



Proposed Development at West Hemel Hempstead

Questions and Answers

March 2013

- 1. Is any development proposed between Pouchen End Lane and the western side of Hemel Hempstead (at Chaulden and Fields End)?**

Yes

- 2. What is proposed?**

The proposal includes about 900 homes and ancillary development. The proposal is contained in the Council's Core Strategy. It is known as a local allocation and referenced as Proposal LA3: you can read the proposal in full in Section 20 of the Core Strategy (page 175). See the web link below:

http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/pdf/Core%20Strategy_pre-sub_track_changes_merged.pdf

- 3. What is the context for the proposal?**

The Council must deliver development which meets the economic, housing and other needs of Dacorum. The Council proposes to accommodate more than 11,000 new homes between 2006 and 2031. While a large part of the provision is being directed to built-up areas, the Council estimates that land for around 1,550 homes needs to be found on new Green Belt sites (known as local allocations): these are located around the main settlements, principally Hemel Hempstead. They include land at west Hemel Hempstead.

- 4. Has planning permission been given?**

No, but please read the answers to Questions 8, 9 and 16.

- 5. Has land been sold for development?**

Various parcels of land have been sold or are subject to options agreements to allow the proposal to come forward. There are three principal "owners". Two house builders are involved - Taylor Wimpey and Barratts. The County Council is the third owner, having a field in the south-eastern corner. It is possible that other (small) pieces of land could be brought into a precisely defined proposal, but that would be a matter for individual landowners.

6. Will all the land between Pouchen End Lane and the western side of Hemel Hempstead be built on?

No. Areas will be set aside for open space, school playing fields, land drainage and landscaping. Existing homes will remain.

7. What stage has the proposal reached?

Proposal LA3 for West Hemel Hempstead is part of the Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy has been the subject to examination by a Planning Inspector. The Inspector's job is to examine, on the evidence, whether the Core Strategy is sound. He has considered very carefully the evidence provided to him, the need for more housing and the effect on the Green Belt. He has suggested that the Core Strategy should move forward with the proposed housing target, provided the Council commit to an early review of the Core Strategy. The Inspector has indicated no issue of soundness with Proposal LA3.

The Inspector wanted the Council to consult on some modifications, which it has done. None of the modifications directly affect LA3.

Subject to the Inspector's Report, the Core Strategy could be declared sound in April 2013.

8. Does this mean that development at West Hemel Hempstead will happen?

Yes. The issue that remains is the form and layout of the development. Particular questions the Council needs to address are:

- the precise Green Belt boundary (which will be shown on a map)
- the precise extent of the development proposals (which will be shown on a map)
- how development fits together - what it will be like to live in
- how it relates to the landscape and surrounding countryside
- how it integrates with the town and the community.

The Council will address these issues through the preparation of a Site Allocations document and master plan for the area.

9. Will this happen in the next five years?

No. The Council does not intend the first homes to be completed until 2021. However, because of its size, the development will take around 10 years to build. It must be underway in 2021 to enable completion within the plan period (i.e. by 2031).

The proposal cannot be built until a planning application has been submitted and approved. Policies in the local planning framework will guide any such

planning application. The Council expects any application to conform to the local planning framework.

However, the Council cannot decide when a planning application will be submitted. This is a matter for the landowner and/or developer.

10. What is the role of the Site Allocations document and a master plan?

The Site Allocations document, like the Core Strategy, will form part of a new local plan for Dacorum. The Council must submit the Site Allocations document for independent examination, just like the Core Strategy. The Site Allocations document will delineate the Green Belt boundary and precise extent of each local allocation (including Proposal LA3). It will say more about the timing and delivery of each of the developments.

A master plan will be prepared to support each local allocation. This will say more about the character of the proposed development and how it will work and fit in with its surroundings (e.g. layout and strategic landscaping). The Council will be responsible for considering consultation responses and approving each master plan.

11. What is happening to the present character of the area?

The Council will endeavour to plan the new neighbourhood sensitively so that the new development integrates with the town and so that the impact on the landscape and countryside is minimised. However, construction of a new neighbourhood will change the existing character of the area, just as the development of Chaulden, Warners End, Gadebridge and Fields End will have done before it. It is one of the inevitable consequences of the Government's drive for more homes and economic recovery, and the need to meet demands within Dacorum. The Government requires local authorities to make provision for all homes, including the identification of a target and five year land supply. Sites must be identified. This applies to the settled community and travellers. The Council's policies do not exclude provision of homes for members of the travelling community within Proposal LA3 or on other local allocations: what will ultimately be considered appropriate will depend on the particular site circumstances and need over the plan period.

12. What is happening to the Green Belt?

The land at west Hemel Hempstead is currently within the Green Belt. The Core Strategy proposes removal of an area from the Green Belt between Pouchen End Lane and the town to accommodate proposed development (i.e. LA3). The Council intends to delineate the new boundary of the Green Belt and town itself in the Site Allocations document. The Core Strategy establishes the general principle of the type and scale of development: the Site Allocations will help define the proposal. A master plan would inform that process, providing further ideas on layout, strategic landscaping and so on.

The Council must take into account Government advice when it draws a new line for the Green Belt. Boundaries should use physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

The Council considers that Proposal LA3 represents the western limit of the town. It will remain important to protect the surrounding countryside from further building, to maintain Bourne End/Winkwell and Potten End as separate communities and to protect the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Special Area of Conservation (the Chiltern Beechwoods).

13. How will the land be accessed?

The Council considers that the main points of vehicular access should be from Long Chaulden and The Avenue. Traffic studies show that traffic can be accommodated on the wider road network on the western side of Hemel Hempstead (with some improvements at key junctions). Vehicular access from Pouchen End Lane has been ruled out. There are however a number of other issues to consider – for example, bus, cycle and pedestrian access and routes, emergency access, the role of minor estate roads.

14. What facilities will be provided with the new homes?

The proposal specifies a shop, doctors surgery, new open space/playing fields and additional social and community provision, including a new primary school. The detail of the proposal and supporting facilities will be the subject of further deliberation and consultation with stakeholders and the local community.

15. What consultation has there been?

The Core Strategy has been subject to extensive consultation over a number of years – documents published in 2006 (Growth at Hemel Hempstead), 2008 (Site Allocations), November 2010 (Consultation Draft of the Core Strategy) and November 2011 (Pre-Submission Draft of the Core Strategy). The Core Strategy and issues associated with it are very wide ranging. The Council uses its web site, adverts, press releases and more recently social media to publicise the Core Strategy. The Council also uses an independent Citizens' Panel for feedback. The Council has advised people of consultations through the Dacorum Digest, including pull out supplements. The Autumn/Winter edition 2010 helped advertise consultation on the "Consultation Draft Core Strategy" and specifically referred to a local (development) option at west Hemel Hempstead.

16. What opportunity do I have to comment on the proposal?

The principle of the development has been accepted by the Council. There is still a lot to consider however.

There will be consultation on the master plan and Site Allocations document during 2013. If you would specifically like to be notified please let the Council know, and you will be placed on our (local planning) consultation database.

Email: strategic.planning@dacorum.gov.uk or phone 01442 228660.

Please look out for information in Dacorum Digest and the press, and on noticeboards and the Council's website.

For relevant planning applications we contact individuals direct and post site notices. This would obviously include any planning application at west Hemel Hempstead. The planning application stage is the point when the most detail is available, e.g. the position of buildings.

17. What information is there in support of this proposal?

The Core Strategy sets the key requirements.

The Council subsequently agreed a Statement of Common Ground with the landowners to assist the Planning Inspector. This demonstrates that the proposal can be delivered and its impacts controlled. It also provides a useful guide to the information available and indicates some of what needs to be done next: together with community and stakeholder engagement, this will inform the master plan. You may wish to refer to the list of examination documents on the Council's website at:

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=7790>.

You should note that the Council has approved no particular layout and awaits further consideration through consultation.