsted	Foodstore (Growth Area Bk13)
Tesco, London Road, Tring	-

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- South West Hertfordshire Retail and Leisure Study (2018)
- Further Dacorum Retail Study (2020)

CLIMATE CHANGE & SUSTAINABILITY



Mitigating and adapting
to climate change.

Shaping
growth in
Dacorum



17 Climate Change and Sustainability

- 17.1** Our climate is changing as a result of human activity, and left unabated will have catastrophic effects on the way we live our lives. We declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 to respond to these challenges and, through this, have committed to reducing carbon emissions across Council activities to net zero by 2030. The declaration also places key responsibilities on the Local Plan to include all available measures to cut carbon emissions and reduce the impact on the environment.
- 17.2** Mitigating and adapting to climate change is at the heart of the environmental arm of our strategy and will support national aims under the Climate Change Act (2008) to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Effectively, the whole economy target is to be net zero carbon by 2050 and the overall objective is for all new development to be 'zero carbon' in the future.
- 17.3** Local planning authorities are bound by the legal duty set out in the 2008 Planning Act to ensure that, taken as whole, plan policy contributes to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. The NPPF expands on this duty, stating that: "local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change (paragraph 149) (in line with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008).
- 17.4** Planning has an important role to play in meeting the challenges of climate change in relation to the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) and improve resilience (adaptation). While the framework for reducing these emissions is set out through national guidance, much of the implementation will need to be at the local level.
- 17.5** The policies set out in this chapter are designed to help shape and design places in order to achieve a low carbon future, support lower carbon emissions and renewable energy technologies, make places resilient to the effects of climate change and ensure a more effective use of the resources available. A gradual tightening of standards over the Plan period can ensure we can deliver our commitment that all new development in Dacorum should be 'net zero' by 2030.

National Policy

- 17.6** Recognising the importance of climate change and how this will affect future generations, as part of the Climate Change Act (2008) the Government set out a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. This was set in the context of international ambition to limit warming to no more than 2 degrees above pre-industrial temperatures, and if possible nearer 1.5 degrees celsius. Based on updated advice from the Committee on Climate Change, in June 2019 the Government passed laws that amended this to 100% below 1990 levels.
- 17.7** Effectively, the whole economy target is to be net zero carbon by 2050 and the overall objective is for all new development to be 'zero carbon' in the future. Legislation will also set out interim requirements leading up to net-zero by 2050, with new energy efficiency standards expected in 2020 and by 2025 the Future Homes Standard will set a 75-80% reduction target for new build homes alongside requirements for future proofing for low carbon heating.
- 17.8** Chapter 14 of the NPPF makes clear the important role the planning system and plans play in responding to climate change. The planning system should support the move to a low carbon future, shape places in ways that contribute to reducing greenhouse gases, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure (paragraph 148).
- 17.9** Plans should be proactive in mitigating and adapting to climate taking into account a number of impacts including flood risk, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures (paragraph 149) The policies of the plan should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts.

- 17.10** New development should be carefully designed to reduce vulnerability to these impacts and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (paragraph 150). The NPPF seeks to increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat through a number of measures (paragraph 151) and urges local planning authorities to support such community-led initiatives (paragraph 152). The NPPF also sets out advice in order to determine planning applications for renewable and low carbon development (paragraphs 153-154).

National Policy Reforms in the White Paper

- 17.11** The Government's Planning for the Future White Paper renews its commitment to combat climate change and achieve net zero by 2050. Pillar Two - Planning for beautiful and sustainable places signals a future change and emphasis within the NPPF to help achieve this goal. Local authorities may be given greater scope to set energy efficiency standards for new build development and play a key role in identifying where renewable energy production and new woodlands would be appropriate.

Other Relevant Strategies and Studies

- 17.12** We are preparing a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to help meet our pledge for the impact of our services and assets to be carbon neutral by 2030 and also to contribute towards the whole UK targets. The Action Plan looks at how services throughout the Council can support our ambition and identifies the Plan as key to achieving change across the whole of the Borough. The proposed actions will evolve and adapt over time and take account of both the outcome of the interventions and external changes.
- 17.13** While the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan assesses the Council's services, the role of the Plan in combatting climate change is different and development focussed. To help deliver the Borough's contribution towards the national targets it sets a phased approach leading to all new development to be net zero carbon from 2030 onwards.

Policy SP10 - Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

1. All development is required to mitigate and adapt to climate change and to actively pursue the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions.
2. The policy will be applied to ensure that all new development in the Borough is net zero by 2030. This will be achieved in a phased way as follows:
 - a. up until 2030, all new development will be required to accord with Policy DM23 - Energy and Carbon Emissions Reductions in New Development; and
 - b. from 2030 onwards, all new development will be net zero.
3. The policies of the Plan will contribute to net zero carbon through mitigation measures by:
 - a. prioritising the development of previously developed land in sustainable locations;
 - b. where carbon emissions cannot be mitigated, collecting contributions towards a carbon off-set fund.
 - c. increasing the area of habitats that fix and store carbon, including tree planting;
 - d. encouraging on-site renewable and low carbon energy sources on development sites, and stand-alone renewable energy or low carbon schemes;
 - e. requiring development to have high levels of thermal efficiency, including setting carbon emission targets where applicable;
 - f. requiring development to specify construction materials with low embodied carbon, and to minimise building construction waste, including reuse and recycling wherever possible;
 - g. designing buildings to reduce excessive cooling and heating loads through orientation, landscaping and appropriate glazing;

- h. encouraging the use of sustainable transport modes in all new development; and
 - i. supporting retrofitting schemes to the existing building stock to meet higher energy efficiency standards.
4. The policies will ensure that new developments are resilient and contribute to climate change adaptation by:
- a. using green infrastructure to reduce flood risk, tackle urban heat island effects and provide solar shading; and
 - b. adapting to climate change by ensuring development avoids areas of flood risk and reduces the risk of flooding elsewhere, through the use of measures including sustainable urban drainage systems, green roofs and walls, and permeable surfaces.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Strategic Design Guide SPD

To be produced

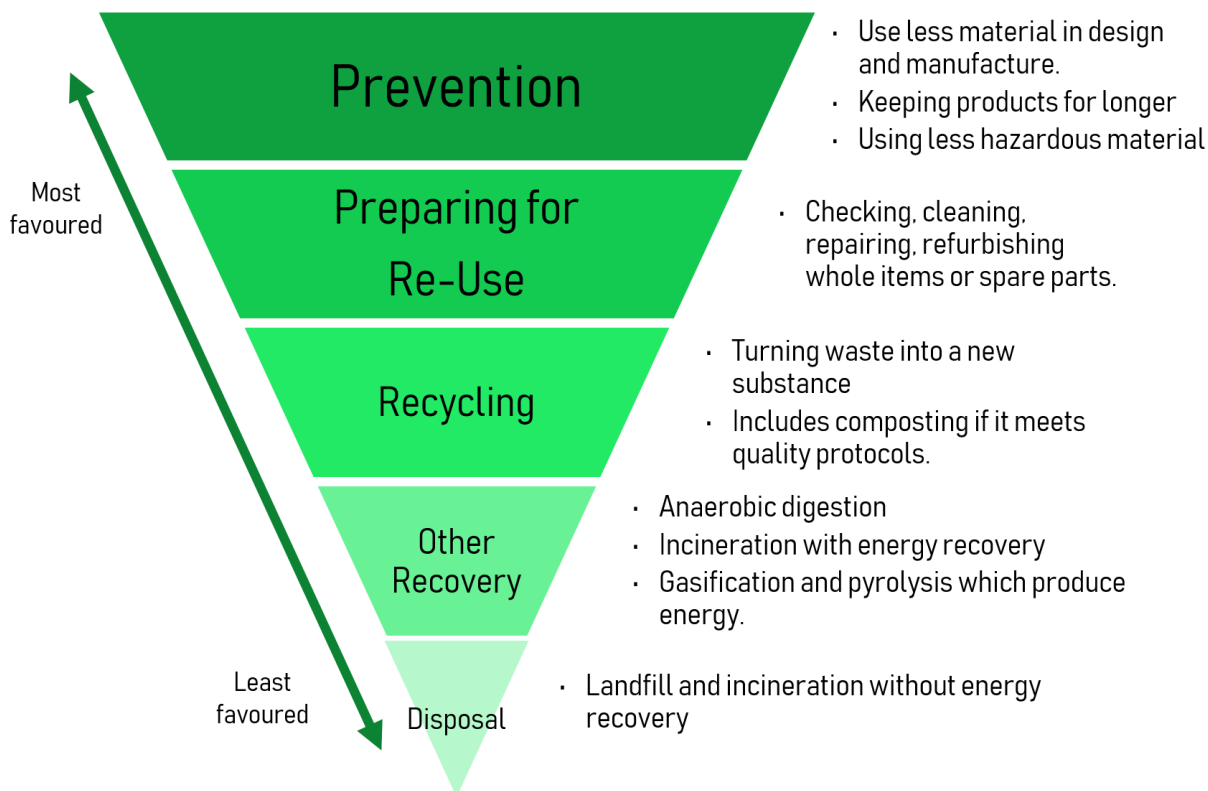
- Climate Change and Sustainability SPD
- Detailed Design Guide SPD
- Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

Sustainable Design and Construction

- 17.14** Sustainable building design and construction is an essential part of the Council's response to the challenges of climate change. The way in which buildings are designed, constructed, operated and decommissioned has significant impacts on the built and natural environment, and requires major resource inputs such as energy, water and materials.
- 17.15** Developers should first consider the reuse or refurbishment of existing buildings before demolition. Where demolition is proposed, materials should be reused, either on site or elsewhere, or recycled to avoid land-fill.
- 17.16** Embodied carbon is the carbon footprint of a material - a measure of how much greenhouse gas has been emitted in manufacturing materials and products such as building materials, and includes end of life emissions. Within a building, the type, volume, fitting and fixture, and future maintenance of the material also contribute towards its overall embodied carbon. For example, cement manufacture (used in concrete) is the source of about 8% of the world's CO₂ emissions, brick has a higher embodied carbon per kg than concrete, but since it is a porous material, the tonnage required will generally be less. Timber is a carbon sink, can be sustainably produced, and is an excellent insulator. Where there is no substitute for concrete, it is possible to specify a low carbon equivalent that locks up CO₂ in its manufacture.⁽⁹⁾
- 17.17** The design and construction of buildings should allow for the easy recovery and recycling of materials at the end of the building's life. Developers are encourage to implement a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) to help manage materials more effectively and reduce waste. Construction waste should be minimised in accordance with the waste hierarchy of materials usage as shown in Figure 4.

9 Climate change: The massive CO2 emitter you may not know about <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-46455844>

Figure 4 Waste Hierarchy



- 17.18** In Dacorum, the ongoing use of buildings accounted for some 59.5% of all greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in 2017, of which residential buildings contributed 58% ⁽¹⁰⁾. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the use of buildings is key to achieving the emission reduction target.
- 17.19** Proposals should be designed to enable future retrofitting to meet higher energy efficiency standards and lower GHG emissions by connecting to a air source heat pump, community heat networks or other low or zero carbon sources.
- 17.20** Hertfordshire’s Building Futures Sustainable Design Toolkit also provides practical case studies and is an evolving best practice guide for new development.
- 17.21** Developers will be expected to submit a Sustainability Statement with their application to demonstrate how the development minimises this impact and contributes to the objectives set out in Policy SP10 - Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.
- 17.22** Further details and the criteria for the Sustainability Statements will be set out in the Climate Change and Sustainability SPD.

Policy DM22 - Sustainable Design and Construction

1. New development will be expected to contribute to strategic Policy SP10 - Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation by mitigating the causes and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Proposals will be supported where they demonstrate that the highest standards of sustainable design and construction will be incorporated into the development.

2. For all new major developments in Dacorum, a sustainability statement is required to be submitted (using the online sustainability checklist as a template and to include consideration of sustainable transport) to demonstrate how the following key principles will be satisfied.⁽¹¹⁾:
3. **Mitigation measures**
 - a. Limit carbon dioxide emissions from the ongoing use of the development in accordance with Policy SP10 - Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, or where this is not applicable, seek to improve on the minimum Building Regulations requirements by following the energy hierarchy set out in Figure 5.
 - b. Use building materials with low embodied carbon unless evidence conforming to BS 15978:2011 or using the RICS 2014 Methodology to Calculate Embodied Carbon indicates otherwise
 - c. Incorporate green infrastructure to sequester carbon, to include two or more new trees (a tree shall be considered to count if it ordinarily reaches a mature height of 6 metres or more) per dwelling or per 100 sq m floor space (for non-residential developments) on-site.
 - d. Minimise building construction waste, reduce the volume of construction waste going to landfill and use construction materials that can be recycled at the end of the building's life.
 - e. Create a 'future proofed' design to enable retrofitting for higher energy efficiency standards (including use of alternative energy sources such as heat pumps), and in District Heating Opportunity Areas how it could be connected to decentralised community heating systems.
4. **Adaptation measures**
 - a. Minimise water usage and risk of flooding by including SuDS (including green roofs and permeable surfaces around the curtilage of buildings and in street design), surface water storage and grey water recycling.
 - b. Explain how the building(s) has been designed to have a long life.
 - c. Deliver an overall net-biodiversity gain and positive measures to support wildlife.
 - d. Use permeable ground surfaces, and if a flat roof is required, use a lighter coloured material, or preferably a green roof, within urban areas.
 - e. Use good design to reduce ongoing energy consumption considering aspects such as orientation, fenestration, aspect and landscape.
 - f. Minimise water use during construction (e.g. by specifying off-site modular construction or non-wet trades) and limit residential indoor water consumption to 110 litres per person per day.
5. Sustainability statements will be assessed on their merits but with an expectation that all measures should be satisfactorily met unless there is clear and convincing evidence as to why any measure(s) cannot be implemented, and if so, that alternative sustainability measures should be proposed. Proposals that exceed the requirements will be supported.
6. All development must be in accordance with the Dacorum Climate and Sustainability SPD which will be produced separately.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Strategic Design Guide SPD
- Hertfordshire's Building Futures Sustainable Design Toolkit

To be produced

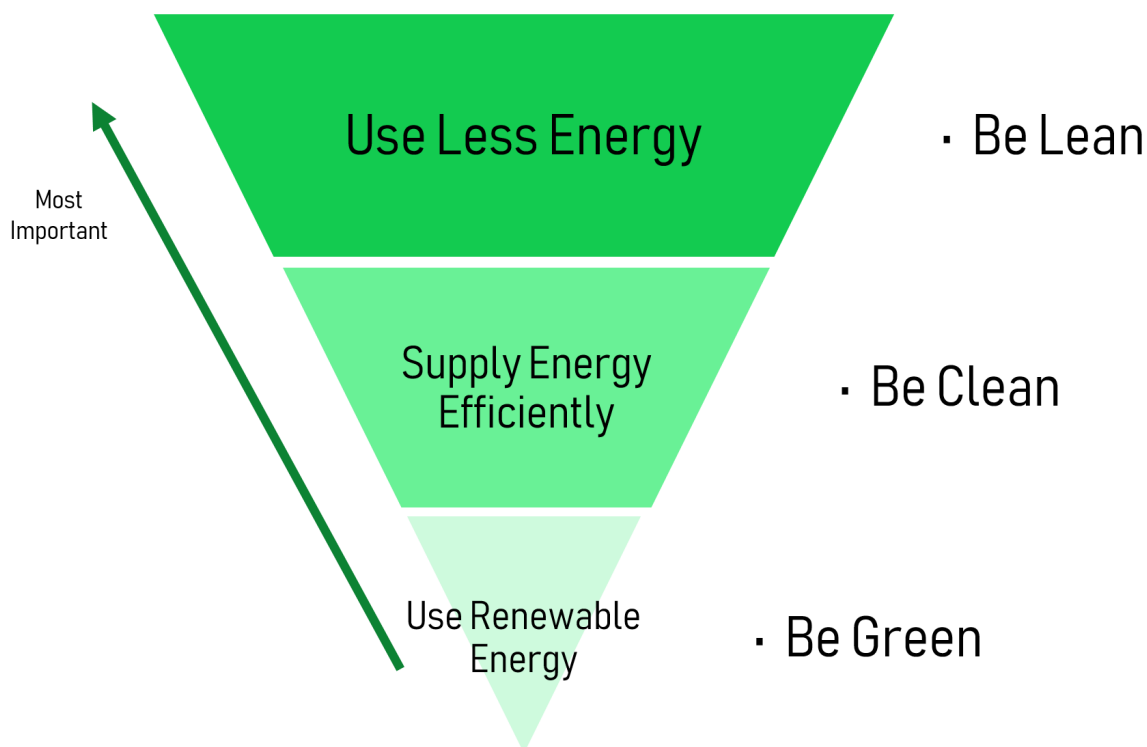
- Climate Change and Sustainability SPD
- Detailed Design Guide SPD

11 This requirement will be waived for non-residential proposals that target BREEAM Excellent and which commit to achieving this through subsequent BREEAM certification with evidence at the planning application stage that the project has been registered with a licenced BREEAM Assessor

Energy and Carbon Emissions Reductions in New Development

- 17.23** A key strand of our climate change strategy is to secure reductions in emissions from all sources. Data from Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy shows total Borough carbon emissions fell by 51% between 1990 and 2018, significantly exceeding the Government's 37% commitment by 2020. ⁽¹²⁾ However, much more is needed to deliver our policy aspirations that all new development will be carbon neutral from 2030.
- 17.24** While the Government has signalled its intent to introduce a 'roadmap' to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050 - to include the Future Homes Standard in 2020 and further measures from 2025 for new homes to produce 75-80% lower CO₂ emissions and be 'zero carbon ready' - our Plan accelerates this change. Our initial energy efficiency standards for new residential development are set at exceeding the Building Regulations Part L 2013 by a further 19% in terms of CO₂ reductions on the Target Emission Rate (TER). This is the equivalent of the withdrawn Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 and complies with the provisions of the Planning and Energy Act 2008. In addition we will seek contributions towards a further 20% reduction, leading to all new development being carbon neutral from 2030.
- 17.25** The Plan expects new non-residential development (where local authorities are not restricted or limited in the setting of energy performance standards) to achieve a BREEAM standard of Excellent.
- 17.26** The Council's approach will be guided by the Energy Hierarchy (Figure 5). This means that planning for carbon emission reductions will start at the design stage, by orientating buildings to maximise the advantages of solar gain and minimise the risk of overheating, and reducing heat loss and improving the energy efficiency of the building fabric, to ensure that carbon emissions reductions are 'future-proofed' for the life of the development.

Figure 5 Energy Hierarchy



12 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-2014>

- 17.27** On-site renewable energy generation can also assist in delivering net reductions in carbon dioxide emissions and should be included in the design of new development to achieve a further 20% reduction in the residual carbon emissions over and above the 19% improvement. Microgeneration technologies on buildings or supporting developments will need to be suitable for the site layout, design principles and any landscape or heritage constraints.
- 17.28** The Council will allow a degree of flexibility in how the standards set out in Policy DM23 - Energy and Carbon Emissions Reductions in New Development are achieved going forward to 2030 in line with national requirements, but will expect the overall targets to be met subject to viability. Where targets cannot be met, applicants / developers will be expected to offset on site the residual emissions through the Council's approach to carbon offsetting in accordance with Policy DM26 - Carbon Offsetting..
- 17.29** The Dacorum Climate Change and Sustainability SPD will provide guidance on the application of the energy hierarchy, best practice in terms of layout, orientation, design, landscaping to maximise the benefits of solar gain whilst minimising overheating risk and the need for active cooling or ventilation, the use of green infrastructure and SuDS to mitigate flood risk and anticipate climate change extremes, how to achieve zero carbon and carbon neutral developments, and carbon offsetting.
- 17.30** Hertfordshire's Building Futures Sustainable Design Toolkit provides practical case studies and is an evolving best practice guide for new development.
- 17.31** New development will be expected to demonstrate their compliance through an energy statement, Energy Planning Guidance London (GLA) provides a good practice guide to preparing these.

Policy DM23 - Energy and Carbon Emissions Reductions in New Development

1. In order to deliver reductions in CO₂ emissions as set down up to 2030 new development is required to demonstrate through the submission of an energy statement and other supporting information (including preliminary energy assessments and 'as designed' performance target) how its design, orientation, layout, operation and performance monitoring will satisfy the following:
 - a. For all new major residential development,
 - i. an energy performance standard equivalent to at least 19% carbon emissions reduction on the Dwelling Emission Rate (DER) against the Target Emission Rate (TER) based on Part L of the Building Regulations (2013) whilst meeting the Target Emission Rate (TER) solely from energy efficiency measures as defined within the SAP calculation model.
 - ii. contribute to a further 20% reduction in residual carbon emissions through the provision of on-site renewable energy generation, or provision and connection to decentralised low carbon energy sources.
 - b. For all new-build non-residential development, or multi-occupation residential, a BREEAM standard of Excellent for buildings;
2. In meeting these requirements developments are expected to:
 - a. be developed in accordance with the sequencing of the energy hierarchy set out in Figure 5 (i.e. design, fabric first approach and energy efficiency measures before considering decentralised renewable or low carbon energy sources);
 - b. show how the performance gap between the "as built" and "as designed" calculations for energy use, carbon emissions reduction, indoor air quality and overheating risk will be closed;
 - c. for all major new build residential development - implement a recognised monitoring regime to assess the energy use, indoor air quality, and overheating risk for at least 10% of the proposed dwellings for the first five years of their occupancy, and ensure that the information recovered is provided to the applicable occupiers and to the planning authority.
3. The Council will give strong support to new residential development that targets certification to the Home Quality Mark and Passivhaus design standards and non-residential development that targets certification beyond BREEAM Excellent.

4. Projects and proposals for retrofitting the existing building stock to meet higher energy efficiency standards that reduce carbon emissions or increase their suitability for reuse will be supported subject to heritage and aesthetic considerations.
5. Proposals should be designed to enable retrofitting to meet higher energy efficiency standards in future such as heat pumps or other low or zero carbon sources and, in District Heating Opportunity Areas (DHOAs) how development could be connected to networks of community heating if this were available.
6. Requirements to demonstrate the meeting of higher energy efficiency standards under this policy will be required until superseded by the Building Regulations standards under Part L or amended by the Planning and Energy Act 2008, whichever is earlier.
7. All development must be in accordance with Dacorum Climate Change and Sustainability Guidance.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- [local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-2014](#)
- Hertfordshire Building Futures Sustainable Design Toolkit

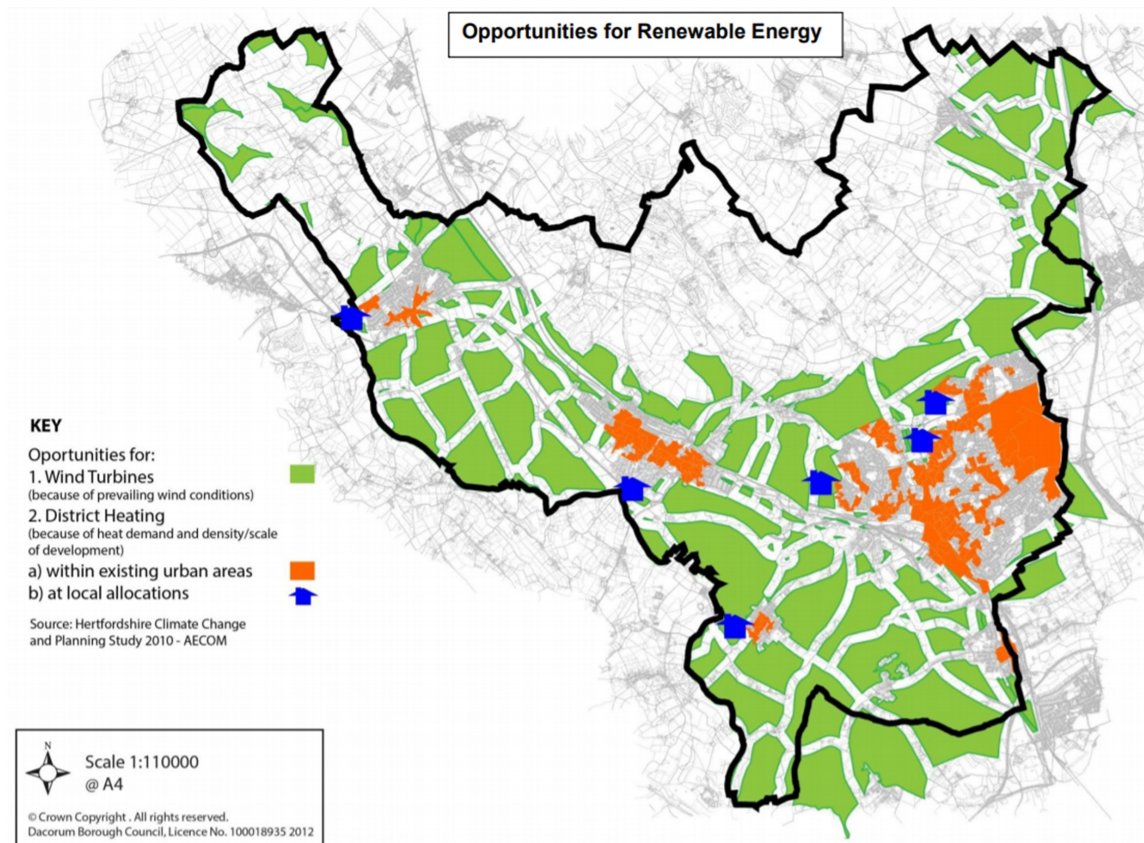
To be produced

- Climate Change and Sustainability SPD

Low Carbon Community Heat and Energy Networks

- 17.32** The NPPF states (paragraph 151) that plans should identify opportunities for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers and encourage development to draw its energy supply from decentralised renewable and low carbon energy sources.
- 17.33** Community heat or energy networks give communities more awareness and accountability for the environmental impact of their energy use, enabling them to play a greater and more direct role in reducing this contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.
- 17.34** Within the UK the majority of community energy projects currently focus on electricity generation, other project areas include energy efficiency measures and a small share on heat generation. Within electricity generation, solar energy is currently the most dominant technology, followed by wind projects. Large scale battery storage may be found co-located with solar energy collection.
- 17.35** District heating schemes are most effective in areas where there is a significant demand for energy within a compact area. The type of technology used is tailored to local circumstances and cost effectiveness, and can utilise energy generated from community or commercial use buildings or energy generated by the natural environment.
- 17.36** The Map below (Figure 6, from the 'Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Study') identifies opportunities for renewable energy in the Borough's town centres and Maylands Business Park, and through large-scale greenfield development.

Figure 6 Opportunities for Renewable Energy



- 17.37** We consider that networks of district heating and Combined Heat and Power (CHP) should be pursued in District Heating Opportunity Areas (DHOAs) where significant regeneration is targeted, and in the Growth Areas. Systems could be powered by local biomass and appropriate waste that is not being recycled for other purposes. Major developments in DHOAs and on allocated Growth Areas will be expected to investigate the potential for providing site-wide community heat or energy networks or for connecting to existing networks of heat or power where this is available.
- 17.38** Smaller developments in or close to existing or planned networks of district heating or CHP should also investigate the delivery of suitable technologies to enable connection to those networks either now or in the future.
- 17.39** More detailed guidance about low carbon community heat and energy networks will be given in the Climate Change and Sustainability SPD.

Policy DM24 - Low Carbon Community Heat and Energy Networks

1. All major development proposals within a Renewable Energy Opportunity Area (as shown on Figure 6) or in defined Growth Areas, will be expected to either:
 - a. create a site-wide community heat or energy network; or
 - b. connect to an existing decentralised network where this is available; unless it can be demonstrated through an energy feasibility assessment that:
 - i. a better alternative for reducing carbon emissions from the development (taking into account the potential efficiencies from expanding the network in future) can be achieved; or
 - ii. heating and/or cooling large parts of any scheme do not justify a heat or power connection; or
 - iii. the cost of achieving this would make the proposed development unviable.

2. Consideration will be given to whether proportionate reductions in social and community infrastructure provision and/or financial contributions are justified, where this would make otherwise unviable schemes that include energy networks viable.
3. Land for service corridors should be protected, irrespective of whether a connection is made.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Study

To be produced

- Climate Change and Sustainability SPD

Stand-alone Renewable or Low Carbon Energy

- 17.40** Renewable energy is an important contributor to reducing overall CO₂ emissions and since 2011 the Borough has seen a steady but modest growth in the installation of microgeneration renewable energy technologies. However to date there have been no significant stand-alone renewable energy generation schemes.
- 17.41** The 'Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Study' identifies opportunities and constraints for renewable energy, including wind power. Natural opportunities for wind power are in the countryside. While the NPPF is clear that, in the main, renewable energy projects comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it does point to how the wider environmental benefits associated with increasing energy production from these sources could form part of a case for very special circumstances (paragraph 147). In addition it is important that schemes are designed and located so that their impacts can be either avoided or suitably mitigated.
- 17.42** Policy DM25 - Stand-alone Renewable or Low-Carbon Energy sets out our approach to supporting applications for renewable energy projects, with proposals that demonstrate local community engagement and endorsement being given positive support. More detailed guidance about the design and potential for renewable or low carbon energy schemes will be given in Dacorum Climate Change and Sustainability SPD. The Chilterns Conservation Board's Position Statement on Renewable Energy provides further guidance on the impacts of renewable energy development on the Chilterns AONB and its setting.

Policy DM25 - Stand-alone Renewable or Low Carbon Energy

1. Proposals for the provision of stand-alone renewable and/or low carbon energy generation, including community energy projects and those promoted in Neighbourhood Plans, will be positively supported if:
 - a. any proposals within the Chilterns AONB or its setting are of an appropriate scale and do not adversely affect the natural beauty or purpose of the AONB;
 - b. the overall visual effect on the landscape (including cumulative impacts and impact on sensitive landscapes) is acceptable, with any harm mitigated by additional environmental benefits that are above those provided by renewable energy;
 - c. any harm to the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets is minimised (including impacts on the setting);

- d. any harm to residential or local amenity, including air quality, noise and light flicker is not substantial;
- e. locally important wildlife sites (including ecological corridors) and features would not be adversely affected; and
- f. the proposals are in accordance with the Dacorum Climate Change and Sustainability SPD; and for community led schemes:
- g. the benefits to the community are clearly articulated.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Study

To be produced

- Climate Change and Sustainability SPD

Carbon Offsetting

- 17.43** Where a development cannot fully achieve the Plan's requirements for reducing greenhouse gas emissions on site it will be required to compensate for any residual CO₂ emissions through carbon offsetting contributions.
- 17.44** The carbon offsetting contributions will be based on a monetary value per tonne of CO₂ emitted per year from the development over and above the policy requirement and will be secured by a s106 planning obligation.
- 17.45** The carbon offset fund will be used to deliver offsetting measures to include carbon sequestration projects such as tree planting to fix carbon, retrofitting energy efficiency and conservation measures into existing buildings (principally the Council's existing housing stock) to reduce carbon emissions, and investment into low carbon or renewable energy generation projects to reduce the demand for conventional fossil fuel powered energy. Measures will be expected to have a lifespan of at least 20 years. Further details will be set out in the Dacorum Climate Change and Sustainability SPD.
- 17.46** Other initiatives to offset residual carbon emissions from development may be acceptable in lieu of financial contributions to the carbon offset fund subject to agreement with the Council. Such initiatives will be expected to be delivered within the Borough to aid monitoring. The project or measure should clearly identify how it will work, when it will be delivered, the expected CO₂ savings and how it will be managed and monitored.

Policy DM26 - Carbon Offsetting

1. Development that cannot meet the Plan's greenhouse gas reduction requirements on site will be expected to contribute to the Council's Carbon Offset fund. This fund will be used to deliver carbon capture schemes, to retrofit existing buildings or investing into low carbon or renewable energy schemes.

2. Financial contributions to or the provision in kind for carbon offsetting will be secured via legal agreements and in accordance with guidance contained within the Dacorum Climate Change and Sustainability SPD.
3. Schemes that reduce greenhouse gas emissions or remove CO₂ from the atmosphere will be accepted in lieu of financial contributions to the Carbon Offset Fund provided that:
 - a. it is clearly identified as to what it is and how it will work;
 - b. monitoring and reporting regimes are incorporated;
 - c. there is clear certainty that delivery will take place;
 - d. appropriate and responsible management of the scheme can be assured over the long term; and
 - e. it is in accordance with the Dacorum Climate Change and Sustainability SPD.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

To be produced

- Climate Change and Sustainability SPD

ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY



Conserving and protecting
the natural environment



Shaping
growth in
Dacorum

18 Environment and Biodiversity

- 18.1** The natural environment is one of the Borough's greatest resources and encompasses the landscape of the countryside and green infrastructure⁽¹³⁾ within towns and villages, helping to give Dacorum its strong sense of place. It provides a diverse range of benefits to people, nature and the economy, supporting the health and wellbeing of residents, biodiversity, food and energy production, flood control, pollution and much more.

National Policy

- 18.2** National policy places great importance on sustainable development's role in protecting the natural environment for the present and the future, placing it within the three overarching objectives of economic, social and environmental. New policy to be introduced in England through the forthcoming Environment Bill will aim to restore wildlife habitats, improve air and water quality, and deliver a 'net gain' in biodiversity. It will also make provision to introduce long term, legally binding environmental improvement targets for air quality, resource efficiency and waste reduction, biodiversity and water, by 2022.
- 18.3** This will take into law the vision of 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' (2018) which sets out national plans to help the natural world to thrive. To achieve these goals it introduces the principle of biodiversity net gain, and of creating green towns, through stronger standards for the delivery of new green infrastructure and tree planting. In the wider landscape. It aims to enhance the beauty of natural heritage and expand woodland cover.
- 18.4** The previous Natural Environment White Paper set out aims including halting biodiversity loss by 2020, supporting 'healthy functioning ecosystems', and establishing 'coherent ecological networks'. The White Paper refers to the role of urban green infrastructure as completing 'the links in our national ecological network' and 'one of the most effective tools available to us in managing environmental risks such as flooding and heat waves'. It advocates that green spaces should be factored into the development of all communities.
- 18.5** The National Planning Framework (NPPF) expects planning policies to conserve and enhance the natural environments and to protect them from harm. All local authorities have a duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in exercising all their functions. The duty aims to make biodiversity conservation an integral part of policy and decision making.

Other Relevant Strategies and Studies

- 18.6** The Borough's natural environment and resources is recorded and evaluated through a number of studies at both strategic and local level. This evidence will direct the implementation of policy, highlighting opportunities to improve the environment and areas to be protected.
- 18.7** A detailed analysis of Dacorum's habitats and species that are a priority for conservation can be found in the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, A 50 Year Vision (2006). Information on biodiversity resources is updated and managed by the Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre, hosted by the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust.
- 18.8** The Dacorum Borough Green Infrastructure Plan (2011) provides an overview of existing green infrastructure assets, considers opportunities for the enhancement and creation of new assets, outlines a series of potential projects and provides advice on delivering green infrastructure proposals. It forms part of a county wide suite of documents and was prepared in parallel with the Hertfordshire Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan (2011).

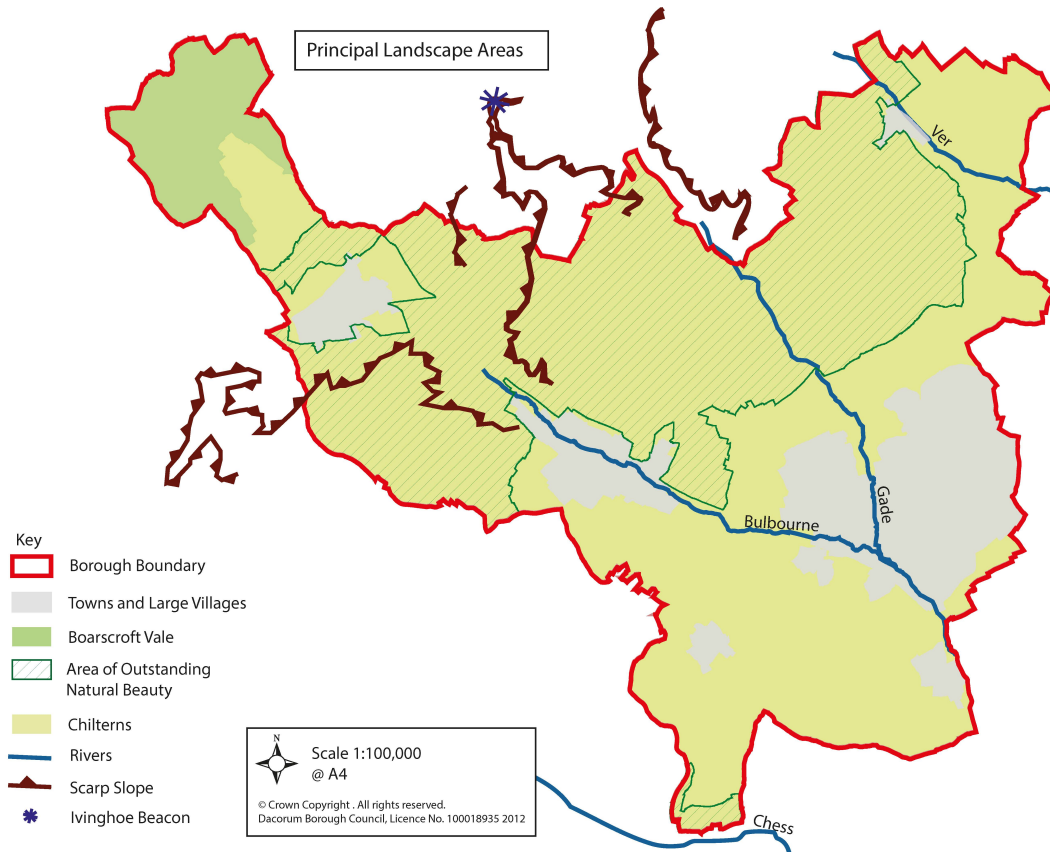
13 The Council considers green infrastructure to also include blue infrastructure, such as rivers, canals, reservoirs and wetlands.

- 18.9** More information on strategic biodiversity networks across the county can be found in the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust's publication *Hertfordshire Ecological Networks (2014)*, undertaken on behalf of the Local Nature Partnership. Its mapping identifies priorities for new habitat areas, aiming to reduce fragmentation and protect existing resources.

Landscape Character and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 18.10** The landscapes of the Borough are highly valued by the people who live and work within them or use them for recreation. Figure 7 shows Dacorum's two principal landscape types:
- the Chilterns National Character Area ⁽¹⁴⁾
 - Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands – an area known locally as Boarscroft Vale.

Figure 7 Principal Landscape Areas



- 18.11** Part of the Chilterns National Character Area is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the highest national designation for landscape, which gives great weight to its conservation and enhancement. The special qualities of the Chilterns AONB include the steep chalk escarpment with areas of flower-rich downland, woodland, commons, tranquil valleys, the network of ancient routes, villages with their brick and flint houses, chalk streams and a rich historic environment.

- 18.12** The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) has a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) to produce a management plan, supported by a delivery plan. This can be a material consideration in making decisions on individual planning applications. *The Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024: Caring for the Chilterns forever and for everyone* identifies the management issues faced and provides policies and actions to guide the work of all those who care for the AONB. The Council will protect the Chilterns AONB and support the management actions, where relevant, through the policies of the Plan. The CCB has also published the Chilterns Building Design Guide and a range of technical notes to help guide development in the AONB.

14 The Character of England's Landscape, Wildlife and Cultural Features Map, 2005 Countryside Agency (now part of Natural England);

- 18.13** A more detailed landscape assessment ⁽¹⁵⁾ divides the Borough's countryside into 30 different landscape character areas. The assessment covers physical influences such as geology and topography, vegetation and wildlife, as well as historical and cultural influences such as the field pattern and settlement form. It includes management guidelines for each area, which development proposals will be expected to adhere to.
- 18.14** Dacorum has extensive areas of surviving high quality historic landscapes. The variety is extremely high, and three are of particular rarity in the Borough ⁽¹⁶⁾:
- coaxial field systems (particularly around Gaddesden Row);
 - Iron age mining and settlements (beneath the woodlands at Ashridge); and
 - deserted Medieval landscapes (Boarscroft Vale).

Policy DM27 - Landscape Character and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

1. All development shall help conserve, restore or enhance the prevailing quality, character and condition of Dacorum's natural and historic landscape.
2. Permission for major developments in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will be refused unless exceptional circumstances prevail as defined by national planning policy. Planning permission for any proposal within the AONB, or affecting the setting of the AONB, will only be granted when it:
 - a. conserves and enhances the Chilterns AONB's special qualities, distinctive character, tranquility and remoteness in accordance with national planning policy and the overall purpose of the AONB designation;
 - b. is appropriate to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area or is desirable for its understanding and enjoyment;
 - c. does not negatively impact on the skyline views of the scarp slope;
 - d. meets the aims of the statutory Chilterns AONB Management Plan, making practical and financial contributions towards management plan delivery as appropriate;
 - e. complies with the Chilterns Building Design Guide and technical notes by being of high quality design which respects the natural beauty of the Chilterns, its traditional built character and reinforces the sense of place and local character; and
 - f. avoids adverse impacts from individual proposals (including their cumulative effects), unless these can be satisfactorily mitigated.
3. Proposals for all new development within a Landscape Character Area ⁽¹⁷⁾ will be expected to be accompanied by a statement to demonstrate how the Strategy and Guidelines for Managing Change have been applied, as contained within the Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment 2004 SPD (including restoration of historic field, transport, settlement and built forms where appropriate), and further advice contained within the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record.
4. The Council will require a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), prepared in accordance with the latest guidance from the Landscape Institute, to be submitted for:
 - a. all major development located either outside of the settlement areas or within nationally important landscape designations; and
 - b. the construction of all other buildings located within the Chilterns AONB or that would affect its setting.

15 Landscape Character Assessment for Dacorum

16 Hertfordshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment, which zones land according to its historic character and the likelihood that a particular area will contain historic landscape features – Hertfordshire County Council

17 comprises the 30 different landscape character areas identified across the Borough lying beyond the towns of Tring, Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

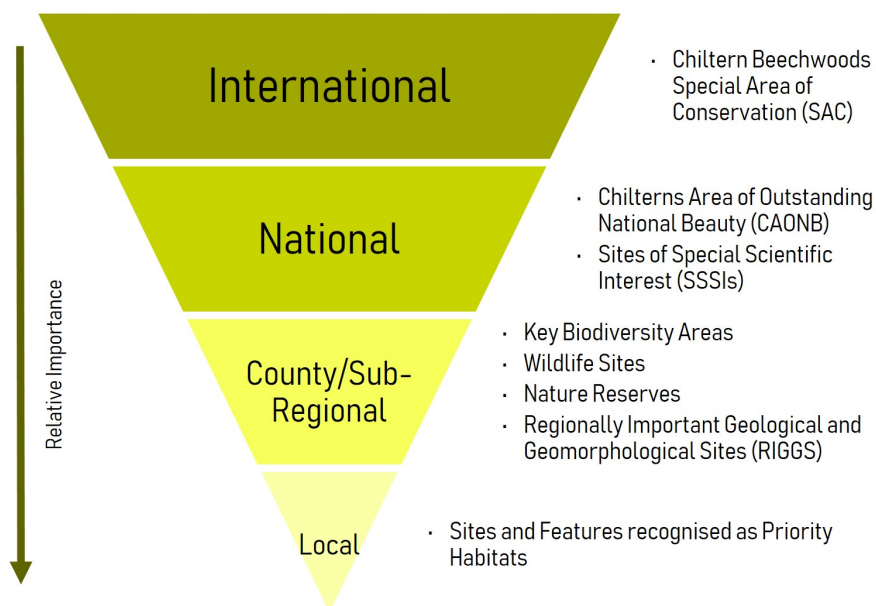
- Landscape Character Assessment
- Chilterns AONB Management Plan
- Chilterns Building Design Guide
- Hertfordshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment

Protection of Sites

18.15 Dacorum has a rich resource of nature conservation sites which are protected according to their relative importance through national and/or local planning policy.

18.16 Biodiversity and geodiversity assets are divided into statutory and non-statutory sites. Statutory sites range in status and importance and include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designated by Natural England, Wildlife Sites and other Nature Reserves. At the lower level are features such as hedgerows and traditional orchards that can be recognised as Priority Habitats (NERC Act 2006) of local importance. This hierarchy is shown in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8 Hierarchy of biodiversity and geodiversity designations



18.17 Individual sites within the Borough are recorded on the Policies Map and include:

- the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which has the highest status of protection for biodiversity through national planning policy;
- eight SSSIs, which are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
- ancient woodland and trees, which will be accorded the same level of importance as SSSIs, as they are irreplaceable habitats that are a national priority for improvement under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan;
- four regionally significant local geological and geomorphological sites; and
- seven sites recognised and managed as nature reserves, which contribute to both nature conservation and public appreciation and understanding of wildlife. ⁽¹⁸⁾

18 Further guidance on LNRs can be found in Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (AGNSt).

- 18.18** Where significant adverse impacts are likely on protected sites, planning permission is likely to be refused unless there are exceptional circumstances where the advantages to the protected site and the local community clearly outweigh the significant adverse impacts. In this instance, we will consider the wider implications of any adverse impact to a protected site, such as its role in providing a vital wildlife corridor, mitigating flood risk or ensuring good water quality in a catchment. Where we become aware of ancient trees not previously identified and under threat from development, a tree preservation order will likely be made.
- 18.19** We will also seek opportunities to create new spaces for nature conservation, such as informal green infrastructure managed for biodiversity benefit, or Local Nature Reserves (LNRs).

Policy DM28 - Protection of Sites

1. Important nature conservation sites, habitats and sites of geological and geomorphological interest will be protected, maintained and enhanced.
2. Development proposals which are likely to cause harm to sites of nature conservation or geological interest will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where the need for the development significantly and demonstrably outweighs the harm and where:
 - a. all necessary measures to mitigate the impact have been put in place; and
 - b. compensatory provision in line with mitigation hierarchy (i.e. avoidance - minimisation - rehabilitation/restoration - compensation) can be secured to ensure that the overall coherence of the site is protected and with the intent to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.
3. The above objectives will be applied as follows:
 - a. for sites of International importance:
 - i. there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest;
 - ii. there are no suitable alternatives to the proposal;
 - b. for sites of National importance:
 - i. the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh the adverse impacts on the site;
 - ii. there are no suitable alternatives to the proposal;
 - c. for sites of county, sub-regional and local importance:
 - i. the local development needs significantly outweigh the biodiversity or geological conservation value of the site.
4. Evidence will be required in the form of up to date, comprehensive ecological surveys undertaken in accordance with industry guidelines and standards prior to the submission of an application.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Policies map

Protected Species and Priority Species and Habitats

- 18.20** Local authorities have a duty to conserve biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). A list of Species and Habitats of Principal Importance, published under section 41 of the Act, identifies species that are most threatened, in greatest decline, or where the UK holds a significant proportion of the world's total population.

- 18.21** Protected species (such as bats, great crested newts, otters and dormice) have statutory protection under the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations (2017 as amended). Further legislation through the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a European protected species while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection, or to obstruct access to any structure or place the species uses for shelter or protection.
- 18.22** Developers must check for the presence of protected species on development sites and seek professional advice to ensure that their proposals safeguard any protected species identified. A survey will be required where the presence of protected species on development sites is likely, and professional advice must be sought to ensure that proposals safeguard any protected species identified.

Policy DM29 - Protected Species and Priority Species and Habitats Policy

1. Development which would result in damage to or loss of habitats of principal importance or the habitats of species of principal importance will not be permitted except:
 - a. in exceptional circumstances where the need for, and benefits of the development significantly and demonstrably outweigh the harm it would cause to the site; and
 - b. where the loss can be mitigated and compensation provided.
2. Where there is a reasonable likelihood of the presence of statutorily protected species or their habitats, development will not be permitted unless it has been demonstrated that the proposed development will not result in a negative impact upon those species and habitats.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Section 41: Species and Habitats of Principal Importance, NERC Act (2006)
- Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations (2010)
- Wildlife and Countryside Act

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 18.23** For development to be sustainable, improvements to the environment and biodiversity must be delivered alongside new homes and infrastructure. National planning policy sets out principles for protecting biodiversity from harm, including the use of a mitigation hierarchy i.e. avoidance, mitigation and then compensation. Local planning authorities have a Biodiversity Duty under the NERC Act 2006 and guidance provided NPPF (paragraph 170 (d) and 174 (b)) to seek enhancements and a net gain for biodiversity from development. In 2020, new national planning policy is expected to make it mandatory for development to deliver a 10% biodiversity net gain.
- 18.24** Development should be designed around existing components of the ecological network, and seek to improve, enhance and connect these features with the wider network (NPPF paragraph 174). Developments will also be expected to include a variety of forms of biodiversity within the built environment, such as street trees, wildflower rich verges and swales, living roofs and walls, hedgerows, and sustainable drainage systems designed to enrich biodiversity. Features for wildlife should be integrated into the built environment e.g. bird boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog highways.
- 18.25** We will help to protect and improve biodiversity by using a net gain metric to secure measurable gains to the environment through on site improvements, or in worst case scenarios, from commuted sums towards offsite habitat areas. Natural England has created the Biodiversity Metric 2.0 calculator as a way of measuring and accounting for biodiversity losses and gains resulting from development or

land management. It allows biodiversity to be taken into account and for it to be measured in a consistent way. The mitigation hierarchy should always be considered as the metric is applied. In addition, use of the metric does not avoid the need to seek expert ecological advice.

18.26 Proposals will also be expected to apply the hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensation (set out below) in respect of any significant harm to biodiversity arising from development.

- Avoid creating a biodiversity impact.
- Minimise impacts that cannot be completely avoided.
- Restore degraded or lost ecosystems.
- Offset to compensate for residual impacts.

18.27 To support this approach, we will also introduce a monitoring framework to ensure proposed net gains in biodiversity are achieved throughout the Plan period, including remedial measures for non-compliance.

Policy DM30 - Biodiversity Net Gain

1. All major development will be required to deliver an overall net gain in biodiversity of 10%, determined by applying the Natural England Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Calculator. Proposals should be accompanied by a "biodiversity gain plan" to explain how the 10% net gain will be achieved and managed.
2. Only in situations where on-site delivery is proven to be unviable will local offsite compensatory habitat or development contributions be sought. The latter should target sites in the vicinity of the development before considering sites elsewhere in the Borough.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- NERC (2006)
- [Natural England Biodiversity Metric 2.0](#)

Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation

18.28 The Chilterns Beechwoods SAC contains sites that are subject to international protection (Natura 2000 designation). These seek to conserve valued habitats, species, biodiversity, flora and fauna that have significant ecological importance. SACs often have a unique character and draw which can be difficult to replicate, so these designations guarantee a high level of protection to ensure the integrity of the site is protected.

18.29 We have a legal duty as the 'competent authority' under the Habitats Regulations to protect the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC from the effects of development. This can be achieved using many measures but an important approach is one of mitigation through, for example, access management strategies, habitat management, provision of new Natural Green Space and sustainable transport choices. We take our responsibilities seriously with regard to the protection of these sites and will ensure that Habitats Regulation Assessments are undertaken for development proposals likely to affect these sites.

18.30 There are specific statutory controls in place which prohibit the granting of planning permission for development proposals that may adversely affect internationally important habitats and species.

- 18.31** Conservation objectives seek to return those parts of the SAC, and the flora and fauna within them, that currently have an unfavourable conservation status to a favourable conservation status or, for parts of the SAC which are currently in favourable conservation status, to maintain that favourable status. We must note that this status does not necessarily take account of or identify the impacts of long term "wear and tear" of the assets within these assessments.
- 18.32** The assessment undertaken to date indicates that likely significant effects from Dacorum's planned growth cannot be ruled out and so the precautionary principle needs to be applied. This assessment identified two environmental impact pathways. This means an Appropriate Assessment will be undertaken to determine if there are likely to be significant effects on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC caused by:
- **Recreational Pressure:** increased visitor pressure (physical disturbance) on the Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI as it is a 'honeypot' site. Consideration will also be given to any potential impacts upon the Tring Woodlands SSSI (located adjacent to Tring Park). Likely to be caused from increased urbanisation (from meeting the local housing needs for Dacorum and the surrounding area). It is widely acknowledged that Ashridge Estate and Tring Woodlands SSSI offer unique features which cannot be easily replicated elsewhere; and
 - **Atmospheric Pollution:** increased air pollution at Tring Woodlands SSSI due to increased vehicle movements on the A41.
- 18.33** This Plan seeks to enable effective on-site measures to absorb or mitigate any additional pressures experienced on these SAC units, especially those which form part of the Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI. This has seen long-term "wear and tear" across the site for example, ever-wider paths through the woods can have harmful impacts to ground flora and tree roots. While this long-term deterioration is very difficult to quantify, the Habitats Regulations Assessment/Appropriate Assessment is seeking to consider this matter.
- 18.34** We will seek to determine if and then what mitigation is required with regards to air quality and recreational pressure. Although to document our current thinking on this matter, possible recreational pressure mitigation measures are detailed in the separate Chilterns Beechwoods On-site and Access Management Strategy Scheme and supporting Environment and Biodiversity Topic Paper.
- 18.35** Policy DM31 ensures that development within the Plan area does not adversely affect the integrity of Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.

Policy DM31 – Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation

1. The Council will expect all relevant development proposals to assist in the conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity, character, appearance and landscape setting of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Proposals should have regard to the reasons for the SACs designation and its conservation objectives.
2. Where there are grounds to believe that the SAC be affected by proposed development, applicants must establish the extent of potential impact. This evidence should inform appropriately designed plans and mitigation measures. Proposals must demonstrate that any effects of development would not be adverse to the integrity of the SAC.
3. **Open Space Requirements and Mitigation for Recreational Impacts**
 - a. Allocated Growth Areas or Major residential development - In order to mitigate against the potential or identified adverse effects of additional development on Dacorum, all development that would result in a net increase in homes within the Borough will be required to:
 - i. **Point of destination:** assist in the conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity, character and appearance and landscape setting of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC by making financial contributions towards the Chilterns Beechwoods On-site and Access Management Strategy Scheme (to be produced), or any subsequent scheme which replaces this. Details will be set out in the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC SPD; and

- ii. **Point of Origin:** demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential increase in visitor pressure on the SAC. This will require the provision of bespoke on-site mitigation to form part of the proposed development. Such provision will need to be:
 - A. delivered 'up front' to reduce pressures placed upon the SAC;
 - B. determined in agreement with Natural England and the National Trust; and
 - C. be proportionately addressed in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy (mitigation - offsetting within the locality - compensation in the form of habitat);
- iii. Where ii (A-C) cannot be achieved, a meaningful proportion of Natural Green Space or access to Natural Green Space must be provided. This could involve:
- iv.
 - A. providing new green spaces, SANGS or Country Parks;
 - B. improving the naturalness, attractiveness or facilities on offer at existing green spaces;
 - C. improving access to green space; or
 - D. improving connectivity between green spaces (where this development proposal would not contribute to a material increase in recreational pressure on designated sites).
- v. Points iii (A. - D). must include a strategy demonstrating how they deliver for both residents and tourists:
 - A. sufficient open space proposals, and where relevant
 - B. options for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace of an appropriate quality and in the right place
- b. Minor residential development - All minor residential development will make financial contributions towards the Chilterns Beechwoods On-site and Access Management Strategy Scheme ⁽¹⁹⁾, or any subsequent scheme which replaces this. Details will be set out in the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC SPD.
4. **Mitigation for Air Quality impacts:** Major development must contribute towards the Chilterns Beechwoods Air Quality Mitigation Scheme ⁽²⁰⁾, or any subsequently agreed scheme, unless it can be demonstrated that the development would not result in any adverse impact on air quality at Chilterns Beechwoods SAC either alone or in combination with other development.
5. The Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation and the zones of influence are defined on the Policies Map.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- HRA: Screening report (2020)

To be produced

- Appropriate Assessment supported by:
 - Recreational Pressure including visitor survey work of Ashridge Estate/Chiltern Beechwoods SAC - to define the Zone of Influence
 - Air Quality
- Chilterns Beechwoods On-site and Access Management Strategy Scheme (setting out the mitigation measures and associated costs) - this will determine the financial contribution

19 to be drafted to support the Publication version of this plan
 20 subject to the outcomes of the Appropriate Assessment

Ashridge Estate

- 18.36** Due to the sheer volume of visitors to the Estate more active on-site measures and management of Ashridge Estate could help reduce the direct harm to the SAC/SSSIs caused by recreational impacts.
- 18.37** This is a very challenging balancing act between conserving the special features of the site and actively managing the volume of visitors who visit the site (as some forms of management could begin to negatively impact the natural beauty and special characteristics, including the historic environment) and may include a variety of on-site measures.
- 18.38** We believe we need mitigation to be implemented on the site, although as evidence on this matter is emerging further details will follow on in due course. Our current thinking on this matter, including possible recreational pressure mitigation measures, is detailed in the separate Chilterns Beechwoods On-site and Access Management Strategy Scheme and supporting Environment and Biodiversity Topic Paper.

Policy DM32: Development on the Ashridge Estate

1. The Council will support proposals which seek to improve the on-site management of visitors to the Estate, especially those which seek the conservation, protection or beneficial improvement of the ecological, historical and biodiversity designations, and in particular areas on the site such as Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and associated SSSIs that are subject to international and national designations.
2. Any proposals must demonstrate how they will contribute to the resilience of the site in the long term by mitigating the causes of degeneration of the sites special and protected features. Support will be given to proposals which seek to re-introduce historic uses, features or field patterns.
3. All proposals must demonstrate whether there are any other suitable alternatives to this proposal and where relevant, the exceptional circumstances necessary to outweigh any adverse impacts on the sites designations. Where mitigations measures are necessary, these should demonstrate any impacts upon the sites ecological, historical and biodiversity designations. This must be completed to the satisfaction of Natural England, the Chilterns Conservation Board, Historic England and other relevant stakeholders.
4. Any proposal must demonstrate accordance with guidance such as the Chilterns AONB Management Plan, the National Trust Conservation Management Plans, Woodland Management Plan and Natural England guidance.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Ashridge Estate Central Area Conservation Management Plan (National Trust and Historic Environment Associates, April 2019)

Protection and Enhancement of the River Character and Water Environment

- 18.39** Chalk streams are a characteristic and attractive feature of the Chilterns landscape, and a globally rare habitat. The three chalk streams of the Rivers Bulbourne, Gade and Ver within Dacorum are considered of poor or moderate status against the Water Framework Directive, with issues such as unfavourable flow conditions, man-made structures in the channel and rural and urban pollution

leading to poor populations of invertebrates and fish. The Colne Catchment Action Network sets out action plans for each river, which form part of Defra and the Environment Agency's strategy to achieve 'good ecological status' for the country's rivers.

18.40 Water resources are under extreme pressure from the use of groundwater for water supply and from climate change. Frequent, extreme weather events such as heavy rainfall and long dry spells, impacts on river levels and flows, creating pressure on underground drainage systems and affecting the level of rainfall left to recharge groundwater sources. This threatens the retention of often fragile ecosystems, susceptible to the availability and flow of water.

18.41 We will work with our partners to help restore river flows and natural habitats along the chalk streams and in Boarscroft Vale, retain water in the catchment area, and support biodiversity. The Environment Agency has a general aim to conserve open watercourses, and wherever possible, encourage and promote the removal of culverts. They provide advice on culverts through their Policy Regarding Culverts - Policy Statement (March 1999).

Policy DM33 - Protection and Enhancement of the River Character and Water Environment

1. The water environment will be managed through development management and other action in consultation with the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority to achieve the following objectives:
 - a. de-culvert watercourses and restore watercourses to a more natural state wherever possible, new proposals for culverting will be discouraged;
 - b. avoid damage to Groundwater Source Protection Zones;
 - c. avoid the need to abstract water from the ground, in particular from the Rivers Ver, Gade and Bulbourne catchments;
 - d. avoid development within 10 metres of the brink of a waterbody;
 - e. proposals adjacent to a waterbody⁽²¹⁾, must incorporate measures to improve, restore or reach 'good' ecological status / potential as defined in the Water Framework Directive⁽²²⁾, including invasive species management; and
 - f. secure opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity, to include reinstating natural buffer zones.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Colne Can Action Network
- Culverts Policy Statement, Environment Agency (March 1999)

Flood Risk and Protection

18.42 National policy (NPPF paragraph 163) advises that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

21 Includes rivers, canals, lakes, ponds, reservoirs

22 A list of relevant measures can be found on the Environment Agency's Catchment Data Explorer.

- 18.43** The Dacorum Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) contains maps showing flood risks from various sources, including river and surface water flood risk areas, and these represent a snapshot of flood risk at a given moment. The Environment Agency publishes regular mapping updates, and the latest evidence should be a material consideration in determination of planning applications. The Environment Agency can also provide pre-application advice.
- 18.44** Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment (FRA) to demonstrate that the proposed development will not create an increased risk of flooding from surface water to the development site and the surrounding area. It should be carried out in accordance with the NPPF and the 'Flood risk and coastal change' Planning Practice Guidance, giving preference to infiltration over discharge to a watercourse, which in turn is preferable to discharge to surface water sewer. Guidance on the preparation of surface water strategies can be found in the Defra/Environment Agency R&D Technical Report W5-074/A/TR/1 Revision E "Preliminary rainfall runoff management for developments".
- 18.45** The drainage assessment / FRA should as a minimum demonstrate the following:
1. runoff rates;
 2. storage volumes; and
 3. sustainable drainage techniques.
- 18.46** Applicants are encouraged to seek pre-application advice from Hertfordshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority prior to the submission of a formal planning application, and to ensure that all the documents contained within the LLFA's 'developer's checklist' is included with the application. Further guidance on SuDS is provided within the Dacorum Energy and Sustainability SPD.
- 18.47** Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment (and sequential and exception tests, as applicable) it can be demonstrated that:
1. within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;
 2. the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient;
 3. it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;
 4. any residual risk can be safely managed; and
 5. safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate as part of an agreed emergency plan.
- 18.48** The NPPF (paragraph 165) states that major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. The systems used should:
1. take account of advice from the lead local flood authority;
 2. have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards;
 3. have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development; and
 4. where possible, provide multi-functional benefits.
- 18.49** In terms of SuDS, proposals should follow the SuDS hierarchy shown in the table below.

Table 24 SuDS Hierarchy

	SuDS technique	Flood Reduction	Pollution Reduction	Landscape and Wildlife Benefit
Most Sustainable	Living Roofs and Walls	√	√	√
↓	Basins and ponds	√	√	√

↓	Filter strips and swales	√	√	√
↓	Infiltration Devices	√	√	√
↓	Permeable surfaces and filter drains	√	√	
Least Sustainable	Tanked and piped systems	√		

Policy DM34 - Flood Risk and Protection

Development will be supported where:

1. It is designed to ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere and is located in areas at lowest risk of flooding (of all sources);
2. It avoids Flood Zones 2 and 3 unless it is for a compatible use: Where development is proposed in these zones:
 - a. Flood Risk Assessments (FRA) must accompany planning applications, explaining how the sequential approach ⁽²³⁾ (and the Exception Test ⁽²⁴⁾ if required) to development has been undertaken and which the Council is satisfied demonstrates that the site is appropriate for development and its intended use, taking into account wider sustainable development objectives;
 - b. a sequential approach to site layout must be satisfied, directing the most vulnerable uses to the areas on the site at lowest risk from of flooding from all sources;
 - c. opportunities to reduce the cause and impact of flooding, such as using green infrastructure for flood storage, must be incorporated; and
 - d. proposals must not cause harm to existing or proposed flood defences;
3. For development in Flood Zone 1, a FRA or statement is submitted following the criteria in this policy and the NPPF which sets out appropriate flood risk management measures;
4. It incorporates flood resistant and resilient measures, and is shown to be safe for the lifetime of the development, taking into account climate change implications;
5. If necessary, it demonstrates that safe access and escape routes will be included as part of an emergency plan;⁽²⁵⁾
6. Measures for the control and reduction of surface water run-off to pre-development rates or better through SuDS are integrated into the design and layout of the development and with existing green infrastructure wherever possible; and
7. For any major development ⁽²⁶⁾ SuDS are accompanied by a management and maintenance plan detailing how they will be maintained throughout the lifetime of the development.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2
- Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Hertfordshire

23 The catchment area for determining the area of search for the Sequential Test will depend on local circumstances relating to the type of development proposed and the target market (see National Planning Practice Guidance)

24 A list of relevant measures can be found on the Environment Agency’s Catchment Data Explorer

25 For further guidance, see Flood Risk Emergency Plans for New Development guidance published by the EA and ADEPT

26 As defined in the NPPF

Protection from Environmental Pollution

- 18.50** The planning system plays a key role in the location and standard of development. Together with other consent regimes and processes, it can limit the impact of (and prevent) polluting emissions – i.e. noise, light, fumes, chemicals, noxious and hazardous substances and waste in general.
- 18.51** The upcoming Environment Bill will enable the Government to set new long term targets in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction, as well as a target for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). The long term (minimum 15 years) targets will be introduced by 2022 and will be accompanied by interim measures. The Plan will endorse the nationally set standards and when these become more stringent, ensure that further efforts are made to enhance the quality of the air, water and/or soils.
- 18.52** In Dacorum special consideration needs to be given to:
- the quality of the groundwater supplying the chalk aquifer;
 - the maintenance of higher quality agricultural areas and the sand and gravel belt;
 - limiting the effects of noise and air pollution along major routes (i.e. road, rail and aircraft from Luton Airport);
 - retaining tranquil parts of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Boarscroft Vale;
 - limiting light pollution, especially in the Chilterns AONB and the rural parts of the Borough;
 - the risks associated with Buncefield Oil Terminal; and
 - ensuring that development land affected by ground contamination is safe and suitable for its proposed use so as to protect human health and the wider environment.
- 18.53** Air quality within Dacorum is generally good, with the main source of air pollution being from traffic emissions, specifically nitrogen dioxide. Three areas are designated as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) because levels of nitrogen dioxide exceeded air quality standards. They are:
- Lawn Lane, Hemel Hempstead;
 - London Road, Apsley, Hemel Hempstead; and
 - High Street, Northchurch.
- 18.54** The number and extent of AQMAs may change as a result of mitigation measures and continued monitoring of air quality. The AQMA at Northchurch has shown levels of NO₂ were below the national objective in recent years (since 2018). If this situation continues the AQMA could be removed in future years but only when there is confidence that future growth in the area would not result in such levels being exceeded again.
- 18.55** We are preparing action plans to set out mitigation measures for each AQMA and will use the planning system to support these. It does not necessarily follow that development would be harmful in an area of poor air quality or that it should be banned in an AQMA. Here, the type, scale and location of development and its traffic generation will be managed sensitively. Greater weight will be given to the consideration and removal of air pollutants.
- 18.56** The planning system has a role to play in the minimisation of waste at or near source and in the disposal of household, commercial and construction waste (Policy DM22 - Sustainable Design and Construction). Unnecessary waste should be reduced and managed nearer to its source. To avoid unnecessary waste going to landfill sites, developers will be expected to avoid potentially polluting developments, the creation of additional waste, and locating new development near existing sources of pollution. Where waste is unavoidable it will need to be transferred and managed. Waste recycling and management will be appropriate in many General Employment Areas. New facilities may be provided through the relocation of the existing Household Waste Recycling Centre and Waste Disposal Centre in East Hemel Hempstead.
- 18.57** Responsibility for ensuring that a development is safe in terms of land contamination and stability lies with the developer. Advice on the storage and handling of hazardous substances will be taken from the Health and Safety Executive.

- 18.58** Exterior lighting is important in promoting safety and security, for recreation and leisure, and other evening activities. Therefore a degree of lighting is required in most environments. However, if poorly designed or installed, artificial light can have a detrimental effect including to wildlife and therefore needs to be controlled. Light pollution needs to be kept to a minimum to avoid a detrimental effect on rural and urban views and the character of the countryside. Further detailed guidance as to appropriate levels of lighting in different locations can be found in the Dacorum Design Guide SPD.

Policy DM35 - Protection from Environmental Pollution

1. Any development proposals which would cause harm to the environment or neighbouring land or properties from a significant increase in pollution (into the air, soil or any water body) by virtue of the emissions of fumes, particles, effluent, radiation, smell, heat, light, noise or noxious substances, will not be permitted.
2. Development will be required in each case, as appropriate, to:
 - a. **Air Quality**
 - i. Support improvements in identified Air Quality Management Areas and Air Quality Action Plans and, as a minimum, maintain air quality standards throughout these areas.
 - ii. Developments that are likely to result in breaches of a relevant limit value or national objective for pollutants, and applications within or near an identified Air Quality Management Area that could harm air quality standards, (also taking into account cumulative impacts) shall be supported by an air quality report assessing the impacts of the proposed development on the surrounding environment and, where they are predicted to exceed a limit value or objective, include proposals for mitigation or avoidance. Advice will be taken from Environmental Health and any requirements will be secured at the application stage or through a planning condition or planning obligation as considered appropriate.
 - iii. Be in accordance with any further Council guidance on air quality.
 - b. **Contaminated Land**
 - i. Maintain soil quality standards and remediate contaminated land to protect human health and the wider environment in line with Environment Agency, Defra and Natural England guidance.
 - ii. A preliminary land contamination risk assessment ⁽²⁷⁾ should accompany any planning application where there is a risk of harm to receptors⁽²⁸⁾ and the land, soil, ground or surface water is known or suspected to be contaminated. Advice will be taken from Environmental Health on the need for any further intrusive site investigation, remedial measures and validation report that may need to be secured by planning condition to ensure that the site is made suitable and safe for the proposed use before development can proceed.
 - iii. Take advice on the storage and handling of hazardous substances from the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency as the statutory Competent Authority.
 - c. **Water Quality**
 - i. Improve water quality standards in line with the Water Framework Directive, Environment Agency and Natural England guidance.
 - ii. Development which could adversely affect the quality of groundwater will not be permitted.
 - iii. Developments involving new or altered foul drainage will be supported by a Foul Drainage Assessment. Discharge to non-mains drainage will only be permitted where satisfactory justification has been provided to show that connection to mains drainage is not feasible, the non-mains system will not cause pollution of groundwater or surface water, Building

27 prepared by a competent person accredited by the National Quality Mark Scheme

28 Receptors include the public, site operatives and workers, occupiers of the site or neighbouring land

Regulations Approved Document H will be met as necessary, an Environmental Permit from the Environment Agency has been given where necessary, and adequate details of maintenance of the system have been provided.

d. Noise Pollution

- i. Minimise the impact of noise on the surrounding environment and noise sensitive receptors.
- ii. Developments that are noise sensitive and in locations where surrounding existing lawful land uses are likely to have an adverse effect on the occupants of new development, must submit an appropriate noise impact assessment including mitigation measures to address the identified impacts.
- iii. Where it is achievable to offset the adverse impact of noise and to protect existing / future sensitive receptors, applications for new development shall be supported by an assessment of the typical worst case noise impact and consideration of achievable mitigation measures to ensure adequate protection of those sensitive receptors. Where the impact cannot be offset then development should be avoided.
- iv. Use good design to improve and enhance the acoustic environment and reduce the impact of noise on and generated by the development, in accordance with Dacorum design guidance
- v. The development of land for noisy countryside sports will only be accepted where:
 - A. the site occupies unused or damaged land outside of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the most sensitive parts of Landscape Regions,
 - B. there would be no disturbance (including any significant noise nuisance) to residential and similar sensitive areas;
 - C. there would be no adverse impacts on wildlife and areas of ecological value; and
 - D. the scale and nature of the activity respects the countryside setting and surrounding area; and the safety of adjoining users is not prejudiced.

e. Light Pollution

- i. Limit and wherever possible avoid light pollution in all its forms, especially in the countryside and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- ii. Development proposals for new exterior lighting or resulting in the need for exterior lighting will only be supported if there would be no significant (or material) adverse impact upon important features of the urban and rural environment including:
 - A. the amenity of residential areas;
 - B. the ecology of the area; and
 - C. the visual character of the natural and historic environment.
- iii. Development involving exterior lighting should be accompanied by a lighting statement by a qualified lighting engineer / consultant together with full details (supported by plans and drawings) of all aspects of the installation, including siting, luminaire and lamp type, brightness, beam control, lux contours / distribution diagrams, column height and design, and proposed finished colour(s).
- iv. Assessment will be based upon the suitability of exterior lighting in relation to the defined Environmental Zone within which the site falls, the surrounding context and the type and extent of lighting, and will include consideration of highway safety, crime prevention and access for people with disabilities. All lighting schemes must:
 - A. avoid dazzle and disturbance to drivers;
 - B. minimise glare and light spillage; and
 - C. create uniformity to avoid shadowed areas.
- v. Further guidance on limiting the impact of light pollution can be found in the Dacorum Design Guide SPD.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Air Quality Management Areas
- Air Quality Action Plan
- Strategic Design Guide SPD

To be produced

- Climate Change and Sustainability SPD
- Detailed Design Guide SPD

Tree Retention and Protection

- 18.59** Trees form an important part of the green capital of the Borough and are important to ensuring places are attractive and sustainable places to live. They provide a range of benefits, including flood mitigation, carbon sequestration (i.e. the process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide), cooling benefits, wildlife habitats and wildlife 'stepping stones', as well as contributing to landscape character and amenity. This resource is under threat from disease, development and climate change. The Plan will therefore, as part of development proposals, give a high priority to the retention of existing trees in the Borough.
- 18.60** New development will be expected to retain and replace existing trees and to help plant more trees by requiring a minimum of two trees to be planted for every new dwelling constructed or per 100 sq m floorspace for non residential development created. Where a tree is lost through development, at least three new trees must be provided, either on site, or in a new location.
- 18.61** Where necessary, tree preservation orders (TPOs) will be made to protect important trees that might be threatened by neglect or future development, or where they make an important contribution to the visual amenities of an area or townscape. Trees in conservation areas are also protected through the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 18.62** Of particular ecological importance in the Borough are areas of ancient semi-natural woodland (areas which have had a continuous cover of native trees and plants since at least 1600 AD, and have neither been cleared nor extensively planted since then).
- 18.63** The provision and long-term management of a minimum buffer between development and irreplaceable habitats, such as ancient woodland and veteran trees, and hedgerows will be required in line with national standing advice, guidance and recognised good practice. Wherever possible, hedgerows should be retained. Where hedgerow loss is unavoidable, new hedgerows should be created.
- 18.64** The Council's Trees and Woodlands Policy document ⁽²⁹⁾ provides a summary of management principles and good practice guidance on species and site selection, and the establishment of trees. Reference should also be made to the Dacorum Design Guide SPD for guidance on Landscaping on Development Sites. The Forestry Commission provides support and encouragement for woodland management, particularly through their Woodland Grant Scheme.

Policy DM36 - Tree Retention and Protection

1. Developers will be expected to protect and retain existing trees and hedgerows as part of development proposals, and to replace them where their loss is justified. All development will be expected to incorporate two or more new trees per dwelling or per 100 sq m floor space (for non-residential developments) on-site. Where a tree is lost through development at least three new 'like for like' trees must be provided.
2. All development on sites adjoining or containing trees must comply with British Standard 5837 (2012) Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations (as may be amended). In particular, the Council will require:
 - a. an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) including a tree survey identifying existing trees on and adjoining the site with their root protection areas (RPA);
 - b. where tree protection measures are necessary, a Tree Protection Plan (TPP); and
 - c. an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) that identifies how operations can be undertaken with minimal harm to retained trees.
3. Details of foundations, services and levels may also be required to understand the potential impact on trees.
4. Proposals will be subject to conditions to secure tree protection measures.
5. Consent to lop or remove trees protected by a tree preservation order will not be given unless the Council is satisfied that it would be necessary to overcome a serious safety hazard, nuisance, its detriment to local character or to improve the health of the tree.
6. For all other trees in both urban and rural locations, management should aim to maintain a healthy, safe and sustainable tree population without causing an unreasonable nuisance or hazard to person, highway or property. High standards of professional tree care will be encouraged and promoted particularly by reference to British Standard 3998 (2010), "Recommendations for Tree Work", other relevant British Standards and the Council's Trees and Woodlands Policy document ⁽³⁰⁾.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Trees and Woodlands Policy document
- Strategic Design Guide SPD

To be produced

- Detailed Design Guide SPD

Landscaping on Development Sites

- 18.65** Tree and woodland planting is essential to nature conservation and to the future creation, conservation and enhancement of landscape quality in the Borough's countryside and the amenity and environmental quality of its towns and villages. They are particularly important in their role of making places more attractive and sustainable places to live as well as benefiting the general goal of climate mitigation and adaptation.
- 18.66** Soft planting proposals, including tree planting, will be an expected general requirement of all development proposals. Proposals should integrate with the existing green infrastructure to ensure it reinforces ecological connectivity by providing suitable wildlife 'stepping stones'.

- 18.67** Space for planting, including suitable provision for irrigation or water retention basins around trees, should be given particular attention in the design of layouts to ensure that trees and other planting is both given sufficient space to grow to maturity, whilst ensuring the best chance of establishment, especially during climatic extremes. Buildings and other structures should be sited to allow adequate space for a tree's natural development, with due regard given to its predicted height and canopy spread.
- 18.68** Care should be taken to avoid the use of species which may lead to the spread of non-native plants into the countryside. Native broad-leaved tree species should be favoured over non-native species in order to reinforce the original character of our countryside. In urban locations, broad-leaved deciduous trees will also ensure that developments do not result in excessive shading during the winter months whilst providing suitable shade during the summer months. Trees should be of reasonable size when planted to ensure that they make an early visual contribution to the establishment of planting on development sites. Therefore, trees should be specified as nursery standards as a minimum, with potentially larger trees specified in accordance with the scale of development being proposed.
- 18.69** The Council's Trees and Woodlands Policy document⁽³¹⁾ provides a summary of management principles and good practice guidance on species and site selection, and the establishment of trees. Reference should also be made to the Dacorum Design Guide SPD for guidance on landscaping on development sites. The Forestry Commission provides support and encouragement for woodland management, particularly through their Woodland Grant Scheme.

Policy DM37 - Landscaping on Development Sites

1. New tree, woodland, hedge and shrub planting, including provision of street trees and community orchards, will be expected as part of development proposals. Proposals shall accord with the following:
 - a. wherever possible provide ecological connectivity by integrating planting with the existing green infrastructure network;
 - b. ensure the layout of development (including tree planting islands in car parks) allows sufficient space for planting, and in particular structural tree planting, to include adequate canopy clearance and root protection areas, so that it can thrive;
 - c. tree planting should be suitable for the local environment and landscape character, with preference given to native broad-leaved species, and avoiding the use of invasive, non-native species;
 - d. include trees of nursery Standard size⁽³²⁾ or larger at time of planting, depending on the scale and nature of the development; and
 - e. ensure tree planting is adequately staked and protected and incorporates suitable irrigation infrastructure or other provision for water retention.
2. Development landscaping schemes shall be subject to long term management requirements by condition or s106 planning obligation. Appropriate management of trees standing either as individual specimens, groups, woodlands or orchards and also as hedgerows will be encouraged.
3. For woodlands, a management plan will be required, which should identify clear objectives for their use and resolve any conflicts arising from value to nature conservation, landscape conservation, recreation and timber production interests. Nature conservation will be afforded a high priority in areas of ancient semi-natural woodland.

31 Trees and Woodlands Policy 2015 – 2020

32 A nursery Standard tree has a girth of 8-10 cm measured at 1 m above ground level

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Trees and Woodlands Policy Document
- Strategic Design Guide SPD

To be produced

- Detailed Design Guide SPD

Open Land

- 18.70** Open Land is a planning designation given to selected open areas within the larger settlements which are important to their open character and setting, or for informal recreation, yet may be more vulnerable to development pressure. Open Land can include contiguous sites of 1 ha or more used for leisure purposes, schools where the playing fields contribute to the urban structure or are in areas where there is a shortage of open space, woodland, nature conservation sites, allotments, churchyards, cemeteries, amenity land, walkways and the Grand Union Canal. No right of public access is implied by this definition.
- 18.71** The primary purpose of the designation is to maintain the generally open character of an area and uses of this nature that support this approach will be retained and encouraged. This includes uses that serve an educational, sports, leisure or nature conservation purpose. These designated areas may also contain some small parcels of existing incompatible and ancillary uses (e.g. residential or utility services). However, the aim of the policy is not to disturb these uses unnecessarily and they will be allowed to remain unless they undermine the broad objectives of the policy. New non-conforming uses will normally be discouraged from locating in areas designated as Open Land.
- 18.72** It is inevitable that Open Land will be subject to change over time and there may be special circumstances where development is justified in such areas leading to its effective loss. Alternatively, new development can result in additional Open Land being created (e.g. new large areas of open space to serve a housing proposal). Such changes have been reflected on the Policies Map to the Local Plan.
- 18.73** The open space typologies covered in 'Policy DM63 - Open Space Provision' are often not designated as Open Land. These areas are usually protected from development because they are held as public open space, or contribute towards the provision standards of open space expected by the Council.
- 18.74** Smaller areas of open space that are not designated as Open Land can also make a valuable contribution to the local character and environment of our towns and villages, serve other leisure and nature conservation roles, and be vulnerable to development pressures. The Plan needs to assess their contribution and weigh it carefully against the demands for development.

Policy DM38 - Open Land

1. Designated Open Land forming part of the urban structure of the towns and larger villages and shown on the Policies Map will be protected. New development within designated Open Land will only be acceptable if it is for sports, recreation or other community or social use and satisfies the following conditions:
 - a. the location, scale and use of the new development must be well related to the character of existing development, its use and Open Land setting;

- b. the integrity and future of the wider area of Open Land in which the new development is set must not be compromised; and
- c. in the case of sites which accommodate existing uses regarded as inappropriate to an Open Land area, proposals must:
 - i. not have a significant adverse impact on the character and environment of the site or its open land setting; or
 - ii. result in overall environmental, leisure or recreational improvements to the site.
2. The provision of expanded school facilities on Open Land will be sympathetically considered subject to the above criteria a. to c.
3. Proposals to develop or change the use of other undesignated open land⁽³³⁾, including the incorporation of such areas into private garden land will be assessed on the basis of the local contribution the land makes to leisure facilities, connectivity, townscape, visual amenity, nature conservation and the general environment.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Policies Map

33 Includes amenity greens, amenity land adjacent to dwellings, landscaped margins, buffers or strips, and strips, small woodland copses and other incidental open land that contributes to the open character or visual amenity of neighbourhoods and settlements

MANAGING DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE



Conserving and protecting
the natural environment



19 Managing Development in the Countryside

- 19.1** The wider countryside outside of the main settlements is covered by either the Green Belt or Rural Area policy designations. They are also overlapped by the nationally important landscape of the Chilterns AONB. While there are some differences in detailed approach in each case, fundamentally these are generally areas of protection where new development will be restricted. This is in order to protect the intrinsic character of the countryside in terms of its attractive landscapes, diverse villages and important natural and built heritage.
- 19.2** Restraint on unsustainable development in the countryside is a well established policy in Dacorum. However, we recognise that Government has been relaxing the planning system to allow for a greater range of opportunities for development and the reuse of buildings there without the need for planning permission.
- 19.3** Furthermore, we also need to be mindful that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is generally restrictive in its approach towards new development in the countryside while also supporting a prosperous rural economy and opportunities to meet local business and community needs there where suitable opportunities exist (paragraphs 83-84). Therefore, the Plan needs to find a balance between restraint and ensuring a "living countryside" for village communities, for those that enjoy recreational activities there, and for the many rural enterprises it supports.

Development in the Green Belt

- 19.4** In Dacorum 60% of the land is designated as Green Belt. This forms a part of the wider Metropolitan Green Belt surrounding London. This extends to the North of Markyate before it joins with the Central Bedfordshire Green Belt which acts as a check on the spread of Luton and Dunstable.
- 19.5** The NPPF establishes five key purposes of the Green Belt:
1. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 2. to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 3. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 4. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 5. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 19.6** The NPPF states that Green Belt boundaries can only be amended in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of a Local Plan (paragraph 136). There is no definition in the NPPF of what constitutes exceptional circumstances, as this will vary for each locality. In Dacorum, we consider that there is a combination of factors that exist that together constitute the exceptional circumstances that require us to amend the Green Belt boundaries. The Sustainable Development Strategy sets out these challenges and establishes why a planned review of Green Belt Boundaries is justified to meet development needs.
- 19.7** We have undertaken a review of the Green Belt and identified those areas on the edge of the main settlements where exceptional circumstances exist to release land for development or where other minor adjustments are necessary. We explore the justification for this in the 'Sustainable Development Strategy' chapter of the Plan. These proposed releases will make a significant contribution to meeting the long term housing and other development needs of the Borough. Green Belt land has been released to enable the delivery of the spatial strategy for Dacorum.
- 19.8** The NPPF makes clear that there will be a general presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt unless very special circumstances exist (paragraphs 143-144). It identifies a number of exceptional circumstances where the construction of new buildings is appropriate (paragraph 145). The NPPF also states (paragraph 146) that certain other forms of development are also 'not

inappropriate' in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. On this basis, there is no necessity to have a detailed coverage of non-strategic policies in the Plan to manage all forms of development in the Green Belt.

- 19.9** The NPPF (paragraph 147) establishes that, when located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.
- 19.10** Chipperfield, Flamstead, Potten End and Wigginton all fall within the Green Belt. They are primarily residential communities, providing homes for several hundred people or more. While they are not appropriate locations for large scale growth and expansion, we recognise the need to allow for limited development which supports their existing role within the settlement hierarchy.
- 19.11** While the policies of the Plan seek to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development, our evidence and other work has highlighted the importance of the Plan for accommodating other key commercial and non-commercial development requirements across Dacorum on a limited number of sites washed over by the Green Belt. This is in order to meet a variety of identified and essential local and strategic need over the Plan period and where there is limited scope for suitable, alternative non-Green Belt locations. The majority of such locations are existing previously developed land with established uses. We provide further detailed commentary on these sites in the relevant delivery strategy in the Delivering Great Places chapter of the Plan.
- 19.12** We will set out detailed changes and other corrections to the Green Belt at the Publication Stage of the Local Plan once we have fully taken into account the results of this public consultation and when we have confirmed the Growth Area allocations in the Green Belt.

Policy SP11 - Development in the Green Belt

1. The extent of the Green Belt is shown on the Policies Map. The Green Belt boundary has been reviewed to land in defined Growth Areas to meet identified need over the lifetime of the Plan and to allow for other minor consequential changes. No further changes are proposed. Sites removed from the Green Belt will be managed as countryside until required for development.
2. The Council will support the principle of development in the Green Belt in the following specific locations in order to help meet Borough-wide strategic commercial, transport and social and community objectives and subject to other policies and/or site-specific requirements being satisfied in the Plan:
 - a. expansion of the General Employment Areas at Upper Bourne End Lane/Stoney Lane (Bourne End Mills) and the former Bovingdon Brickworks (Growth Areas Cy01 and Cy02);
 - b. film, television and related production at Bovingdon Airfield (Renewal Area Cy06);
 - c. redevelopment/enhancement of the Watling Street Truck Stop, London Road, Flamstead (Growth Area Cy05);
 - d. new burial space and crematorium at Bunkers Lane, Hemel Hempstead (Growth Area HH28).
3. Elsewhere in the Green Belt proposals will be acceptable if they accord with national policy or where the criteria in Policy DM39 - Limited Infilling in Selected Small Villages in the Green Belt, or DM40 - Bovingdon Airfield are met.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- [NPPF Section 13 Protecting Green Belt land](#)

Limited Infilling in Selected Small Villages in the Green Belt

- 19.13** The focus of new development is the towns and larger villages as smaller villages of the Borough contain only a modest level of services and facilities that can help sustain rural communities and enterprises. While these settlements are less sustainable and subject to strict policies of restraint over new development, we will support a limited amount of infill development in order to diversify housing offer, allow for some local market demand to be met, help support the viability of existing services and businesses and ensure that the more rural parts make a small contribution to the development requirements of the Borough.
- 19.14** The NPPF allows for limited levels of infilling in Green Belt villages (paragraph 145), although the definition of 'limited' and 'villages' is not defined. Policy DM39 -Limited Infilling in Selected Small Villages in the Green Belt clarifies our approach to and how we interpret these terms. We also note that case law exists that the Local Plan village boundaries are not definitive and an on the ground assessment is required to establish this. However, we consider the Plan boundaries represent a reasonable starting point for their assessment.

What settlements are villages?

- 19.15** The settlements considered to be of sufficient size and importance to support a minimum level of services and facilities to serve the day to day needs of residents are classed as villages within the Settlement Hierarchy Study 2017.
- 19.16** In the Green Belt these are:
- Chipperfield
 - Flamstead
 - Potten End
 - Wigginton
- 19.17** Other settlements and hamlets in the Borough are not considered to constitute villages. This is for a number of reasons including:
- they do not have the necessary cohesiveness to justify a boundary;
 - they do not contain enough key services and infrastructure to warrant settlement status;
 - they simply form the ribbon development of adjoining larger settlements; or
 - in order to protect their intrinsic character from development.

We do not consider an infilling approach is justified in the case of the Rural Area. The main reason for this is the degree of restraint operating there i.e. there is greater flexibility towards the levels of new housing development we encourage in the Rural Area compared to the Green Belt. The Plan allows for the principle of more development opportunities in Aldbury, Long Marston and Wilstone than the equivalent selected villages in the Green Belt. Furthermore, the above approach to the definition of a village would also exclude many other smaller villages and hamlets in the Rural Area.

What is Limited?

- 19.18** Limited will be related to the degree of restraint considered appropriate having regard to its location within the Green Belt and having regard to the impact on the open character of the countryside.
- 19.19** The site must be within the on the ground assessment of the settlement envelope of one of the selected small villages, be located in a clearly identifiable space between a built frontage. Furthermore, the proposed dwelling(s) should be constructed on a similar building line (formed by the front main walls of existing dwellings) and be of a similar scale, form and proportion to those adjacent.
- 19.20** To be limited, the plot must also be comparable in size and shape to the average house plots in immediate locality of the site. The area of assessment will depend on the character of the area, number of plots, and will need to be assessed individually. The proposed building(s) must also be similarly comparable in size and scale to those in the immediate locality.
- 19.21** Proposals will also be assessed in terms of their impact on the character, grain and morphology of the village, in particular to ensure that the proposal does not result in the loss of a gap or open space considered important to its open character.

Policy DM39 - Limited Infilling in Selected Small Villages in the Green Belt

1. The policy will apply to the following villages:
 - a. Chipperfield
 - b. Flamstead
 - c. Potten End
 - d. Wigginton
2. Planning permission will be granted for limited infilling within these selected small villages in the Green Belt provided that it meets all of the following criteria:
 - a. an on the ground' assessment of the site shows that it lies within the envelope of a selected small village;
 - b. the site comprises a gap in an otherwise clearly identifiable built up frontage, or a gap within a group of buildings, and does not include backland development;
 - c. the dwelling(s) must be constructed on a similar building line (formed by the front main walls of existing dwellings) and be of a similar scale, form and proportion to those adjacent;
 - d. the proposed dwellings are in keeping with the size, width, scale, height and spacing of those in the immediate locality of the site; and
 - e. there would be no harm to the settlement pattern, grain or morphology of the village (including any open land considered important to the open character of the village or its contribution to the openness of the Green Belt).

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Settlement Hierarchy Study 2017

Bovingdon Airfield

- 19.22** In recent years Bovingdon Airfield has established itself as a location for film and television production. This has taken advantage of extensive areas of previously developed land in the form of former runways and associated hardstanding. We recognise the importance of such activities and that it makes a significant contribution to the UK film and television industries and the local economy.
- 19.23** However, Bovingdon Airfield falls within the Green Belt. We want to continue to support filming, commercials and television recording and production there (albeit on a limited scale and non-permanent basis), within this constraint. This places restrictions on the type, scale and permanency of activity that we can approve there. Much of this activity has taken place under permitted development rights. Furthermore, we have granted a series of temporary permissions where we have been satisfied that very special circumstances exist in terms of the importance of the use, the potential harm to the Green Belt and where activities can be suitably accommodated on the site in terms of the open landscape of the airfield, siting, heights of buildings, access, parking and local amenity, etc.
- 19.24** Bovingdon Airfield lies close to the National Air Traffic Service (NATS) air traffic navigation beacon. All proposals will need to pay careful attention to the height restrictions over the safeguarding zone in consultation with the Civil Aviation Authority.

Policy DM40 - Bovingdon Airfield

1. The Council will support the principle of filming, television and related production at Bovingdon Airfield where the applicant can demonstrate that the proposal:
 - a. minimises its impact on the Green Belt and the wider landscape of the airfield;
 - b. supports local economic and social benefits;
 - c. is for temporary studios, stages and sets, ancillary storage, office and crew buildings and associated plant and machinery;
 - d. is acceptable in terms of its transport impacts and allows safe and convenient access for all construction vehicles, crew and visitors;
 - e. limits a wide range of environmental impacts (e.g. lighting, glare, noise, ecology etc.), particularly on the amenity of nearby residential properties;
 - f. carefully controls the heights and siting of buildings and other structures;
 - g. is restricted to existing hardstanding areas; and
 - h. does not interfere with the safe operation of the NATS navigation beacon.
2. In each case the Council will need to consider whether the proposal is:
 - a. not inappropriate development; or
 - b. demonstrates very special circumstances.
3. The acceptable area for filming and television production is shown on the Policies Map.
4. The derelict condition of the site will not be taken as general justification for inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Development in the Rural Area

- 19.25** The Rural Area designation identifies areas of countryside beyond the boundaries of the Green Belt. It is highly valued by the Borough's residents and visitors alike, particularly for its open and largely undeveloped nature. As such it forms an important part of the character of the Borough and is a significant countryside resource. Our approach remains to direct development to existing, main settlements and to thus reduce harm to the openness and character of the countryside. Whilst its role is different from the Green Belt, the pressures it faces are often comparable. In order to retain its open character, new development must be managed in a broadly similar way, although we recognise the need for greater flexibility there.

- 19.26** The largest settlements within the Rural Area are Aldbury, Long Marston and Wilstone. They provide homes for several hundred people and contain important services and facilities which need to be maintained. These villages are the most suitable locations for small-scale, sensitively designed development that meets the long-term needs of the rural community and wider countryside.
- 19.27** In all cases, development in the Rural Area should not result in harm to the character and appearance of the countryside or the existing character of a village.

Policy SP12 - Development in the Rural Area

1. Within the Rural Area the following types of uses will be permitted:
 - a. agriculture;
 - b. forestry;
 - c. countryside recreation uses;
 - d. social, community and leisure uses; and
 - e. essential utility services.
2. The following development will be permitted provided that they are compatible with the character and appearance of the Rural Area:
 - a. for the uses set out under point 1. above;
 - b. the replacement of existing buildings for the same use;
 - c. the appropriate reuse of permanent and substantial buildings;
 - d. rural exception housing in accordance with Policy DM3 - Rural Exceptions;
 - e. proposals for renewable energy projects in accordance with Policy DM25 - Stand-alone Renewable or Low Carbon Energy;
 - f. the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings); and
 - g. development identified in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.
3. The replacement, extension or alteration of a building within the Rural Area should consider its:
 - a. size;
 - b. scale;
 - c. mass;
 - d. form;
 - e. siting; and
 - f. design.
4. Small-scale development for housing, employment and other purposes will be permitted at Aldbury, Long Marston and Wilstone.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

DELIVERING GREAT PLACES



Ensuring an attractive and valued
Built and Historic Environment



Shaping
growth in
Dacorum

20 Delivering Great Places

- 20.1** We are committed to delivering great places and raising design standards across all forms of development. The quality of the built environment and the public realm is important in shaping places and enhancing the quality of life. Good design can help create distinctive, integrated places where people feel welcome and want to live, work and spend their free time.
- 20.2** Given the scale of new development proposed across the Borough it is vital that this is of a high standard and delivered at the optimum densities and in the right locations. It must also recognise the intrinsic qualities, characteristics and setting of our towns and villages.

National Policy

- 20.3** Guidance on design is set out in the NPPF (paragraphs 124-132), and in the 'Design: Process and tools' Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 'Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places'. Planning should achieve high quality and inclusive design for all development which is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- 20.4** Being clear about what is expected of applicants and developers is essential to achieving this and national guidance seeks to ensure that all development will function well, add to the quality of the area, be visually attractive as a result of good design and architecture, be sympathetic to local character and history, establish and maintain a strong sense of place, optimise the use of land and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible. It is also recognised that good quality design is essential for health and well-being.
- 20.5** The NPPF (paragraph 184) recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. It also requires (paragraph 185) that Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.

National Policy Reforms in the White Paper

- 20.6** The Planning for the Future White Paper outlines the Government's intentions to reform the planning system, with the proposals set out under Pillar Two 'Planning for beautiful and sustainable places', aiming to improve the design quality of homes and placemaking for the long term, alongside simplifying planning procedures.
- 20.7** This will enable development to be accelerated where it is of high quality and reflects local character and preferences that have been prepared through meaningful engagement with local communities. A key message of the proposed reforms is that local authorities will be expected to develop local design standards/design codes to provide clarity to applicants on the form and design requirements for each development, taking into account local character and the views of the community.
- 20.8** Under the proposals, developments which demonstrate compliance with local design guides and codes will have a positive advantage and greater certainty about their prospects of swift approval, under an updated NPPF. Where Plans identify Growth Areas, the Government will require that a masterplan and site-specific design code are prepared through the Local Plan. This will direct detailed matters submitted later. In Renewal areas, some types of residential re-development will receive automatic permission where it meets design requirements and other specific conditions. This will be known as 'fast-track to beauty'.

Other Relevant Strategies and Studies

- 20.9** The previous Plan was supported by a suite of design statements and guidance which have been prepared over many years. These need updating and consolidating to reflect modern approaches to design, place-making and sustainable development. We intend to replace these with the Strategic

Design Guide SPD and the Detailed Design Guide SPD. Together - referred to as the Dacorum Design Guidance - this will provide consolidated design advice for all new development coming forward in the Borough and inform the production of site-specific design codes and masterplans, which will be prepared for the site allocations we have identified as Growth Areas. The Dacorum Design Guidance will also include specific criteria for Tall and Taller Buildings, to ensure development maximises their unique opportunities and addresses the constraints they face.

20.10 We have also set up a Community Review Panels as a way of facilitating early active engagement to ensure the development delivers high quality design and empowering communities and we will look to expand these further.

Design Review Panel

20.11 “Design Review is a well-established way of improving the quality of design outcomes in the built environment and is now recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework. “ *Design Review Principles and Practice, Design Council CABE*. We support independent Design Reviews which have been undertaken by: [Design Council CABE](#), ; [Hertfordshire County Council](#) ; or [Urban Design London](#). Feedback from these panels shall meaningfully inform the development proposals design.

20.12 We will also look more favourably at proposals that can demonstrate early active engagement with the community. Where appropriate, and at as early a stage as possible, we will use design review panels to assess large scale or complex schemes, or proposals that generate significant public interest.

Delivering High Quality Design

20.13 Policy SP13 - Delivering High Quality Design sets our expectations for creating distinctive, sustainable, healthy and successful new communities, with the highest quality design in all new development in Dacorum.

20.14 The key to our design approach for new development is a focus on local distinctiveness. This refers to the unique quality of buildings, landscape, the skyline and topography in a locality which informs its character. Across the Borough there is a wide variety of settlements, and landscape character types, which contribute to the distinctiveness of local character. As a result designs or layouts that may be entirely acceptable in one part of Dacorum may not be appropriate elsewhere.

20.15 Therefore delivering great places needs to be design-led and underpinned by a structured process that all applicants should follow and demonstrate as part of their submission. This should be based on a sound understanding of:

- local context;
- the constraints to be mitigated and the positive aspects to be built upon and enhanced;
- the design options considered that have led to the preferred approach; and
- how the proposal responds to the various expectations of the Plan as set down in its policies and site requirements.

20.16 In recognition that proposals vary in their size and the nature of design input required, the information required will be proportionate to this.

20.17 Our design process is based on three key stages set out in the Strategic Design Guide SPD shown in the table below.

Table 25 Structured Design Process

1	Observing a place	Observing and understanding the site and its broader context.
2	Evaluating a place	From the features observed, identifying which will be most influential to design.

3	Making a place	Applying the identified features to design at all scales and stages, from a site-wide masterplan through to increasing levels of detail, to create distinctive places.
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- 20.18** The Strategic Design Guide SPD also establishes key design principles that we will expect designers to follow for all scales and types of development. We have arranged the design principles under 10 categories, each of which links a strategic aim to a checklist of practical, measurable principles that designers can implement and that we can assess.
- 20.19** Major proposals provide the opportunity to meet the Dacorum design principles through the creation of new places, spaces and streets, whilst smaller applications will be expected to demonstrate that they contribute towards and support the principles for high quality urban design. Policy SP13 clarifies how we will achieve this.
- 20.20** Many developments that occur are of a small scale, such as extensions to existing properties or the replacement of single dwellings. Proposals should provide a clear design rationale, to ensure that the potential impacts of these smaller developments respect the local character and do not significantly detract from the amenities of any neighbouring property. Proposals of all sizes should also demonstrate how they have considered resilience to climate change and sustainability.
- 20.21** Having established the process and principles in the Strategic Design Guide, the Detailed Design Guide provides applicants with a clear view of our expectations for suitable and sustainable design when preparing applications, by setting out examples of acceptable development and listing criteria against which we will assess all types of development across Dacorum when we determine planning applications.

Policy SP13 - Delivering High Quality Design

- All new development must be of a high quality design that reflects the character of the local area and both physically and visually enhances and complements its surroundings.
- All development must be in accordance with the Dacorum Design Guidance and the outcomes and principles set out below:

Table 26 Design Outcomes and Principles

	Principle Categories	Outcomes
1	A Distinctive Place	Provide a clear narrative or vision which directs the design to reinforce local character and meet future needs, and demonstrate in an objective design rationale how the three step structured design process (table 25) has been adhered to in order to ensure a character-led approach
2	A Compact Place	Create compact neighbourhoods, and ensure the effective use of land in terms of a development's scale, height, massing (volume, shape), orientation, siting, layout and landscaping
3	A Place for All	Integrate and include for all people of varying backgrounds, socio-economic groups, ages and abilities
4	A Connected Place	Maximise spatial, visual and functional integration with the existing settlement, in order to enhance outcomes for existing neighbourhoods and communities
5	Great Streets and Public Spaces	Create legible public spaces and streets with active frontages that facilitate social interaction, deter crime and the fear of crime itself

6	Great Homes	Promote high quality homes and avoid significant detrimental impacts on the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties
7	Active and Healthy	Give prominence to creating healthy places and enabling active lifestyles for all
8	Facing the Climate Crisis	Embed environmental sustainability into the design and layout of the development
9	Flexible and Adaptable	Incorporate design that is flexible to future adaptation, including the changing needs of occupants and users, and future changes in technology
10	For the Long Term	Sustain quality through use of high quality, long-lasting and low maintenance materials and landscaping, and ensure that community led stewardship is well established

3. This should be demonstrated through all:

- a. site specific masterplans;
- b. detailed site design codes;
- c. guidance provided for defined growth, renewal and protected areas; and
- d. planning applications.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Strategic Design Guide SPD

To be produced

- Detailed Design Guide SPD

Height of Buildings

20.22 Promoting higher buildings in key parts of Dacorum is a central part of our strategy to create more sustainable development by making the most effective use of land in those locations with greater access to employment, leisure and retail facilities, and passenger transport nodes. In turn this will reduce the pressure for Green Belt land.

20.23 For the purposes of Policy DM41 - Height of Buildings, tall and taller buildings are defined as follows:

- a **taller building** is defined as buildings up to 18 metres (approximately six storeys) and two or more storeys higher than the surrounding building heights;
- a **tall building** is defined as a building which is higher than 18 metres (approximately six storeys).

20.24 This is considered to be an appropriate benchmark to determine whether a building is classified as being ‘tall’ or ‘taller’, as it establishes a flexible, location specific approach based on the prevailing “tall” character of the area and its specific sensitivities. This applies to all new build or the addition of storeys to existing built development.

20.25 Any proposal which equals or exceeds either of the above storey/height thresholds will trigger these policy requirements.

- 20.26** To calculate the surrounding building heights - take the mean heights of development within 100 metres of the proposed footprint (in all directions).
- 20.27** The height of buildings in Dacorum is generally modest, comprising 2 or 3 storeys at most, with the occasional 4 storey. Even in Hemel Hempstead there are relatively few taller buildings. Hemel Hempstead town centre is the main exception, along with Maylands GEA where historically there are a number of taller buildings. In recent years Hemel Hempstead has experienced a move to build above existing premises and in one or two instances seeking permission for higher / landmark buildings. In the Station Gateway area of Hemel Hempstead, a masterplan is being prepared that envisages a significant intensification around this transport hub through redevelopment.
- 20.28** This Plan seeks to encourage much greater use of land within the existing urban areas, and well-designed tall and taller buildings will make an important contribution to this and can make a positive impact on design quality and place making. They can act as landmarks, emphasising important places and making a positive contribution to views, character and the skyline. However, tall and taller buildings will not be appropriate in all locations, particularly sensitive areas such as within or close to conservation areas or listed buildings.
- 20.29** The scope for building higher will also depend on the size of the site(s) being developed, larger sites being more appropriate for taller buildings as their sphere of influence relates more to their own site rather than that of their surroundings, especially where there are dividing roads or other buffers. Wider street or set backs will also increase the potential for building higher.
- 20.30** To ensure a successful development is achieved, proposals for tall buildings (and other buildings with a significantly larger scale or bulk than their surroundings) require special consideration of their:
- location and siting; relationship to context; appropriate scale, form, design and massing of the building;
 - relationship to open land or the edge of settlements;
 - impact on local character, views (including view corridors, skyline views and views of landmark buildings), and composition - how they meet the ground and the sky;
 - treatment of the public realm and how private and communal amenity space and planting is incorporated into the design;
 - environmental impacts, such as sunlight, daylight, overshadowing and wind; and
 - the overall sustainability credentials.
- 20.31** These need to be resolved satisfactorily in relation to the context and local character to ensure that a tall or taller building integrates successfully into its surroundings and makes a positive contribution to the areas townscape whilst providing the appropriate amenity for its residents.

View Corridors

- 20.32** Details of view corridors can be found within the Dacorum Design Guidance / the Tall and Taller Buildings SPD - these are important vistas that can be seen from places that are publicly accessible and well used. They include significant buildings or urban landscapes that contribute to the image and character of Dacorum. These views represent at least one of the following categories:
- views from an urban space of a building or group of buildings within a townscape setting (including narrow, linear views to a defined object) i.e. a local landmark;
 - tree lined, valley side panoramas across substantial parts of Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamsted;
 - escarpment views to and from the Chilterns; or
 - views across the Boarscroft Vale.

- 20.33** Development above a threshold height in some areas could compromise the viewer’s ability to recognise and appreciate the locally important landmarks. This could be because of their composition, their contribution to legibility, or because they provide an opportunity to see key landmarks as part of a broader townscape or panorama. Some views are experienced as a person moves through a viewing place and assessment of development proposals should consider this.
- 20.34** Within the designated views we will identify landmarks that make aesthetic, cultural or other contributions to the view and which act as an orientation point or assist the viewer’s understanding and enjoyment of the view. Each element of the vista will require a level of management appropriate to its potential impact on the viewer’s ability to recognise and appreciate the locally important landmark.
- 20.35** New development will often make a positive contribution to the views and can be encouraged. However, in others, development is likely to compromise the setting or visibility of a key landmark and should be resisted.

Locally specific guidance

20.36 We recognise that there may be opportunities to create new taller / higher density buildings particularly in Hemel Hempstead and also elsewhere across the Borough, but these must be carefully considered, designed and directed to the right locations. In order to manage tall and taller buildings, this Plan provides a framework for where this type of development is to be encouraged or resisted. For Growth Areas, we will develop masterplans for each site which will set out appropriate height ranges and identify any locations that are suitable for taller buildings. Appropriate building heights for renewal and protected areas, and other parts of the Borough, will be determined according to the table below that seeks to identify the locations where tall and taller buildings would be most appropriate.

Table 27 Range of generally acceptable building heights by location

Place	Up to 3 storeys	Taller Buildings	Tall Buildings
Allocated Growth Areas	Subject to masterplanning	Subject to masterplanning	Subject to masterplanning
Opportunity Areas in Hemel Hempstead	√	√	√
Intensification Areas: Other Town, District and Local Centres within Dacorum	√	√	X
Elsewhere in the Towns	√	Limited to appropriate locations in renewal areas	X
Elsewhere in Dacorum	√	X	X

We have set out policy criteria to assess any speculative proposals received outside of the identified Opportunity Areas and Intensification Areas. Further detailed guidance on the height of buildings can be found within the Dacorum Design Guidance and the Tall and Taller Buildings SPD.

Opportunity Areas in Hemel Hempstead

20.37 Tall and taller buildings are considered appropriate in principle in the opportunity areas of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre, Two Waters and Maylands Local Centre. This is based on the concentration of services and facilities and their accessibility to key destinations and passenger transport hubs. Tall buildings are most appropriate in more sustainable locations near town centres or key transport hubs. Opportunity areas are identified as brownfield land with significant capacity to accommodate new housing, commercial and other development, they will be linked to existing/emerging improvements to public transport accessibility (or deliver such improvements as part of the scheme i.e. through financial contributions), along with other supporting facilities and infrastructure.

Intensification Areas: Other Town, District and Local Centres



- 20.38** Outside of the opportunity areas the table identifies other locations where taller buildings will still be appropriate, or would need to be considered on their merits. These intensification areas are typically built-up areas with good existing or potential public transport accessibility which can support redevelopment at higher densities. They have significant capacity for new jobs and homes but at a level below that which can be achieved in the opportunity areas.

Elsewhere

- 20.39** Within areas of development restraint, exceptional circumstances would need to be justified for any building above two storeys.

Policy DM41 - Height of Buildings

1. The height of all development must be acceptable to the locality and in accordance with:
 - a. Allocated Growth areas
 - i. The height of buildings will be guided by site specific masterplans, design codes and growth area guidance.
 - b. Opportunity Areas in Hemel Hempstead
 - i. tall and taller buildings will be supported subject to other policies in the Plan.
 - c. Other Town, District and Local Centres within Dacorum
 - i. Taller buildings will generally be supported.
 - d. Elsewhere in the Towns
 - i. Buildings up to and including three storeys in height will generally be supported;
 - ii. Taller buildings up to six storeys in limited locations within identified Renewal Areas.
 - e. Elsewhere in Dacorum
 - i. Buildings up to and including two storeys in height will generally be supported.
2. Support for points a to e set out above is subject to:
 - a. the guidance provided in the Tall and Taller Buildings SPD including:
 - i. the relationship to open land/edge of settlements;
 - ii. urban design function (e.g. tall buildings as landmarks);
 - iii. relationship to key nodes in the settlement; and
 - iv. enhance social cohesion and well-being.
 - b. the proposal being informed by and being sensitive to
 - i. the distinctive qualities, identity, topography, building pattern and opportunities of the area;
 - ii. reinforcing or enhancing the local character of the surrounding area and the buildings setting, and
 - iii. ensuring that it does not result in a discordant appearance in the street scene, dominate an adjoining dwelling(s) or result in a hard transition with, or appear unduly prominent from the countryside or open land areas;
 - c. the proposal making a positive contribution to the skyline and image of Dacorum;
 - d. in most instances the proposal shall accommodate a mix of uses on different floors; which can enliven streets and spaces, support a range of typology and a mix of tenures;
 - e. there would be no adverse impact upon the character and setting of heritage assets, including Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings;
 - f. the proposal provides
 - i. a high quality public realm for pedestrians,
 - ii. a high quality amenity space for residents, including provision of good quality landscaping,
 - iii. a setting appropriate to the scale and significance of the building,

- iv. appropriate ground floor active frontages,
 - v. overlooking to minimise any fear of crime,
 - vi. and well-designed, high quality transport provisions/solutions.
- g. minimise the environmental impacts such as (microclimate and negative wind effects); and
- h. proposals shall demonstrate how they will make a positive contribution to and protect the locally important features such as:
 - i. protected and designated views (either strategic or contained urban views) (development will be assessed for its impact on the designated view - if it falls within the foreground, middle ground or background of that view);
 - ii. Dacorum Panoramas;
 - iii. the setting of Landmarks, other important vistas and skylines.
3. All development must be in accordance with the relevant policies contained in this Plan and supporting guidance, especially regarding Density of Development.
4. A Comprehensive Design and Access Statement and Visual Impact Assessment (Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment) shall support all Tall and Taller Building proposals. These Assessments will:
 - a. include accurate visual representations (AVRs) of the proposal in its local and settlement context;
 - b. detail the overall design approach using appropriate urban design analysis;
 - c. provide the written feedback received from the Design Review Service and any pre-application discussions, especially with regards to how this has influenced the design and layout; and
 - d. include a taller buildings statement of how the design has accounted for the criteria in the Tall and Taller Buildings SPD.
5. Speculative buildings proposals that exceed the above height parameters will be considered on their merits having regards to the relevant criteria above.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Two Waters Masterplan Guidance
- Strategic Design Guide SPD

To be produced:

- Tall and Taller Buildings SPD
- Detailed Design Guide SPD
- Station Gateway Masterplan

Crime and Security

- 20.40** In accordance with national guidance, proposals should create places where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience. Applicants should consider appropriate security measures in the design of buildings and spaces.
- 20.41** Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires all local authorities to exercise their functions with due regard to their likely effect on crime and disorder, and to do all they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder. Crime for these purposes includes terrorism.

- 20.42** Various detailed measures can be integrated within development schemes to assist in discouraging crime. Security features should be designed in a sensitive manner to respect the character of the area.
- 20.43** Developments in Growth Areas are encouraged to contact The Hertfordshire Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer for advice on potential measures to prevent crime at the conceptual design stages of development and also to incorporate recommendations within the detailed site masterplan. This advice is also subject to the requirements of building and fire regulations.
- 20.44** Secured By Design (SBD) is the UK Police flagship initiative supporting the principles of “designing out crime” through the use of effective crime prevention and security standards for a range of applications. The Strategic Design Guide SPD recommends the application of Secured by Design and guidance on how to integrate safety measures into all forms of development is provided within the Detailed Design Guide SPD.
- 20.45** For all locations which will generate crowds in public places, the potential for malicious threat should be addressed. The consideration of security requirements will need to be proportionate to the size and nature of the development, the anticipated number of users and the wider setting. As well as understanding the purpose of the site, how it will operate and its potential to be regularly crowded, consideration will need to be given to measures that directly or indirectly mitigate identified threats as far as is proportionate.
- 20.46** Detailed guidance will be provided in the Strategic and Detailed Design Guide SPDs.

Policy DM42 - Crime and Security

1. The design of all development will be expected to reduce the opportunity for crime and reduce the fear of crime itself. Where appropriate development must also:
 - a. encourage passive surveillance of on street activity;
 - b. ensure that lighting is effective and strategically placed; and
 - c. implement appropriate security hardware.
2. Applicants for major development are advised to consult the Hertfordshire Constabulary for advice on measures to prevent crime before detailed site masterplans are prepared.
3. Security features should be designed in a sensitive manner which respects the overall character of the location.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Strategic Design Guide SPD
- Secured by Design

To be produced

- Detailed Design Guide SPD

Development Affecting the Historic Environment

- 20.47** Our historic environment is diverse and is made up of a variety of designated and non-designated heritage assets. National designations comprise listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and registered parks and gardens. Local designations comprise conservation areas, locally listed buildings and areas of archaeological significance. We are considering whether we should undertake a review of the current areas of archaeological significance and locally registered park and gardens and if they are best identified in this plan or as part of a separate local list.
- 20.48** 'Significance' is defined as the value of a heritage asset (and its setting) to current and future generations from its heritage interest. Heritage interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Understanding the significance of a heritage asset and its setting at an early stage in the design process of development, can help ensure that proposals minimise, or ideally avoid, harm.
- 20.49** Heritage Impact Assessments can generate a clear understanding of the affected asset, the heritage interests represented, and their relative importance. This can help identify how development can both conserve the heritage assets and deliver public benefits in a sustainable and appropriate way. The level of detail within a Heritage Impact Assessment should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance.
- 20.50** In cases where both a Design and Access Statement and a Heritage Impact Assessment are required, applicants can avoid duplication by including the heritage assessment within the Design and Access Statement.
- 20.51** Where there is evidence of deliberate damage to, or neglect of, a heritage asset in the hope of making consent or permission easier to gain, we will disregard the deteriorated state of the asset in any decision.
- 20.52** Putting heritage assets to a viable use is likely to lead to investment in the maintenance needed for their long-term conservation. Harmful development may sometimes be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of an asset, provided that the harm and resulting loss of significance is minimised. Where a heritage asset is capable of having a use, then securing its optimum viable use should be taken into account when the public benefits of a proposed development are assessed.
- 20.53** Marketing is required to demonstrate that an a heritage asset has no viable use. The aim of such marketing is to reach potential buyers who may be willing to find a viable use that also provides for its conservation to some degree.
- 20.54** The Council evaluates heritage assets and their settings on a continual basis. This ongoing appraisal will inform further local designations and future management plans and includes an ongoing programme of conservation area appraisals and a 'Heritage at Risk' review. The 'Heritage at Risk' review will identify vulnerable heritage assets: the Council will act to ensure their protection, using enforcement action, Article 4 Directions, building preservation and urgent work notices, spot listing and applications for funding, as necessary.

Policy DM43 - Historic Environment

1. Development proposals should preserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment of Dacorum.
2. The Council will pursue a positive strategy for the protection and enjoyment of the historic environment and when considering development proposals will take into account:
 - a. the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - b. the wider social, cultural and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

- c. the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
 - d. opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.
3. All development proposals involving designated and non-designated heritage assets should be supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment.
 4. Development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets should incorporate measures that identify, record, interpret, protect and, where appropriate enhance an asset's significance.
 5. The Council will work closely with our partners including Historic England and Hertfordshire County Council to ensure that records are kept up to date, so that the historic environment is cared for in the most appropriate manner.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Conservation Area Appraisals

To be produced

- Detailed Design Guide SPD

Development Affecting Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 20.55** In addition to the designations that protect the historic environment, there are also undesignated heritage assets identified by the Local Authority, which merit conservation.
- 20.56** Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.
- 20.57** There are a number of processes through which non-designated heritage assets may be identified, including the local and neighbourhood plan-making processes and conservation area appraisals and reviews. It is important that the decisions to identify them as non-designated heritage assets are based on sound evidence.
- 20.58** Significance will be measured in terms of how the asset meets the following criteria:

Table 28 Significance of Non-Designated Heritage Assets Criteria

Age	The age of the asset may be an important criterion and can be adjusted to take into account distinctive local characteristics
Rarity	Appropriate for all assets, as judged against local characteristics
Aesthetic Value	The intrinsic design value of an asset relating to local styles, materials or any other distinctive local characteristics

Group Value	Groupings of assets with a clear visual design or historic relationship
Evidential Value	The significance of a local historic asset of any kind may be enhanced by a significant contemporary or historic written record
Historic Association	The significance of a local heritage asset of any kind may be enhanced by a significant historical association of local or national note, including links to important figures
Archaeological Interest	This may be an appropriate reason to designate a locally significant asset on the grounds of archaeological interest if the evidence base is sufficiently compelling and if a distinct area can be identified
Designated Landscape	Relating to the interest attached to locally important designed landscapes, parks and gardens
Landmark Status	An asset with strong communal or historical associations, or because it has especially striking aesthetic value, may be singled out as a landmark within the local scene
Social and Communal Value	Relating to places perceived as a source of local identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence; often residing in intangible aspects of heritage contributing to the “collective memory” of a place

20.59 Non-designated heritage assets are identified and recorded via the Conservation management appraisals.

Policy DM44 - Development Affecting Non-Designated Heritage Assets

1. The Council will engage with key stakeholders and local communities to identify non-designated heritage assets that contribute to local distinctiveness.
2. Development affecting non-designated heritage assets and their settings should seek to conserve and where possible enhance their significance.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

To be produced

- Detailed Design Guide SPD

Heritage Assets with Archaeological Interest

- 20.60** Development proposals that would be likely to harm heritage assets with archaeological interest, will be required to undertake appropriate archaeological investigation and reporting as part of any permission. Appropriate recording of heritage assets that would be lost (whether archaeological or otherwise) will also be sought as appropriate.
- 20.61** Areas of Archaeological Significance (AAS) are places within the Borough that are deemed to be of moderate or high archaeological potential, based on evidence from known heritage assets (buildings, sites, features and finds). Alterations to existing AAS or identification of new AAS may be required based on new data or understanding of significance.
- 20.62** The Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) is a record of Hertfordshire's historic environment. It contains information on historic buildings, archaeological remains, historic sites and military remains. The HER can be used to identify significant historic remains and finds. It also contains information on surveys and archaeological excavations undertaken in Hertfordshire.

Policy DM45 - Heritage Assets with Archaeological Interest

1. Where a site has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest (whether scheduled or unscheduled), applicants should consult with the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Unit to submit an appropriate desk based assessment and, where necessary, the results of a field evaluation, prior to the submission of an application.
2. Where development is permitted on sites containing archaeological remains, planning permission will be subject to conditions and/or formal agreements requiring appropriate excavation and recording in advance of development and the subsequent storage and display of material.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Policies map

Conservation Areas

- 20.63** Dacorum has 25 designated Conservation Areas and many of these have been subject to individual appraisals to analyse their character and appearance and identify any negative features or issues that could be addressed through development. Boundaries of conservation areas are also periodically reviewed.
- 20.64** Evidence from Conservation Area Character Appraisals and local groups indicates that a number of Conservation Areas are suffering from the gradual erosion of traditional features, materials and details in both the public and private realm and that this is undermining their special interest. A more proactive approach is needed to halt and reverse this trend and to reinstate these features as part of works to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas.

- 20.65** Where appropriate, Article 4 directions will be made that bring specific permitted development rights within the planning system. This will be used to prevent the further loss of significant historic features and to seek to secure the restoration of features already lost. Thus, in time, the erosion of the Conservation Area's special interest will be halted and reversed and the area will be better preserved and enhanced.

Policy DM46 - Conservation Areas

1. New development, extensions and alterations to existing buildings in Conservation Areas will be permitted provided that they preserve or enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the area.
2. Development proposals outside a Conservation Area which affect its setting will be considered likewise. Proposals will be expected to:
 - a. respect established building lines, layouts and patterns;
 - b. use materials and adopt design details which reinforce local character and are traditional to the area;
 - c. be of a scale, proportion, form, height, design and overall character that accords with and complements the surrounding area;
 - d. in the case of alterations and extensions, be complementary and sympathetic to the parent building; and;
 - e. have regard to any 'Conservation Area Character Appraisals' prepared by the Council and safeguard all aspects which contribute to the area's special interest and significance, including important views and green spaces.
3. If demolition of buildings or structures within a Conservation Area is permitted it will not be allowed to occur until immediately prior to redevelopment/ remediation.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Policies map
- Dacorum Conservation Area Appraisals

Listed Buildings

- 20.66** Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 there is a statutory duty to compile Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest for the whole country. Dacorum has over 2000 listed buildings.
- 20.67** 'Listed building consent' is required from the Council for any works that affect a building's special character. The listing of a building is intended to ensure that it will be conserved in accordance with its significance. The designation allows changes to be carefully scrutinised when a planning application is made.
- 20.68** Similarly, new development affecting a listed building must be sympathetically designed, so as not to harm the listed building's historic integrity and identity. The use of legal powers will be considered where listed buildings are at risk from wilful neglect, long-term dereliction or abandonment.

Policy DM47 - Listed Buildings

1. The Council will actively seek opportunities to sustain and enhance the significance of Listed Buildings and ensure that they are in viable uses consistent with their conservation.
2. In considering applications the Council will ensure that proposals involving the alteration, extension, or change of use of a Listed Building will only be permitted where:
 - a. the proposal would not have any adverse effect on the architectural and historic character or appearance of the interior or exterior of the building or its setting; and
 - b. the proposal respects the scale, design, materials and finishes of the existing building(s), and preserves its historic fabric
3. Proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building will only be permitted where the setting of the building is preserved.
4. When considering re-use or refurbishment of Listed buildings, opportunities should be explored to identify potential modifications to reduce carbon emissions and secure sustainable development. In doing this a balanced approach should be taken, weighing the extent of the mitigation of climate change involved against potential harm to the heritage asset or its setting.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

Advertisements

- 20.69** Many advertisements benefit from deemed consent in accordance with the Classes set out in Schedule 1 and 3 of the The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. If a proposed advertisement falls outside of these Classes, then consent must be applied for and obtained from the Council (referred to as express consent). In these circumstances, there is a need to control their display in the interests of visual amenity and public safety in general and in particular to maintain the character of conservation areas.
- 20.70** The Council has put in place further measures to control advertisements by designating much of Dacorum as an Area of Special Control of Advertisements, where scenic, historical, architectural or cultural features are so significant that a stricter degree of advertisement control is justified in order to conserve visual amenity within that area.
- 20.71** Even if express consent is not required, all advertisements must comply with any other relevant statutory provisions. For example, listed building consent may be required under the Listed Building Regulations.
- 20.72** In considering how brightly advertisements should be illuminated, the Council will have regard to the The Institution of Lighting Professionals : Professional Lighting Guide PL05.
- 20.73** The Council will use its enforcement powers, as appropriate, to ensure the removal of advertisements which do not benefit from deemed consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as may be amended from time to time) or which do not benefit from express consent.
- 20.74** In Conservation Areas, the introduction of unsympathetic advertisements can compromise the quality of the environment. Signage and lighting must therefore be sensitive to the character of these areas.

Policy DM48 - Advertisements

1. Express consent to display an advertisement will be given provided the advertisement:
 - a. is appropriate in size, appearance, design and position to the building or site on which it is displayed;
 - b. does not detract from the amenity and character of the surrounding area; and
 - c. does not adversely affect highway or public safety.
2. In addition to the above, where express consent is required for Advertisements within Conservation Areas the Council will only accept advertisements where they:
 - a. are either painted or individually lettered in a suitable material of a proportionate size and design in relation to the building or fascia upon which they are to be displayed and are of a traditional fascia or hanging type; and
 - b. are preferably non-illuminated or do not contribute to an escalation of shopfront lighting along the street scene. Where illumination is proposed it should be external illumination which is discreet in size and of a minimum level. Internal illumination of shop signage will not be permitted;

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Area of Special Control of Advertisements, Dacorum
- Policies map
- Dacorum Conservation Area Appraisals

To be produced

- Detailed Design Guide

Canalside Environment

- 20.75** The Grand Union Canal represents a major recreational resource running through the Borough and has potential to provide for further rural pursuits and water based activities.
- 20.76** Within Dacorum there are 17 miles of the Grand Union Canal, including two miles of the Aylesbury Arm, one mile of the Wendover Arm and a total of 32 locks. The main canal and the Wendover Arm are in the Metropolitan Green Belt and a quarter (4.25 miles) of the overall length is in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where it forms an important part of the landscape.
- 20.77** The Grand Union Canal South has more private boats than any other waterway in the south east region. It is the Canal and River Trust's current policy not to increase the number of moored boats on the towpath, but to provide additional off-navigation moorings with a range of boating services including sanitary stations and fuel and water points to meet recreational demand.
- 20.78** Any new facilities in the Green Belt and rural area should be small scale and cause no material harm to the landscape, in particular the impact on the Chilterns AONB and its setting, will be an important matter in the consideration of any proposal. Locations should be close to existing services to minimise

the need for new buildings and may be co-located with other appropriate recreational uses. Larger developments may include a residential security mooring and are more likely to be appropriate in urban settings.

20.79 The Aylesbury Arm is in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt and may be too narrow to accommodate any additional facilities apart perhaps from lay-bys. For topographical reasons, the 2.5 miles section of the Tring Cutting from Bulbourne to Newground Bridge may also present difficulties for development.

20.80 The Council intends to consider the Canal's recreational potential and environmental enhancement further in co-operation with the Canal and River Trust. This work would not duplicate the Canal and River Trust's own feasibility study of the Wendover Arm. Proposals to improve the canalside environment and leisure facilities are identified in a number of locations (e.g. the Two Waters Masterplan Guidance). The Council supports the aims of the Wendover Arm Restoration Project which will extend the recreational opportunities associated with the canal network.

Policy DM49 - Canalside Environment and Recreational Moorings

1. The Grand Union Canal (GUC) and its environs will be protected and promoted as a recreational and environmental resource by joint action with the Canal and River Trust and other agencies.
2. Appropriately sized recreational mooring basins and laybys on the GUC will be permitted provided:
 - a. the proposal would not result in a proliferation of basins and / or laybys that would:
 - i. overload the local road system with consequent inconvenience and danger on it; or
 - ii. damage the landscape and/or countryside, including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; or
 - iii. result in loss of character of the GUC as an important historic and visual feature and as a source of tranquility in the urban and rural scene;
 - b. where appropriate, the proposal offers advantages in canal management and use, such as relocation of boats from towpath moorings; and
 - c. details are provided of:
 - i. the volume of material to be excavated;
 - ii. the method of disposal (to include removal of excavated material by canal where feasible); and
 - iii. the formation of the new canal bank.
3. All development adjoining the Grand Union Canal will be expected to make a positive contribution to the canalside environment. The design, scale and materials of new developments and canalside facilities must be appropriate to the environmental and historic character of the canal, and have no adverse impact on its nature conservation interest. Important views both to and from the canal should be retained.
4. The Council will positively support proposals to improve pedestrian access, and provide small scale outdoor facilities appropriate to the canal, where consistent with other environmental and land use policies of the plan and provided there would be no adverse effect on the value of the canal for nature conservation. Such facilities may include picnic areas, seating and nature trails to improve public enjoyment of the canal.
5. Improvements to the canal towpath will be sought as part of planning applications and approvals where appropriate and justified to help improve accessibility to services and facilities from and to the development.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Two Waters Masterplan Guidance

To be produced

- Detailed Design Guide SPD

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY



Promoting and facilitating sustainable transport and connectivity.



21 Sustainable Transport and Connectivity

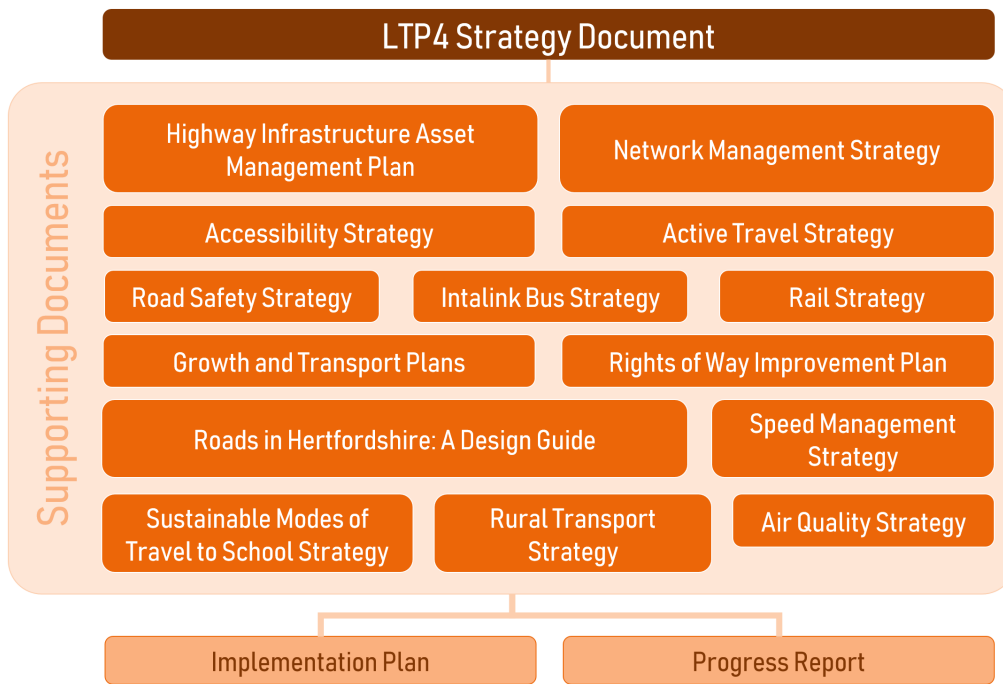
- 21.1** Dacorum has good transport links. It benefits from direct access to the strategic road network including the M1, M25 and A41 and is well served by the west coast mainline railway service which links the three towns and provides fast, regular and convenient services into London. The towns also have reasonable access to inter-urban bus services, but villages that are located away from key inter-urban bus corridors are not as well served.
- 21.2** However, the strategic and local road network can become congested, leading to delays, difficulties in accessing services during peak travel hours, and air quality issues in certain parts of the towns. Across the Borough bus services could be improved and railway stations require upgrading, alongside the need to expand and improve the existing pedestrian and cycle network.
- 21.3** The way we move around the Borough will need to change if we are going to manage the levels of growth proposed, to help reduce congestion on our local and strategic roads, improve air quality and tackle climate change. We need to plan for a low carbon and less car-dominated future. The change required will be profound but not immediate. We need to move towards more sustainable and active forms of travel, particularly for those shorter journeys within our towns and villages, where alternatives to the car are more feasible and practical. New technologies, better travel information, and emerging innovative approaches to how we travel can help us to achieve this.

Table 29 Transport responsibilities

Organisation	Responsibility
Hertfordshire County Council	Local highway authority and responsibility for countywide and local transport policies, plans and programmes.
Highways England	Managing, maintaining and improving motorways and trunk roads.
Network Rail	Maintaining and renewing rail infrastructure and train planning and signalling.
Canal and River Trust	Maintaining and developing the Grand Union Canal, its public towpaths and waterway access points.
London Luton Airport Operations Limited	Managing airport operations, facilities and infrastructure. Dacorum liaises over airport issues through the London Luton Airport Consultative Committee (LLACC).
Bus and rail service providers	Running and managing bus and rail services.

- 21.4** National planning policy acknowledges the importance of transport policies in facilitating sustainable development and places a greater emphasis on sustainable travel modes and providing a greater range of choice for how people travel. A key part of our strategy is to locate development in areas which are or can be made sustainable by encouraging a mix of uses within a development, limiting the need to travel, wherever possible, and offering a genuine choice with the priority being on walking, cycling and passenger transport.
- 21.5** The strategy for movement is also heavily influenced by Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) that focuses on sustainable transport and improving the uptake of walking, cycling and passenger transport. This sets out the strategic vision of how transport can help to deliver a positive future for Hertfordshire and Dacorum from 2020-2038. However, it also considers how future planning decisions and emerging technology might affect the way that transport needs to be provided in the longer term. Other strategies include the Active Travel Strategy, Intalink Bus Strategy and associated Enhanced Partnership Scheme and Plan and Rail Strategy all of which help to inform the approach that should be taken.

Figure 9 Local Transport Plan 4 Strategy Diagram



21.6 The South West Herts Growth & Transport Plan (GTP): is a new transport strategy and encompasses Dacorum and its neighbouring authorities in South West Hertfordshire. The Plan includes a range of packages for Hemel Hempstead including the East-West Corridor which will better connect the town to other major settlements in Hertfordshire along the A414 and provide enhanced facilities for walking, cycling, and buses alongside private vehicles (This is being supported by other work including the A414 and Mass Rapid Transit strategy).

21.7 Urban Transport Plans and Sustainable Transport Strategies: The majority of work included under LTP4, however is looking at transport at a Countywide level and although this is still important for strategic links there needs to be a greater focus on settlement issues for the six main urban areas of Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted, Tring, Bovingdon, Kings Langley, and Markyate. The County Council in partnership with Dacorum Borough Council have produced two new Urban Transport Plans (now referred to as Sustainable Transport Strategies) one for Hemel Hempstead and the other for Berkhamsted and Tring. These strategies are built around the sites to be allocated within this Plan and ensures that the measures to encourage change in travel behaviour are provided and offer more choice for both new and existing users.

21.8 The Sustainable Transport Strategies prepared for both Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamsted and Tring have been used to inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and develop the site requirements and transport proposals for the Growth Areas identified in the Proposals and Sites section. These have identified a number of interventions to improve the transport network and make it much more attractive for walking and cycling. The Strategy identifies 4 key strategic movement corridors through Hemel Hempstead:

- East- West movement across Hemel Hempstead.
- North and North West Hemel to the town centre.
- South and South East Hemel to the town centre.
- Orbital movements through the planned garden community.

21.9 Along these movement corridors opportunities to promote sustainable and active modes of travel will be explored and land protected for such purposes. These corridors will also seek to integrate into Hemel Hempstead's existing sustainable travel network.

- 21.10** The interventions for Hemel Hempstead are along similar lines but also take into account the need for more significant interventions, such as the A414 strategy and Mass Rapid Transit study, given the scale of growth in and around the town. The Strategy sets out the long term vision to meet longer term modal shift aspirations.

A414 Strategy and Mass Rapid Transit (MRT)

- 21.11** The Council and Hertfordshire County Council are working together to develop schemes that will provide viable alternatives to car travel across the Borough and wider county area. This is to take shape as a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system which will connect Hemel Hempstead station to Harlow, just beyond Hertfordshire's eastern boundary using some of the existing A414 route. This is to include the introduction of new Multi-Modal Transport Interchanges (MMTIs) that enable people to reduce their reliance on the car for the majority or all of their journey. MMTIs are to be delivered as part of Hemel Garden Communities given the mix of uses surrounding it and the population it is likely to cover.
- 21.12** The Mass Rapid Transit proposal spans both the A414 Strategy and Hemel Hempstead and has notable mention within both strategies and as previously mentioned will be supported by a number of new MMTIs. This will predominately feature within the Hemel Growth Area in St Albans district and will expand the possibility for users to combine travel modes such as walking or driving to the interchange and reducing the need for journeys to be carried out entirely by car. This will be supported by better cycling and bus routes from the town centre and Hemel Hempstead Railway Station and the provision of bus priority measures for quicker and more reliable journeys. As part of the transit system Hemel Hempstead Railway Station is to be regenerated which will make the station more accessible to sustainable forms of transport and less car dominated. Specific details of which can be seen in Growth Area HH08: Station Gateway.
- 21.13** By delivering these we will ensure that residents can enjoy healthy and active lifestyles and can help us achieve our climate change commitments. However, we know that to deliver this shift we must provide the right infrastructure at the right time to enable alternative forms of travel to be attractive to our residents. We also recognise that in some more rural areas of the Borough this shift will be harder to deliver with a greater reliance on private transport.
- 21.14** The Council has worked with the County Council and other agencies to model the impact of growth on our local and strategic road network and suggests there is sufficient capacity providing there is a greater uptake in walking, cycling and passenger transport. This has influenced where we have located major growth opportunities. Through the new Sustainable Transport Strategies proposals have been set out for significant investment in our pedestrian and cycle network, as well as other ways to improve bus and rail services and accessibility. These focus on identifying and costing sustainable transport routes, which will enable travel choice from the new developments to key destinations in the towns, whilst also improving options for existing residents.
- 21.15** To facilitate this change, the priority will need to shift away from car-based transport towards a lower carbon future for movement. Electric vehicles, whilst they remove a source of carbon emissions are unable to address many of the other challenges faced such as road capacity and congestion, health and safety, and the ineffective use of land. The policy will therefore give greater emphasis on the provision of bus, cycle and pedestrian transport infrastructure through its enhancement, extension or addition of as appropriate; and to ensure that development encourages these options through good design and ensuring their convenience.
- 21.16** However, policy also needs to acknowledge as mentioned in the NPPF that "sustainable transport options will vary between urban and rural areas". This is an important consideration for development that will take place beyond the three main settlements, where the ability to provide frequent passenger transport will be more challenging. In such instances, the Council will work proactively with the relevant agencies to identify possible links to neighbouring settlements that can be achieved through forms of non-motorised travel. Developers will be expected to demonstrate how they will facilitate this as part of the application process.

- 21.17** Private transport will still have a role to play in the interim, however this should only be for essential journeys. The Plan does support a small number of road schemes to serve key developments and allow phases to be brought forward and be properly connected. For example, there is need for a new northern corridor to serve Hemel Hempstead. Some smaller-scale highway improvements will also be necessary to reduce problems of congestion, and to provide local solutions to existing road safety, capacity and air quality, however these measures will not seek to increase road capacity.

Transport Proposals

- 21.18** We are continuing to develop the transport proposals that will be included within the Plan. These are being informed by detailed County-wide COMET transport modelling to identify pressure points across the network in addition to the detailed Sustainable Transport Strategies that have been prepared for Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring which set out detailed proposals for transport interventions. These will be developed with the County Council and other relevant bodies and fed into the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and into site specific policies for development. The exact transport interventions and the timing of delivery will be detailed in the next stage of the Plan.

Policy DM50 - Transport and Movement

1. The Council seeks to deliver Local Transport Plan 4 by facilitating a transport strategy in the following order of importance:
 - a. Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel.
 - b. Vulnerable road users needs (such as pedestrians and cyclists).
 - c. Passenger transport user needs (such as bus, train and taxis).
 - d. Powered two wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs.
 - e. Other motor vehicle user needs.
2. This strategy will be supported by adopting the following principles that will incentivise other transport modes and reduce dependency on the private car:
 - a. Locate development in areas that provide good levels of access to sustainable modes of transport and can make provision for its improvement.
 - b. Promote genuine transport choice through the provision of direct, safe and convenient walking and cycling networks and make improvements to passenger transport and its supporting infrastructure that would incentivise non car based travel.
 - c. Improve access to key services and facilities by all modes of transport and provide better integration between these modes.
 - d. Where possible as part of major development promote the usage of shared transport schemes.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- [Local Transport Plan 4](#)
- [South West Herts Growth and Transport Plan](#)
- Hemel Hempstead Sustainable Transport Strategy:
- Berkhamsted and Tring Sustainable Transport Strategy:
- A414 Strategy:
- Mass Rapid Transit study:
- COMET Run 5:

- 21.19** For the Council to achieve its modal share aspirations there will likely be a need for all development to make contributions towards the onsite delivery of infrastructure and/or interventions identified through the Sustainable Transport Strategies. In cases where the infrastructure cannot be attributed to particular developments monetary contributions will be sought.
- 21.20** To ensure that the interventions identified through the Sustainable Transport Strategies can be delivered during the Plan period, land will need to be protected for such uses.

Policy DM51- Supporting and protecting land for transport interventions

1. Land identified through the Sustainable Transport Strategies as important transport corridors will be protected for transport interventions and will be retained as its existing designation until such a time where the land is to come forward for development. These corridors include:
 - a. The northern distributor road through the North Hemel Growth Area.
 - b. East - West links across Hemel Hempstead including the Link Road, Queensway, Midland Road and St Albans Road.
 - c. North and North west routes to Hemel Hempstead town centre including Leighton Buzzard Road and Galley Hill.
 - d. South and South East routes to Hemel Hempstead town centre including London Road, Lawn Lane/ Belswains Lane and Hemel Hempstead Road.
 - e. South - North movements to Berkhamsted Town Centre including Bell Lane, Durrants Lane Swing Gate Lane and Woodland Avenue.
 - f. East - West movements through Berkhamsted along Shootersway and Gossoms End/ High Street/ London Road.
 - g. East - West movements in to and out of Tring including London Road, Station Road, Icknield Way and Aylesbury Road.
 - h. North - South movements through Tring including Brook Street and Grove Road.
2. Major development along these corridors will be expected to contribute towards the delivery of interventions identified in the Sustainable Transport Strategies, beyond those necessary to make a scheme compliant. Similarly, if a scheme is capable of improving pedestrian movements across the town this should also be explored as part of the planning application process and should be developed in alignment with Policy DM52 - Movement and Access and Policy DM53 - Walking and Cycling.
3. In all instances these sustainable transport measures should be delivered early on in the development to establish green travel behaviour from the outset of occupation in accordance with Policy DM53 - Walking and Cycling.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Hemel Hempstead Sustainable Transport Strategy:
- Berkhamsted and Tring Sustainable Transport Strategy:

Movement and Access

- 21.21** Developers will need to ensure that they contribute positively towards the Council's goal of achieving a more sustainable future in accordance with HCC's LTP4 document and encouraging the switch away from the private car.

- 21.22** All applications will need to abide by the requirements set out in Hertfordshire County Councils Travel Plan Guidance and Roads in Hertfordshire guidance (or subsequent HCC design guidance) and engage with the Transport teams for specific requirements.
- 21.23** In designing new development the proposed access arrangements must be safe for users, proportionate to the type of development proposed and can accommodate the expected number of trips the development is to generate. The introduction of new accesses will be limited to this effect to prevent 'rat-running' through developments and should take guidance from the Roads in Hertfordshire: A Design Guide 3rd Edition 2011 or subsequent HCC design guidance. Where additional trips are predicted from a site it is necessary to ensure that measures can commensurately mitigate the impact where possible. Additionally, in alignment with LTP4 and national policy (NPPF 2019, paragraph 108) schemes should demonstrate that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.
- 21.24** There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that safe access is provided to pedestrians and cyclists and that it creates attractive, high quality and suitable routes including appropriate surfaces and lighting. This should be met both within and outside of the development area. Developers should be able to demonstrate that transport provision associated with development proposals will be appropriate, both in terms of modal choice and the capacity of the highway network to accommodate additional trips for all modes.
- 21.25** It is also important that development is respectful of the existing scale and character of the area. The private vehicle requirements of the development should not have a significant adverse effect on the wider environment and the amenity of local residents, such as through unacceptable levels of trip generation or result in displacement parking.
- 21.26** Therefore, the policy requires developers to consider safe and effective access arrangements for all users to the site. This should take account of its wider transport safety implications, such as parking, visual splays, permeability by methods other than the car, its impact on the wider environment, and for some applications, to provide travel plans or travel plan statements as necessary. These thresholds can be found in Policy DM52 - Movement and access - point 3b.
- 21.27** The Council encourages developers to consult with Hertfordshire County Council's Transport teams through the pre-application engagement process to ensure as many issues can be resolved in advance of the detailed planning application stage.
- 21.28** Detailed design standards for highway infrastructure is currently provided in 'Roads in Hertfordshire: A Design Guide 3rd Edition 2011' or subsequent HCC design guidance.

Policy DM52 - Movement and access

1. Development proposals will be expected to minimise the need to travel by car in the first instance by:
 - a. providing gigabit capable broadband in accordance with Policy DM57 - Digital Communications;
 - b. locating development in close proximity to, and with access to, key services and facilities;
 - c. encouraging the use of sustainable transport in line with LTP4.
2. Schemes will be permitted that:
 - a. encourage reduced car ownership or use by prioritising sustainable transport modes and making this more accessible and attractive to users. This could include the adoption of measures through a Travel Plan such as cycle hire or car club, or for destinations, priority and high quality provision for those walking, cycling or using passenger transport. This should be achieved through the overall site layout;
 - b. provide access to passenger transport and contributes to the required infrastructure to support it;

- c. integrate into existing sustainable transport infrastructure and does not have an unacceptable impact on the operation, safety or capacity of the highway network; including cumulative impacts, and is acceptable in terms of any implications for on-street parking;
 - d. ensure safe, suitable and convenient access for all users;
 - e. maintains, enhances and integrates with existing Rights of Way (equestrian, cycle or other) and protects their special character (including designated and non-designated routes and where there is evidence of regular public usage). Should diversion prove unavoidable, suitable appealing alternative routes of equal or enhanced standard will be required.
 - f. in the case of the Growth Areas, and other major development, gives consideration to bringing forward the implementation of sustainable travel infrastructure to the early phases of development, so as to not disadvantage initial occupants and users and to influence behaviour which enables green travel patterns to become established from the outset of occupation; and
 - g. ensure that there are mechanisms in place, either through a s106 planning obligation, or other method deemed appropriate by the Council, for the long term maintenance of the above.
3. Development proposals that create a significant amount of transport movement must be supported by a full Travel Plan or Travel Plan Statement. This must be:
 - a. secured through S106 planning obligation (whenever the CIL regulations tests for the use of S106 are met);
 - b. prepared in accordance with the County Council's Travel Plan Guidance (or document that supersedes this after the adoption of the Plan) ⁽³⁴⁾⁽³⁵⁾;
 - c. based on this evidence and / or the recommendations of the Highway Authority and where this cannot be met on site, financial contributions, or provision in kind, will be sought for sustainable transport or other highway measures that are necessary to mitigate the impacts of the development.
 4. Where major development is expected and there is to be significant change to the local highways, developers should work closely with Hertfordshire County Council's Transport teams to secure appropriate mitigation measures.
 5. Where proposals (either stand-alone or in-combination) may give rise to air quality concerns, these will be considered in accordance with Policy DM35 - Protection from Environmental Pollution.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- [Local Transport Plan 4](#)
- [HCC Travel Plan Guidance](#)
- [Rights of Way Improvement Plan](#)
- [Roads in Hertfordshire Design Guide](#)

Walking and Cycling

- 21.29** Walking and cycling make up the two most sustainable forms of transport and feature high in the Transport User Hierarchy. These modes have a significantly smaller impact on the environment given that they do not contribute to pollution levels or congestion, and the infrastructure necessary to support them is usually modest in scale.

34 <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/highways/development-management/travel-plan-guidance.pdf>

35 (Travel Plans will be assessed by the Road Safety and Sustainable Travel Team - queries regarding Travel Plans can be directed to travelplan@hertfordshire.gov.uk).

- 21.30** There are also social and health benefits to encouraging people to walk and cycle - active travel is more convenient and accessible to a wider part of the population and can increase social interaction within a community. Well designed pedestrian and cycling networks have the ability to improve health whilst also discouraging crime, which all have a cost benefit to society.
- 21.31** LTP4 identifies that 53% of all journeys to work within Hertfordshire are under 10 miles and that 63% of all journeys in the County are under 5 miles. This illustrates that there is considerable scope to increase sustainable modes of travel by improving these networks.
- 21.32** The Council will seek opportunities to promote healthier and more environmentally friendly travel choices. To ensure this, walking and cycling routes need to be more direct, safe, convenient and offer continuous connectivity to key services and facilities. Developers should ensure new developments are designed from the outset for pedestrian and cyclists and that they connect to and/or enhance existing networks. This includes opportunities to reduce severance and traffic calming. The Dacorum Design Guidance provides examples of good practice such as the relationship between movement and place and how these factors help to determine the type of infrastructure best suited to that development or need. Interventions that are considered to be most important to the Council can be found within the Hemel Hempstead, and Berkhamsted and Tring Sustainable Transport Strategies.

Policy DM53 - Walking and cycling

All development proposals will be expected to promote safe and attractive walking and cycling provision to nearby employment, essential services and community facilities by the following:

1. Wherever possible, priority should be given to walking and cycling routes, in accordance with the Transport User Hierarchy, this should be evident in all aspects of development design.
2. Ensuring that existing pedestrian and cycle networks (including designated and non-designated routes) are protected, enhanced and extended to better integrate into the rest of the network. Proposals for development should actively pursue improvements and additions to the pedestrian and cycling network. These new routes should be attractive, convenient, safe and secure.
3. Ensuring that development proposals do not substantially alter existing routes to the point where safe crossing could be difficult. Should this prove unavoidable provision will be required to enable safe crossing.
4. Creating safe, well lit, convenient and attractive walking and cycling connections to existing developments, neighbourhoods, jobs and services. In locations where there is a deterrent to pedestrians and cyclists this should be improved as far as is reasonable to do so.
5. Enabling opportunities to walk and cycle through sustainable travel initiatives, which could include and is not limited to wayfinding, provision of pick up points, secure cycle parking, electric bike charging and shower and changing facilities. This should be provided, where necessary as part of multi-modal transport interchanges and at key locations including employment sites and town and district centres.
6. Providing where possible new walking and/or cycling routes from the rural and small settlements to the larger surrounding urban areas of Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- [Local Transport Plan 4](#)
- Hemel Hempstead Sustainable Transport Strategy
- Berkhamsted and Tring Sustainable Transport Strategy
- [Active Travel Strategy](#)
- [Rights of Way Improvement Plan](#)

Passenger Transport

- 21.33** A high quality passenger transport network will be essential if the Council is to meet its objectives under the recently announced climate emergency and the Council's modal share aspirations for Hemel Hempstead. There are numerous benefits associated with passenger transport including reducing traffic congestion, maximising the capacity of the road network and helping to tackle climate change. The Council has already invested in and delivered a new bus interchange in Hemel Hempstead town centre as part of a wider regeneration programme.
- 21.34** Passenger transport is also important for social inclusion as it offers access to travel to those most marginalised in society such as young people, older people and people with disabilities and to those living in more rural parts of the Borough. However, the Council acknowledges that both services and the supporting infrastructure need to be improved to ensure greater uptake and to remove barriers to the most vulnerable. In order to facilitate, encourage and deliver these improvements the Council, County Council and developers will need to work closely with bus and rail service operators and Network Rail (responsible for rail infrastructure). This will draw heavily upon the Intalink Bus Strategy which details the priorities for the network.
- 21.35** The Council is currently exploring opportunities to improve the three main stations of Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring over the Plan period due to the anticipated significant increase in passenger numbers. The Plan encourages major improvements to the Hemel Hempstead mainline station covering a remodelled station, new facilities for passengers, an increase in parking and the introduction of a range of other uses, which will help to facilitate greater transport choice to and from the station. This is being taken forward through the Station Gateway project and more details can be found in the Hemel Hempstead Delivery Strategy. This forms part of a number of improvements to the transport network within and out of Hemel Hempstead as part of the A414 Strategy and Hemel Garden Communities programme which will enable people to complete a greater length of their journey by sustainable modes through the delivery of Multi-Modal Transport Interchanges.

Policy DM54 - Passenger Transport

The Council will require all development proposals to be designed to meet the needs of passenger transport operators and users. In particular the following principles will apply:

1. Road layouts must include direct, convenient and safe passenger transport routes which are easily accessible by foot or cycle. These passenger transport routes should be free of obstructive parking.
2. Passenger transport priority measures must be implemented in accordance with the Bus priority feasibility studies, South West Herts Growth and Transport Plan, the A414 strategy and the Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamsted and Tring Sustainable Transport Strategies (in some instances they maybe required through S106 agreements to make proposals acceptable in planning terms).
3. Bus stops must have good pedestrian access, be open to public supervision and be sheltered where appropriate. These should be provided on the carriageway where possible and design informed by a safety audit.
4. Where appropriate, the implementation of multi modal transport interchanges will be required which is to be informed through development site masterplanning and the Hemel Hempstead Sustainable Transport Strategies, the South West Herts Growth and Transport Plans and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
5. Major Development will be required to contribute towards service improvements so that the frequency and availability to travel to key destinations is enhanced and more attractive to users subject to viability and the existing bus network in the vicinity of the site.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- [Local Transport Plan 4](#)
- [Intalink Bus Strategy](#)
- [Rail Strategy](#)
- Hemel Hempstead Sustainable Transport Strategy
- Berkhamsted and Tring Sustainable Transport Strategy

Parking Provision - Residential

- 21.36** The Council will take a proactive approach to the provision of parking availability in new development. The amount of parking provision associated with development can have a significant effect on travel behaviours and how people access the development. Similarly, the restriction of provision at destination points, where properly managed, can lead to greater use of sustainable transport from place of origin instead of car usage. Furthermore, there are benefits in applying stricter parking standards in terms of the reduction in congestion and harmful vehicle emissions and allowing more effective use of urban land.
- 21.37** Parking standards should go beyond simply providing car spaces in new developments. It should be flexible enough to deal with all manner of developments and make provision for evolving technology such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Suitable parking facilities should also be made available for cycles and powered two wheelers. Such measures help encourage a modal shift towards sustainable transport options. The Council will take steps to increase their availability across the Borough through and outside the planning system.
- 21.38** In accordance with national policy, the Council will consider reducing residential parking provision in sustainable locations where there are viable alternatives available to residents and visitors. Such locations include those within the town centres and close to railway stations, such as at Hemel Hempstead railway station (see the Hemel Hempstead Garden Communities Delivery Strategy for further details).
- 21.39** The flexible parking principles will be articulated through parking zones with a lower parking standard in the most accessible locations where the greatest choice of movement options and opportunities exist. The accessibility zones will reflect density zones identified through the Delivery Strategies with the lowest levels of parking corresponding with the highest density developments as these will be located in the areas with greatest accessibility by non-car modes.
- 21.40** The Council recognises that a difficult balance must be struck between the advantages of achieving lower parking levels in new development against the potential problems of not providing a sufficient amount of provision. We must ensure that lower parking standards in certain areas do not result in adverse effects on residential amenity and highway safety, or displace parking problems to nearby areas. We also need to be careful that the vitality and viability of the existing town centres is maintained through providing adequate levels of parking. To this end, the Council has recently invested in a new multi-storey car park in Berkhamsted town centre.
- 21.41** Parking should be designed and located so that it is safe, secure and convenient for users, and is sensitive to its local context in terms of surfacing, lighting and landscaping. Detailed guidance on the design and location of parking is provided in 'Roads in Hertfordshire 2011' or subsequent HCC design guidance and the Dacorum Strategic Design Guide SPD.

Policy DM55 - Parking Provision - Residential

1. All residential development will be required to provide parking in accordance with the adopted standards contained within the Parking Standards SPD in order to encourage a shift towards more sustainable and active forms of movement.
2. In addition to meeting the requirements of the Council's adopted standards, car parking will be expected to:
 - a. be conveniently located, be visible from surrounding dwellings and have safe and convenient access from the dwellings they are intended to serve;
 - b. not result in a dominance of car parking in a way that would dominate the street scene, be adequately screened and broken up by soft planting to mitigate its visual impact;
 - c. provide an appropriate proportion of spaces of conveniently located disabled spaces; and
 - d. provide an appropriate amount of active and passive Electric Vehicle charging points.
3. Where applicants seek to deviate from these standards the Council will require justification and further information, including the submission of parking stress surveys, in order to demonstrate that there would be no harm to highway safety, convenience or local amenity. In addition, where the Council feels that the development would be located in an area of particular parking stress it may require the imposition of different parking standards.
4. Development proposals will also need to demonstrate that they are in line with the Transport User Hierarchy and appropriate cycle and motorcycle parking. This should be located in the most beneficial location for users ideally with convenient and prominent access and visible from surrounding dwellings.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Parking standards SPD

Parking Provision - Commercial

- 21.42** The mix of uses in established employment areas, and other areas such as town centres, is changing due to the relaxation of planning policy and permitted development rights. We are beginning to see more diverse uses which provide services and facilities to support businesses and employees. These include hotels, restaurants and cafes, hot food takeaways and gyms. This increase can ensure that an area serves a purpose throughout the day and can reduce the need for people to travel further or during peak times to access services. Therefore, commercial parking standards need to reflect such changes in the use of employment and other areas.
- 21.43** The Maylands Business Park (MBP) is one example of where these changes to planning policy have allowed for a greater range of services to come forward and provide new opportunities for people in the local area. The new local centre (the Maylands local centre) in the MBP includes residential, leisure, retail, community, and employment uses in a central and accessible location. It is therefore important that parking provision takes account of these competing uses and ensures that a right balance is struck between parking availability and the effective use of land.
- 21.44** Furthermore, there is a need to consider the traffic generation that employment areas produce, particularly from service vehicles, light delivery vehicles and HGV movements. The MBP suffers from a high level of lorry movements and large numbers of light goods vehicles providing short distance deliveries. It currently experiences a lack of off-street and overnight parking, especially as a consequence of the growth of large logistics facilities. This can often result in unsafe road conditions for other users when such vehicles lack adequate parking facilities.

- 21.45** The National Planning Policy Framework recognises that this is an issue and in paragraph 107 states 'Planning policies and decisions should recognise the importance of providing adequate overnight lorry parking facilities, taking into account local shortages, to reduce the risk of parking in locations that lack proper facilities or could cause a nuisance'. The Council is looking at ways this can be addressed within the MBP and also assessing opportunities for this to be accommodated through the expansion of the truck stop facilities at Junction 9 of the M1.

Policy DM56 - Parking provision- Commercial

1. All non residential development will be required to provide parking in accordance with the adopted standards contained within the Parking Standards SPD in order to encourage a shift towards more sustainable and active forms of movement. In addition to meeting the requirements of the Council's adopted standards car parking will be expected to:
 - a. provide shared parking areas where possible provided there is sufficient provision for each use at peak periods;
 - b. in the case of commercial (including retail) developments provide adequate lorry, commercial service vehicle and/ or coach parking and maneuvering having full regard to the adopted SPD and will be assessed through a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement on a case by case basis and is further detailed through the 'Roads in Hertfordshire: highways design guide' or subsequent HCC design guidance;
 - c. provide an appropriate amount of active and passive Electric Vehicle charging points.
 - d. retain land currently used for lorry and other-parking in general employment areas. Planning permission for alternative uses will only be granted where the lorry parking area is no longer needed either for the current operator's use and the impact of the loss of provision will not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the local highway network or amenity and appearance of the area as a result of parking on the roadside or on verges.
2. Additionally, commercial development will also need to provide cycle and motorcycle parking in the most beneficial location for users and provide changing facilities suitable for the level expected.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Parking standards SPD

Digital Connectivity

- 21.46** The introduction of new technology offers opportunities for residents and businesses to be better connected and to access digital services more efficiently. It can be a driver for increased productivity, economic growth and job creation.
- 21.47** The Government has taken significant steps to increase the delivery of such technologies. This includes new ambitious targets such as delivering gigabit capable networks UK wide by 2025, and plans to amend Building Regulations to ensure that all new homes have the right infrastructure to support gigabit broadband⁽³⁶⁾

36 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-build-homes-to-come-gigabit-speed-ready>

- 21.48** The National Planning Policy Framework acknowledges the importance of supporting these technologies classing them as 'essential for economic growth and social well-being' and that planning authorities should support the expansion of these technologies (paragraph 112).
- 21.49** The importance of introducing new technologies is also recognised locally, forming part of our Corporate Plan and the continuing work to roll out gigabit connectivity in the Borough.
- 21.50** New infrastructure will continue to play a greater role in our ability to access digital services and to work more flexibly off-site, either at home or at a choice of locations. It can also make businesses more resilient and future proofed. We are committed to ensuring that Dacorum has a first class digital network in place so that it remains an attractive area for residents to live and for businesses to operate from and invest in. This improvement to the Borough's digital network needs to be achieved in conjunction with new development.

Policy DM57 - Digital Communications

The Council will support the deployment of next generation technology to ensure that Dacorum remains an attractive area to invest for businesses and meets the needs of its residents. The Council considers that Fibre To The Premise (FTTP) is essential infrastructure and vital to the delivery of sustainable development. Therefore proposals will be expected to comply with the following principles:

1. All qualifying development shall deliver FTTP. Qualifying development includes:
 - a. all residential and employment schemes proposed in, or adjoining, the main towns and large villages;
 - b. residential schemes promoting 10 dwellings or more in the remaining parts of the Borough; and
 - c. employment schemes promoting 10 or more jobs (FTE) in the remaining parts of the Borough.
2. Proposals for qualifying development will be needed to be supported by an FTTP Statement, to be agreed by Council, this will;
 - a. establish how FTTP will be provided to serve the development and that it will be engaged at first occupation; or
 - b. in the case of when an applicant has determined that it is not practical, viable or feasible to deliver FTTP, be supported with evidence from the applicant to demonstrate that a departure from policy is justified.
3. For other residential and employment schemes, FTTP will be encouraged by the Council as a means of expanding the local fibre network.
4. Where FTTP is not delivered, non-Next Generation Access technologies than can provide speeds in excess of 24 Mbps should be provided as an alternative.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Superfast Broadband Programme- commitment to ensure 96% of the UK can achieve 24Mbps speeds or higher until 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/superfast-broadband-programme>
- New -build homes to come with gigabit-speed broadband fit for the future: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-build-homes-to-come-gigabit-speed-ready>

Mobile Communications

- 21.51** Mobile communications infrastructure is another emerging technology that is important to Dacorum remaining an attractive area for people to live and work. Mobile infrastructure supports applications beyond the home or workplace and can provide greater convenience for example in the way people travel - such as the ability to access smart ticketing which can speed up the drop off and pick-up times on public transport, and 'on-demand' travel information for travel planning.
- 21.52** The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the expectation for local authorities to take a pro-active and supportive approach to delivering this infrastructure stating: *"Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic networks, including next generation mobile technology (Such as 5G)... providing access to services from a range of providers"* (paragraph 112).
- 21.53** While the Council does not have full control over the delivery of communications infrastructure (as much of this can be carried out under permitted development or prior approval) it is important that the number of sites are controlled and consistent with the needs of the consumer.

Policy DM58 - Mobile Communications

The Council will support proposals for the provision and improvement of new telecommunications infrastructure provided that:

1. it has been demonstrated that there are no reasonable opportunities for sharing a site, mast, or facility with existing telecommunications infrastructure in the area;
2. the installation and any associated apparatus is sited and designed to minimise unacceptable impact on the character, residential amenity or the safe and satisfactory functioning of highways and appearance with particular consideration given to the impact on:
 - a. designated or locally identified heritage assets; or
 - b. internationally and/ or nationally protected nature conservation sites, AONBs, regional and local sites, and areas of designated open land;
3. it has been demonstrated that the siting of the proposal and any other additional equipment involved with the development does not overly detract from the appearance of the surrounding area, including the use of innovative design and construction and/or sympathetic camouflaging;
4. any building-mounted installations would not have an overly detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the building;
5. prior approval of the siting and appearance of the development will be required if the proposal is within or would affect the Chilterns AONB, Listed building, a site of archaeological importance or a site designated for its nature conservation importance; and
6. all residential and new employment development should consider the mobile telecommunications requirement of the development proposal and ensure and demonstrate that there would be sufficient coverage. This information should be submitted in a site connectivity plan during the pre-application and application stages.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- [Next Generation Mobile Technologies: A 5G strategy for the UK](#)

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Supporting community health,
wellbeing and cohesion.



Shaping
growth in
Dacorum

22 Healthy Communities

- 22.1** The health and wellbeing of our communities is crucially important to delivering long term sustainable development and placemaking. This includes physical, mental and social wellbeing. Key to the Plan is ensuring access to good quality services and facilities exists and that people of all ages and backgrounds receive the access they need to live full, productive and prosperous lives.

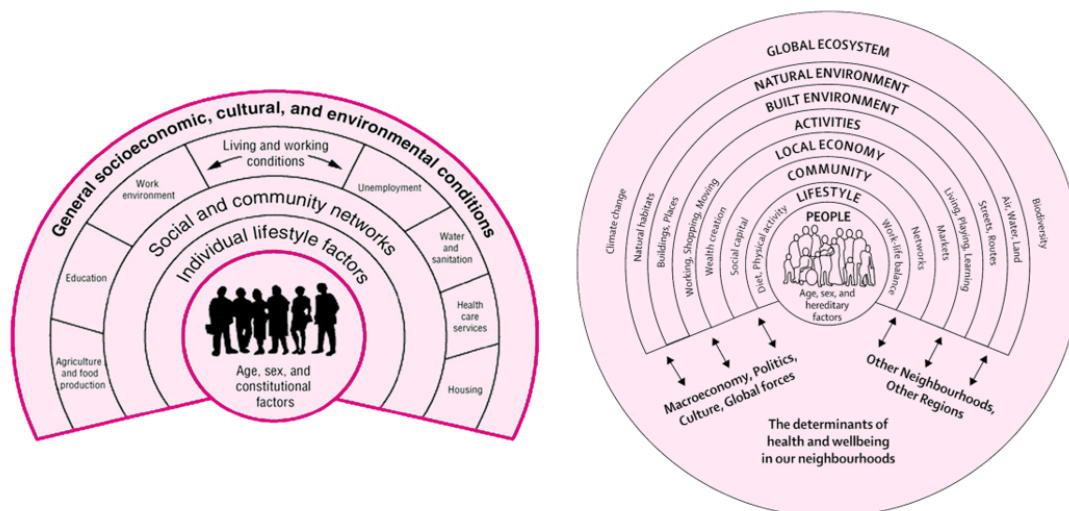
National Policy

- 22.2** National Policy and Guidance clearly establishes that the design and use of the built and natural environments, including green infrastructure, are key determinants of health and wellbeing, and that the Local Plan has a important function in the delivery of healthy places.
- 22.3** Planning and health need to be considered together in two ways: in terms of creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles, and in terms of identifying and securing the facilities needed for primary, secondary and tertiary care, and the wider health and care system.
- 22.4** Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, are safe and accessible, and enable and support healthy lifestyles. Planning should also provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs.
- 22.5** Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- 22.6** Integrated working with Public health organisations, health service organisations, commissioners, providers and local communities is necessary to effectively promote healthy and inclusive communities and support appropriate health infrastructure.

Other Relevant Strategies and Studies

- 22.7** The Health and Social Care Act, which came into force in April 2013, introduced a new public health landscape. The transfer of public health services from the NHS to Herts Public Health represents an opportunity to change the focus from reacting to sickness to actively promoting health and wellbeing and preventing ill health.
- 22.8** As a part of this transfer, Herts Public Health produced the **The Hertfordshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy**. This sets a goal to optimise the health and wellbeing of people throughout the course of their lives, with the strategy focusing on the four major life stages: starting well, developing well, living and working well, and ageing well.
- 22.9** The determinants of health (figure 10) are the factors that influence health. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy identified that out of many determinants, wider living and working conditions have the largest impact on health - more so than individual factors like genetics. This is why it is vital we integrate health within the Local Plan, as planning has a direct influence on many of these factors.

Figure 10 The Wider Determinants of Health. L: Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991) R: Barton and Grant (2006)



22.10 To aid this integration, Herts Public Health published the **Health and Wellbeing Planning Guidance** to support councils. This provides recommendations and advice on how we enable developments which enhance the physical and mental health of the community.

22.11 The Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Planning Guidance also refers to the use of Health Impact Assessments - a tool that judges the potential, and sometimes unintended, effects of a project on the health of a population. Health Impact Assessments identify actions to manage those effects. Public Health then published its **Health Impact Assessment Position Statement** in 2019.

Planning Reforms in the White Paper

22.12 The vision of the Planning for the Future White Paper recognises that the Plan has a measurable effect on physical and mental health. It clearly explains the link between planning and social justice, and references general inequalities within the system. The document places a clear emphasis on the need for high quality design in order to enhance the health of local areas.

22.13 The white paper was heavily informed by the report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful commission in January 2020, which established that quality of place needs to be understood in terms of provable relationships between urban form with health, wellbeing and sustainability. In the white paper, the Government confirmed that it will be considering the findings from this report further, which places greater focus on integrating design with delivering health benefits.

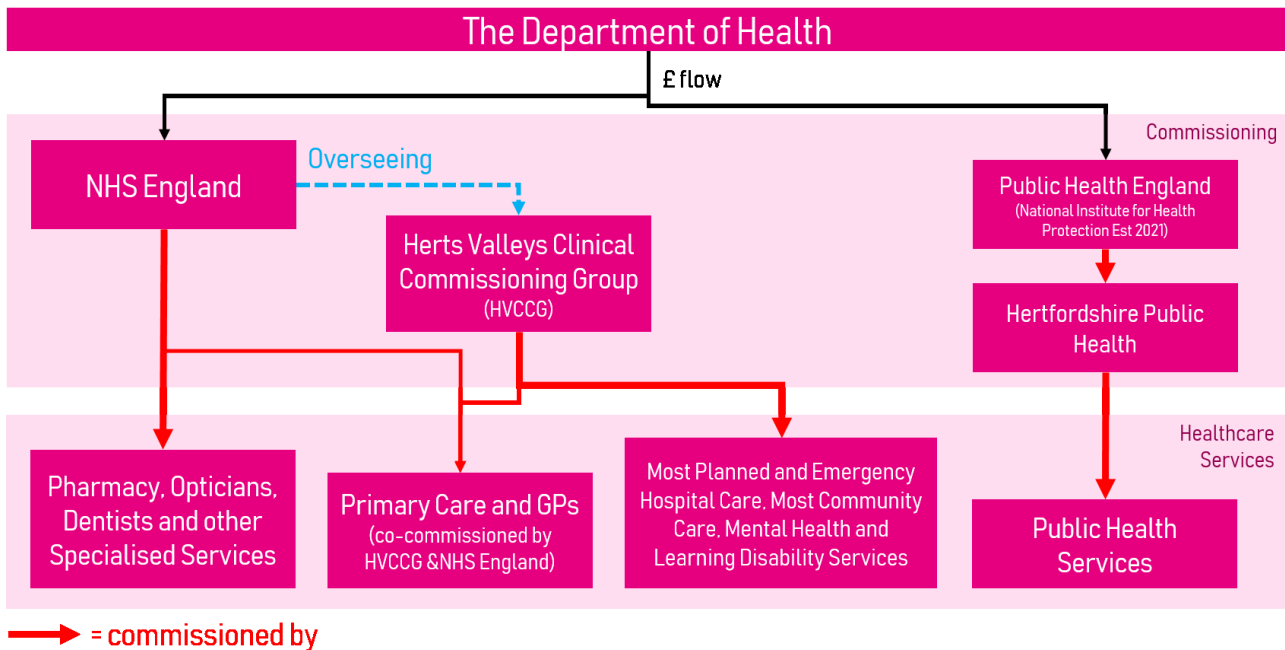
Health Facilities

22.14 Over the Plan period, it is essential that growth and development is supported by increased levels of healthcare provision and other community facilities and services. Although the Council does not directly deliver healthcare facilities we have a key enabling role by understanding service capacity and the need for additional facilities, and then identifying opportunities for new and improved provision through policies and allocations in the Local Plan.

22.15 Provision of primary care and acute health facilities will be coordinated through on-going joint working with NHS England and the Hertfordshire Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group (HVCCG) in Dacorum. These bodies are directly responsible for commissioning and delivering these facilities.

22.16 Figure 11 shows a simplified structure of how healthcare services are commissioned in Hertfordshire.

Figure 11 How Health Services are Commissioned in Herts.



- 22.17** The scale and range of service provision will need to be appropriate to the level of demand generated by development. The timely delivery of services and facilities will be important to ensure that need is met as it arises, and that growth can be brought forward in a sustainable way.
- 22.18** The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out the requirements for new provision to support growth across the Borough.
- 22.19** The way primary health care services have been provided locally and nationally has been changing in recent years and this has led to a number of practice mergers in the Borough. Practices are now forming Primary Care Networks (PCN) where they can benefit from greater cross practice, community working and the sharing of assets. Many of the GP surgeries are recognised as operating at over capacity and the HVCCG has agreed forward investment of practices in anticipation of the growth in the Plan.
- 22.20** While acute services are commissioned by the HVCCG, West Hertfordshire Hospital NHS Trust (WHHT) is the provider. In Dacorum, Hemel Hempstead Hospital provides an urgent treatment centre and other local healthcare and out patient facilities. The HVCCG, WHHT and its partners, including the Council, are working towards agreeing the future of the hospital site and the development of detailed options. In 2019 the hospital trust board met and approved the Strategic Outline Case. Work is now beginning on the Outline Business Case (OBC).
- 22.21** The general approach is to retain an acute services presence on the site., with a new Urgent Treatment Centre, and providing a new planned medical services centre The current site is likely to be reconfigured to focus services into a smaller footprint, allowing part of the site to be released for other development. This is dealt with in more detail under the Hemel Hempstead Delivery Strategy.

Policy DM59 - Health Facilities

1. The Council will support proposals for the the provision, expansion or improvement of health facilities in the Borough in line with the Herts Valleys CCG and NHS England requirements.
2. The Council will enable increasing the capacity and quality of health and social care facilities in the Borough, in line with the growing population and its changing needs.

3. New development will be expected to make appropriate contributions to new health care provision to support new development in accordance with the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan. In addition developers should engage with the Clinical Commissioning Group at the earliest opportunity in order to determine the health care requirements associated with new development.
4. Contributions towards new or enhanced health care facilities will be sought to ensure the health care requirements arising from new developments are met.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

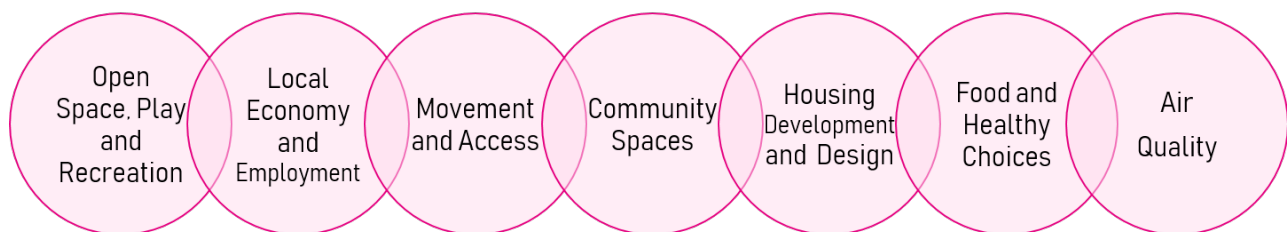
- [West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust Future of Hospital Services Strategic Outline Case July 2019](#)
- [West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust - Redevelopment Home Page](#)
- [Herts Valleys CCG Your Care, Your Future Vision Website](#)
- [The NHS Long Term Plan](#)

Health Impact Assessments

22.22 A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a combination of procedures, methods and tools that systematically judges the potential, and sometimes unintended, effects of a policy, plan, programme or project on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population. The HIA identifies appropriate actions to manage those effects and is a way of enabling planning decisions to take health into account.

22.23 Planning regulates land use and thus has great potential to influence health. The diagram below shows the seven key areas identified in the Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Planning Guidance where planning can have the greatest impact on health.

Figure 12 Seven Key Areas where Planning effects Health



22.24 Planning is, in turn, required to undertake impact assessments. Following changes to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations in 2017, all EIAs are required to consider the impact on human health. However, as EIAs are by definition focused on environmental concerns, they cannot holistically assess health impact. Hertfordshire Public Health has identified that undertaking a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) can be an appropriate mechanism for meeting these regulations effectively.

- 22.25** HIAs consider how the population will be affected, assessing both positive and negative health impacts. Health inequalities and ensuring that these are not increased further by proposed developments, should be a key consideration. All development which falls under the threshold for undertaking a HIA, should still be designed to maximise the impact it can make to promoting healthy communities and reducing health inequalities.
- 22.26** Development will be expected to include measures that contribute to healthier communities and reduce health inequalities, as set out in the Dacorum Design Guidance and Hertfordshire's Health and Wellbeing Planning Guidance.
- 22.27** A HIA will follow a staged process to assess health in a broader sense giving consideration to the wider determinants of health and in particular the effects on vulnerable populations who are more likely to experience health inequalities. It is reasonable that only the larger forms of development should generally be subject to this process as these are likely to have the biggest impact on health and wellbeing.
- 22.28** The Council will expect developers to work positively towards identifying mitigation measures should the HIA identify any negative impacts.
- 22.29** A guidance note detailing the process of conducting a HIA will be provided separately.

Policy DM60 - Health Impact Assessments

1. The Council will require a Health Impact Assessment, setting out the expected effects on health, wellbeing and safety, from the following new developments.
 - a. All identified Growth Areas
 - b. Residential developments of 100 units and above.
 - c. Non-Residential Developments subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment.
2. All development subject to HIA must demonstrate how the positive health impacts it can deliver are maximised, and reduce and/or mitigate negative health impacts, with a particular regard to removing health inequalities.
3. Where unavoidable negative impacts on health, wellbeing and safety are identified, mitigation measures must be incorporated into the proposal.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- [Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)
- [Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Planning Guidance](#)
- [Hertfordshire County Council Position Statement: Health Impact Assessments](#)

Education

- 22.30** Access to education is a key contributor to a sense of community and wellbeing. Schools are often the focus of a community, particularly where early years education, extra-curricular activities or public access to facilities are offered.

- 22.31** Ensuring that sufficient school places are available to support development is an integral part of delivering sustainable communities. Educational attainment is the keystone of any economy and it is important that access to such facilities is available to all, from the very young through to adult learning opportunities. The Government is committed to ensuring that there is sufficient provision to meet growing demand for school places, through increased choice and opportunity in state funded education. This commitment is reflected in the NPPF. Local authorities are required to give full and thorough consideration to enabling the development of schools in their planning decisions.
- 22.32** Hertfordshire has experienced a significant rise in the demand for school places across the County in recent years, reflecting national trends. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are provided within its area and it monitors and publishes annual school places forecasts. A number of primary school expansions and redevelopment of existing secondary school sites have already taken place recently in order to meet demand for schooling.
- 22.33** However, HCC does not control the admissions or management of many schools across the County with the move towards academies and free schools. As the Borough's population grows, demand for school places will continue to increase, placing pressure on existing facilities. It is therefore vital that where housing growth results in increased demand, investment is made across each education tier, as necessary, to ensure there are enough places to serve the Borough's pupils within their community.
- 22.34** The Council will seek to support the continued delivery of high quality learning and education within Dacorum, and will seek to support the development of learning and further education facilities. We will also seek to work collaboratively with key skills providers to ensure the needs of our current and future residents are met. For example, West Herts College has been active in delivering new buildings on its Hemel Hempstead campus site.
- 22.35** The Plan signals significant growth and this will need to be matched by an increase in school places. The Plan proposes a number of new schools across the Borough as part of new Growth Areas.
- 22.36** Applicants should work with Hertfordshire County Council, Dacorum Borough Council, and other neighbouring local authorities, to identify the education needs arising from development and to ensure that appropriate provision is made in the form of new or enhanced facilities. Major applications will be expected to demonstrate how they have provided for additional school places. Growth Areas will be expected to make full provision on-site, or contribute towards improving or extending existing facilities where this is the most effective option.
- 22.37** A small number of state and independent schools fall in the Green Belt, particularly on the urban edge of settlements. The NPPF does not specifically identify new school buildings as an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt. However, the NPPF does allow greater flexibility for infilling and redevelopment of previously developed land in the Green Belt which should provide greater scope for such schools to expand without the need in every case for very special circumstances to be demonstrated. In addition, the Council will support new school facilities in the Green Belt, wherever possible, where there is a clear evidence for need and where it can be demonstrated that the impacts of new buildings and activities do not adversely affect the objectives of the Green Belt.
- 22.38** As a larger number of schools within the settlements sit in an open setting, the Plan has designated these sites as Open Land under Policy DM38 - Open Land. Normally, the Plan seeks to maintain the open character of such sites and protect them from development. However, the Council will apply the approach flexibly to support new school facilities where need is fully evidenced and the integrity of the Open Land is maintained.

Policy DM61 - Education

1. Development that creates a potential increase in demand for education will be required to make appropriate provision for new facilities either on-site or by making a suitable contribution towards the improvement or expansion of nearby existing facilities.

2. Applicants will be expected to work in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, and other neighbouring local authorities as appropriate, to ensure there are sufficient school places and facilities available to serve new housing developments.
3. The provision of new and the expansion of existing schools will be supported, where it is in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council advice. School provision or expansion is considered acceptable development in principle on designated Open Land, subject to other policy considerations. Strategic allocations will be expected to provide new schools on-site, to be delivered in an appropriate and early phase to serve new residents. All new schools will be expected to provide community access to facilities.
4. Proposals for the creation of new or extended education facilities for all ages should:
 - a. be in an accessible location, served by a choice of sustainable travel options;
 - b. have safe drop-off and pick-up provision;
 - c. be of high quality of design, which offers flexible use of facilities, in order to ensure the various needs of the community can be met; and
 - d. provide or retain a suitable provision of outdoor recreation space and playing fields.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Policies Map

Sport and Leisure

- 22.39** Access to opportunities to participate in physical activity and exercise is essential to delivering healthier, more active and inclusive communities. The Plan seeks to protect sport and leisure facilities including outdoor playing pitches, artificial grass pitches and athletics provision, in addition to indoor leisure facilities such as swimming pools and sports halls, in accordance with the NPPF (paragraph 97).
- 22.40** Planning guidance requires local authorities to base policies on an up-to-date assessment of community needs, which should be derived from Sport England or National Standards for provision. To achieve this we have undertaken a technical evaluation of sport and recreation facilities across the Borough. The Playing Pitch Strategy (2019) and Leisure Facilities Strategy (2019) look in detail at existing provision across the Borough, its quality, distribution, use, participation trends and sport initiatives, before considering the impact of future growth, following Sport England's best practice methodology. This evidence has informed our planning for new provision. Population growth can have a significant impact upon existing sport and leisure facilities, putting pressure on existing resources. We will expect development to provide for the needs of new residents to ensure all sectors of the community have good access.
- 22.41** Sport England has a role in protecting sports provision and is consulted where planning applications impact on such facilities. All proposals for new sports facilities such as swimming pools and sports halls will be expected to be designed in accordance with Sport England's design guidance to help ensure that facilities are fit for purpose and of a high quality design.
- 22.42** Facilities within schools and colleges can provide a useful contribution to the leisure requirements of the communities in which they are located. Where new facilities are provided as part of school improvements or expansion the Council will encourage their use by the wider community.

22.43 The Council's evidence suggests there is a need for a variety of additional sports pitches across the Borough over the Plan period. Although there is a less pressing need for new indoor sports facilities, our evidence shows that there will be pressure on waterspace in the future, particularly in Hemel Hempstead where there is currently a small shortfall in provision. The larger Growth Areas in Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted, and Tring provide opportunities to secure new enhanced sports provision in these towns.

22.44 The Council actively seeks greater participation in formal and informal recreational and leisure activities in Dacorum. It manages directly or indirectly a number of playing pitches and sports centres across the Borough. It continues to invest in and/or support with partners, new and upgraded provision in the towns and villages, with a particular focus on improving the sports centres in Berkhamsted and Tring.

Policy DM62 - Sport and Leisure

1. The development of land currently in use for sport or leisure provision will not be permitted unless:
 - a. an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the sports or leisure provision, to include playing pitches, to be surplus to requirements; or
 - b. the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced with equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality (on site or suitably relocated); or
 - c. the development is for alternative sport or leisure provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.
2. All new residential development will be expected to contribute towards additional sport and playing pitch provision. These will be calculated using Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (for outdoor sports pitches).
3. All new residential development in Hemel Hempstead will be expected to contribute towards additional leisure facilities provision. These will be calculated using Sport England's Sport Facility Calculator.
4. Where provision, such as new sports pitches, is made on-site as part of a development, applicants should detail long term maintenance arrangements in accordance with Policy DM65 - Community Stewardship and Management.
5. Proposals to improve the quality, capacity and accessibility of the Borough's existing sport and leisure provision will also be supported.
6. New educational establishments must include facilities for community use and be subject to formal community use agreements.
7. Sport and leisure provision within employment sites will be encouraged.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Playing Pitch Strategy (2019)
- Leisure Facilities Strategy (2019)
- Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Open Space Provision

- 22.45** Open space in all its forms is essential to creating great places to live and sustainable communities. It also performs wider health and wellbeing functions, by promoting healthy lifestyles and providing opportunities for reflection and relaxation. It is therefore important that existing open space is protected and that new development plays a role in delivering appropriate green infrastructure to serve new residents.
- 22.46** To understand our current and future needs for open space we undertaken a Borough wide open space assessment using a wide range of typologies: parks and gardens, amenity greens, natural and semi-natural greenspace, provision for children and young people, allotments, cemeteries and green corridors. The assessment identified existing open space provision, its condition, distribution and overall quality, and additional needs arising from future growth, using Fields in Trust's recommended benchmark guidelines and evaluation criteria derived from the Green Flag Award. More information can be found in the Council's Open Space Study, which will provide the basis for assessing proposals.
- 22.47** The loss of existing open space will not be permitted except in very special circumstances. All new residential development will be required to contribute towards open space provision, by applying the Council's standards for provision, which are based on Fields in Trust's benchmark guidelines. Open space should be incorporated into new development from the earliest design stage, and follow Dacorum Design Guidance.
- 22.48** The requirements for outdoor sports pitches and artificial grass pitches are set out under Policy DM62 - Sport and Leisure. Land used for outdoor sports pitches may contribute towards provision if there is public access and it provides informal recreation opportunities. Facilities with restricted public access, such as enclosed private sports facilities or fenced school playing fields (irrespective of community use agreements) will not be considered new open space provision.
- 22.49** The NPPF gives communities the opportunity to identify Local Green Spaces (LGS) which are of particular importance to them (paragraph 99). This land can then be protected through the designation of local and neighbourhood plans, which affords a similar protection to that of Green Belt. However, the current made Grovehill neighbourhood plan does not propose any LGS, although these could be designated in future through such plans if desirable.
- 22.50** There is scope for the larger Growth Areas to secure enhanced provision of open space in these new developments to both meet the needs of new residents and help address local shortfalls and alleviate recreational pressure on sensitive landscapes such as Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.

Policy DM63 - Open Space Provision

1. The loss of designated open space will not be permitted unless:
 - a. there is a surplus of open space (excluding allotments) within the settlement of the proposed development, and
 - b. accessibility to open space, as set out in the table below, is not compromised; or
 - c. the loss is mitigated through new open space being provided to an equivalent or better standard in an accessible location; or
 - d. the new development is for alternative open space, sports or recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss, or
 - e. for allotment sites, there is a surplus of allotment sites within the settlement of the proposed development and more than half of the plots affected have been vacant for at least two years, in spite of convincing efforts made to let them.
2. Development to facilitate the use of open space will be permitted where it is ancillary to the purpose of the site and is in accordance with other relevant Local Plan policies.

3. All new residential development of 25 homes or more will be required to comply with the Council's open space provision standard of 3.2 ha per 1000 population. Where this cannot be delivered within the development, contributions will be sought towards improving or delivering open space off-site.
4. The total area of open space to be provided will be calculated using the 3.2 ha per 1000 population standard. The specific form and mix of provision will be determined by local open space deficiencies, and the Fields in Trust's recommended benchmark provision and accessibility standards ¹ set out in the table below. Details on contributions for off-site provision are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
5. In addition to open space, new developments of 25 homes or more, will be required to deliver play space of 0.25 ha per 1000 population. The thresholds for the type of play provision are as follows:
 - a. Local Area of Play (LAP) - 25 homes;
 - b. Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) - 70 homes;
 - c. Youth/Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) - 200 homes;
 - d. Neighbourhood Equipped area of Play (NEAP) - 500 homes.
6. New residential developments of 700 homes or more, will be required to deliver allotment or community garden space of 0.25 ha per 1000 population, in addition to the open space and play provision requirements set out above.
7. Further details on the requirements for each type of play provision can be found in the Open Space SPD.
8. **Table 30 Fields in Trust recommended benchmark provision and accessibility standards for open space.**

Type of Open Space		Hectares per 1,000 population	Accessibility	Time Equivalent
Parks & gardens		0.80	710m	9-minute walk time
Natural & semi-natural		1.80	720m	9-minute walk time
Amenity green space		0.60	480m	6-minute walk time
Play areas and provision for young people (minimum activity area ha)	LAP (0.01)	0.25	100m	1-minute walk time
	LEAP (0.04)		400m	5-minute walk time
	NEAP (0.1)		1,000m	12.5-minute walk time
	MUGA/Youth (0.1)		700m	9-minute walk time
Allotments		0.25	N/A	N/A

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Open Space Study
- Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Policies map
- Beyond the Six Acre Standard Fields in Trust

Community Facilities

22.51 National guidance expects Local Planning Authorities to plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services, as part of delivering the social, recreational and cultural services and facilities that a community needs (NPPF paragraph 92).

22.52 Dacorum supports a diverse range of public and private community facilities in its towns and villages that are highly valued by local communities, especially by residents who live in rural areas or do not have ready access to transport.

22.53 Community facilities often underpin the local, neighbourhood and village centres in the Borough and, in some instances, have been declining in recent years. Planning can help co-ordinate the provision and funding of new facilities in accessible locations, to meet the additional demands and needs created by population growth and demographic change.

22.54 It can also resist, where necessary, the loss of existing facilities arising through redevelopment and change of use, which could prove damaging to the fabric of local communities.

22.55 This is also of concern to the Government, which has introduced the new use classes order to protect certain community facilities from changes of use under permitted development rights by creating the new classes of:

- F.1 Learning and non-residential institutions: includes educational uses, museums, galleries, libraries, public halls, religious buildings and courts of law; and
- F.2 Local community: includes local shops, community halls, outdoor sports, swimming pools and skating rinks.

22.56 Furthermore pubs, music venues, cinemas and concert/bingo halls now class as 'sui generis' meaning no changes of use to or from these uses fall under permitted development.

22.57 Facilities in new development can help create community cohesion, provide essential services for residents, and are a crucial part of effective place-making. However, it is essential that they are brought forward in a timely fashion to meet the needs of the new occupiers as they arise. We will expect larger Growth Areas to directly provide a range of community facilities to serve existing and new communities and for these to be located within new local centre hubs.

Figure 13



Policy DM64 - Community Facilities

1. Existing community facilities will be protected, unless:
 - a. appropriate alternative quantity/quality of provision is made and conveniently located in relation to the lost facility;
 - b. satisfactory evidence is provided to prove the facility is no longer needed in its current form or it is no longer viable;
 - c. the loss may be offset by the presence of nearby facilities; or
 - d. the development is for an alternative community facility, the need for which clearly outweighs the loss.
2. The re-use of a building for an alternative social or community service or facility is preferred.

3. New community facilities will be supported in principle where they do not conflict with other policies within this Plan and where they are:
 - a. located in suitable locations, served by a choice of sustainable travel options;
 - b. of an appropriate scale to meet needs and are designed to allow for different activities throughout the day; and
 - c. brought forward in tandem with the development to ensure they are available for the new and existing community from the start of occupation.
4. All new development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of adequate and appropriately located community facilities. For larger developments, this may include land and/or buildings for public or community use.
5. Developers will be expected to provide either on-site provision, or where appropriate, a financial contribution towards either off-site provision, or the enhancement of existing off-site facilities. Where provision is made on-site as part of a development, applicants should detail how it will be maintained in the long term in accordance with Policy DM65 - Community Stewardship and Management.
6. Growth Areas will deliver and contribute towards a range of local services and facilities. Detailed requirements are set out in the relevant Delivery Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
7. The dual or multiple use of new and existing facilities will be encouraged wherever possible. The use of Community Use Agreements will be sought where appropriate.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Community Stewardship and Management

22.58 We support the involvement of residents and businesses in the long term management and stewardship of community assets, such as open space and community facilities. An active role for residents in managing these assets will help deliver the social objectives of sustainable development, as set out by the NPPF (paragraph 8) by building community capacity, cohesion and identity. It will also help to secure the long-term management and maintenance of, and safeguard access to, new facilities, to ensure our neighbourhoods remain great and vibrant places to live.

22.59 In particular this will be a requirement within Growth Areas, elsewhere Active Local Stewardship that promotes the community ownership of land and long term stewardship of assets, alongside a role for the Council, will be encouraged.

Policy DM65 - Community Stewardship and Management

1. Development proposals on Growth Area sites will be expected to set out a long-term strategy for the management and maintenance of new open space and community facilities to ensure quality and access is safeguarded for the future. Development on Growth Area sites should allow for community and Council involvement and this should also be encouraged on smaller sites. Details of the strategy should accompany planning applications and should include stewardship objectives and funding arrangements.

2. Where the Council is involved in the stewardship or maintenance of a development a commuted sum will be required.
3. The details of the strategy, including transfer arrangements, where applicable, will be secured through a s106 Planning Obligation. Where community assets are proposed for transfer to the Council, the agreement will require that the applicant / developer submit a management plan and maintenance schedule for assessment against applicable rates.

Relevant Evidence and Supporting Guidance

- Strategic Design Guide SPD