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INTRODUCTION

The Deposit Draft of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan was published on 2nd November 1998. Objections to the Deposit Draft were the subject of a Public Local Inquiry held between 28th March 2000 and 25th May 2001. The Inspector's Report was received by the Council at the end of July 2002 and made available to the public in September 2002.

A Full Council meeting considered the Inspector's recommendations on 25th June 2003. The Council's decisions, the reasons for them and the Council's proposed actions were published in the "Statement of Decisions" document. At the same meeting the Council decided to propose modifications to the Deposit Draft. These are set out in the "List of Proposed Modifications" document.

The List of Proposed Modifications was placed on deposit from 11th August 2003 to 26th August 2003, along with the Council's Statement of Decisions.

The Council's responses to representations on the Schedule of Decisions and Proposed Modifications and the Council's Response to these Representations were published in January 2004.

As a result of comments received, the Council published a List of Proposed Further Modifications (January 2004). These were subject to a 6 week consultation period which ended on 11th March 2004.

This document sets out:

- extracts from the report to cabinet on 6th April 2004 on the Local Plan. These cover the context for considering the representations, summarise the issues and responses and outline the final stages in preparing the Local Plan;
- the representations received to the proposed Further Modifications and the Council's response to these representations (see Appendices 1 and 2).

The response was agreed at Cabinet on 6th April 2004 and at Full Council on 21st April 2004.

The Council adopted the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 on 21st April 2004.

EXTRACTS FROM CABINET REPORT (21st APRIL 2004)

The purpose of this report was to respond to representations on the Proposed Further Modifications to the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 and to consider adoption of this Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations were agreed as set out below:-

1. agree the responses to the representations on the List of Proposed Further Modifications as set out in Appendices 1 and 2.
2. adopt the Deposit Draft of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011, as amended by the Proposed Modifications and Proposed Further Modifications.
3. authorise the Head of Planning to make any minor corrections when publishing the adopted Plan

BACKGROUND IN THE REPORT

Introduction:

The Schedule of Decisions and List of Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan were subject to a 6-week period of public consultation in August/September 2003. As a result of representations received, nine Proposed Further Modifications have been made to the Plan. These changes were agreed by Full Council on 21 January 2004 and are summarised below:-

Policy and/or Proposal Site Reference	Summary of Proposed Further Modification
Policy 1A – Sustainable Development	Amend supporting text to include a reference to the need to conserve, protect and enhance the historic environment.
Policy 3 – The Green Belt	Remove open land designation from land to the south-east of Egerton Rothesay School (Proposal C1 / L1) and amend Open Land Strategy for Berkhamsted accordingly.
Housing Proposal Site H46A – Harts Motors, High Street, Markyate	Amend the progress section to clarify the status of development.

Employment Proposal Site E4 – Three Cherry Trees Lane (East)	Amend description of proposed development to ensure consistency with Policy 35 and the Structure Plan.
Two Waters & Apsley Inset – Kents Brushes and former Homebase site	Amend text relating to Proposal Site TWA9, with regard to highways alterations, land designations and future development requirements.

Public Consultation:

The Proposed Further Modifications were subject to a 6 week period of public consultation running up to 11 March 2004. Those individuals and organisations who have participated in previous stages of the Local Plan review process were informed of this consultation by letter. Formal notices were also placed in the Hemel Hempstead Gazette. The stage was advertised in the Dacorum Digest and both the document and comments form made available on the Council’s web-site.

Responses Received:

A total of 35 responses were received regarding the Proposed Further Modifications within the advertised time period.

Four of these are not considered duly-made, as they do not directly relate to the Proposed Further Modifications. The Council is not required to formally respond to these representations. One of these representations objected to the principle of development at the Manor Estate, Apsley and another to land at Shootersway / Durrants Hill Lane, Berkhamsted. GO-East expressed their disappointment that the Council has not proposed any changes to the Plan in the light of their earlier objections to the Proposed Modifications (August 2003). However, they accept the need to ensure that the Local Plan reaches adoption as soon as possible and therefore do not raise any objections to the Proposed Further Modifications. Consultants Terence O’Rourke, acting on behalf of Future Energy Solutions for the Department of Trade and Industry expressed their support for Policy 95B – Renewable Energy and related supporting text. Whilst this support is welcomed, these comments cannot be considered at this stage as none of the Proposed Further Modifications relate to this section of the Plan.

Thirty one responses were duly-made. The Regulations require the Council to consider each of these duly-made representations and decide whether any changes are required to the Plan as a result of these comments. A summary of the representations received and the Council’s proposed response is set out in Appendices 1 and 2.

Of these duly-made responses, 6 were statements of support and 23 of objection. The remaining 2 responses, from Aylesbury Vale District Council and the Highways Agency, were of ‘No Comment.’ Representations centre

around three sites: land at Durrants Lane / Shootersway, Berkhamsted (Egerton Rothesay School); the Kent Brushes / former Homebase site, London Road, Apsley and Employment Proposal Site E4 at Three Cherry Trees Lane, Hemel Hempstead.

Land at Durrants Lane / Shootersway, Berkhamsted:

The area is designated for a mixture of social, community and residential uses in the Deposit Draft Local Plan, published in October 1998. The proposals will result in a new school and associated leisure space, with the former school site being redeveloped for housing.

The principle of releasing the land from the Green Belt, the effect of additional traffic, the impact on local schools, the need for open space, the relocation of Egerton Rothesay School, the issue of precedent and the availability of other sites were all discussed at the Public Local Inquiry held between March 2000 and May 2001.

Paragraph 4.19.15 of the Inspector's Report states that there is an exceptional need to release some additional land on the periphery of Berkhamsted to meet future housing needs. He considered that the release of land at Durrants Lane/Shootersway would not have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt or the main purposes behind its designation. He did not consider that the impact of proposed development, in terms of traffic or pressure on local services, would cause harm to the Green Belt. Furthermore, he was not satisfied that any more suitable sites existed within Berkhamsted, nor that the release of this land would set an undesirable precedent for the development of adjoining land. The Inspector acknowledged that the release of this Green Belt land was part of a comprehensive redevelopment package (paragraph 4.19.12). This involved the expansion and relocation of Egerton Rothesay School, the re-use or redevelopment of buildings in Charles Street, currently occupied by the Lower School, for housing and the provision of an extensive area of public open space. He therefore concluded that overall, these benefits were sufficient to outweigh the site's disadvantages.

The Council's Statement of Decisions on the Inspectors Report and resulting List of Proposed Modifications were agreed by Full Council on 25th June 2003. These Modifications reaffirmed the principle of the development. In removing the Green Belt designation from the fields alongside Shootersway / Coppins Close and bringing them within the defined urban area of Berkhamsted, the Council considered whether they should be attributed to one of the broad uses under Policy 7: Land Use Division in the Towns and Large Villages. The Council designated the fields as Open Land: this was overlain by the Proposal for Open Space and a new school. It is this Open Land designation which is at issue.

Only one Further Modification has been proposed for the area. Proposed Further Modification 2 deletes the open land designation on the field to the south east of Egerton Rothesay School, adjacent to Coppins Close and

amends the Open Land Strategy for Berkhamsted accordingly. This change is the only aspect of the scheme to which objections can now be considered.

The objectors are concerned that this change in designation will affect the location of the proposed development. This is not the case. It has always been, and remains, the intention that the new school should occupy the field adjoining Coppins Close. Whether or not the field is designated as open land has no impact upon the principle of the development of a school. The Council's Proposed Further Modification 2 more accurately reflects the Inspector's conclusions on the area to be designated as Open Land.

It is therefore recommended that no change is made to the Plan in the light of these objections.

Due to the number and similarity of objections received, a single response is proposed. This response is set out in Appendix 2.

Employment Proposal Site E4:

The Crown Estate, English Partnerships and Gazeley Properties raise objections to the description of Employment Proposal Site E4 (Three Cherry Trees Lane, Hemel Hempstead). The objectors consider that the proposed wording is not compliant with Policy 15 of the Hertfordshire Structure Plan.

Proposal Site E4 has already been amended in line with Recommendation 8.15.12 of the Inquiry Inspector (see Proposed Modification 157). This recommendation included the revision of the 'Proposal' section to refer solely to specialised technological activities and activities in the national or regional interest.

Proposal E4 must be read in conjunction with Policy 35 of the Local Plan (land at North East Hemel Hempstead). This Policy provides the overall planning framework for development of the key employment site. Policy 35 of the Deposit Local Plan already includes the additional wording requested by the objectors. The phrase does not need to be repeated in E4 of the Employment Schedule as this provides guidance on the detailed site requirements, rather than repeat the strategic framework.

It is not considered that any significant new planning issues are raised as the Council's approach toward this site is wholly consistent with that set out in the Structure Plan and accords with the Inspector's recommendation. No changes are required to Proposed Modification 4 in the light of these objections.

There is a typographical error in Proposed Modification 4. The word '*of*' after '*new estate...*' should have been underlined rather than struck through and the words '*units for*' should have been struck through rather than underlined. However, this does not change the above response or the intention of the proposal itself. It is possible that there may be other similar minor errors and corrections needed which do not make any significant material difference to

the Plan. It is recommended that authority is delegated to the Head of Planning to make any such corrections when publishing the final Plan.

London Road, Apsley

Five of the Proposed Further Modifications relate to the designation of land comprising Wickes, Kent Brushes, the vacant unit formerly occupied by Hombase and a small office building and petrol filling station fronting London Road, Apsley. An objection has been received to one of these Proposed Further Modifications (Proposed Modification 6).

The objector acknowledges that Proposed Further Modification 6 deletes the General Employment notation from the land currently occupied by G B Kents Ltd and the adjacent office building and petrol filling station fronting London Road. However, an objection is raised to the precise wording of this Proposed Further Modification. The objector considers that the Inspector did not intend the Plan to specify a particular form of development, or include reference to the need for a comprehensive redevelopment of the area concerned. The objector considers the proposed wording to be inappropriate and unnecessary and believes that it could jeopardise any future development of the site.

The objector appears to misinterpret Proposed Modification 6, which gives Kents a relatively open choice as to the future of the site (subject of course to compliance with relevant planning policies). The onus is on the adjoining Homebase / Wickes site to consider the potential of including the Kent Brushes site in a comprehensive redevelopment scheme and not the other way round.

Agents acting on behalf of Prudential Assurance Ltd who own the Wickes and former Homebase site have submitted representations supporting this Proposed Further Modification.

Given that the wording does not prevent the reuse of the Kent site on its own, it is not considered that any significant new planning issues are raised. No changes are required to Proposed Modification 6 in the light of this objection.

Next Stages:

For the reasons set out in Appendices 1 and 2, and summarised above, no changes are proposed to the Plan as a result of these representations.

Subject to the agreement of Full Council on 21 April, four copies of the plan and a copy of the formal adoption Notice will be sent to the Secretary of State. Advertisements will be placed in the London Gazette and Hemel Hempstead Gazette for two successive weeks, announcing the adoption of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011. This plan will formally supersede the existing Dacorum Borough Local Plan, adopted in April 1995. Notification letters will also be sent to all organisations / individuals who have been involved in the local plan review process.

Reference copies of the new Local Plan will be available from Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamsted civic centres and Victoria Hall, Tring, from the date the first advertisement appears.

Following the publication of this advert, a 6 weeks period commences when any person aggrieved by the proposals can launch a legal challenge through the High Court.

It is anticipated that hard copies of the final Local Plan document, including colour proposal maps, will be available from August 2004.

CONTENT OF APPENDICES

This document contains two Appendices that originally formed part of the Cabinet Report.

Appendix 1 comprises a summary of all duly-made representations and sets out the Council's agreed response. The Regulations only require the Council to respond to duly-made representations.

Appendix 2 contains a detailed response to objections to Proposed Further Modification 2 (land at Egerton Rothesay School).

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Representations on the List of Proposed Further Modifications and the Council's Response to these Representations

Representations relating to The List of Proposed Further Modifications are set out in a standard format:

Further Modification Number: i.e. that modification in the List of Proposed Further Modifications to which a representation relates. Representations are given in ascending order of Further Modification number.

Representation: i.e. a brief summary of the particular point.

Response: i.e. a statement of the Council's intention to modify the Deposit Draft or a Proposed Modification, or not. Reasons for each intention are given.

Notes:

1. Representations are given in Plan order.
2. This document should be read with reference to the Deposit Draft of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (October 1998), the List of Proposed Modifications (August 2003) and the List of Proposed Further Modifications (January 2004).

List Of Commenters on the List of Proposed Further Modifications

Commenter	Further Mod No.	Plan Reference	
John Felgate Planning on behalf of Egerton Rothesay School	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mrs Gillian Bailey	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mr J.M. Bailey	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mr John R. Stier	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mr N.J. Jones	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mr T. Kerr	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mr & Mrs Carlyon	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mr Ian Stuttard	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mrs P.S. Jones	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mr Mark Jones	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mrs Marion Stuttard	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mr N.D. Kelly	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mrs Carol Hall	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mr & Mrs Tossell	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mr J.A. McLellan	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mrs Margaret A. McLellan	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mrs L.C. Reeves	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mr Mark Jones	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mrs P.S. Jones	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mr Michael Boyce	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
P.A. Ferguson	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Mr G. Hall	2	PART 2 – Policy 3	Development Strategy – The Green Belt
Entec on behalf of Crown Estate	4	PART 2 – Employment	Employment Proposal Sites
Jones Lang LaSalle Limited on behalf of English Partnerships	4	PART 2 – Employment	Employment Proposal Sites
Gazeley Properties	4	PART 2 – Employment	Employment Proposal Sites
Prudential Assurance Company Ltd	5	PART 4 – Section 7	Two Waters and Apsley Inset
Prudential Assurance Company Ltd	6	PART 4 – Section 7	Two Waters and Apsley Inset
Aitchison Raffety on behalf of G.B. Kent & Sons Ltd	6	PART 4 – Section 7	Two Waters and Apsley Inset
Prudential Assurance Company Ltd	7	PART 4 – Section 7	Two Waters and Apsley Inset
Prudential Assurance Company Ltd	8	PART 4 – Section 7	Two Waters and Apsley Inset
Prudential Assurance Company Ltd	9	PART 4 – Section 7	Two Waters and Apsley Inset

Schedule of Representations Relating to the Council's List of Proposed Further Modifications and the Council's Response

PART 2 – POLICY 3: DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY – THE GREEN BELT

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Egerton Rothesay School (John Felgate Planning)
Object / Support: Support

Representation:

The Proposed Further Modification would accord with the Inspector's recommendations more closely than the original Modification published in 2003.

The support for this Proposed Modification is without prejudice to the belief (as expressed in the objections to the original Modifications) that, to fully accord with the Inspector's recommendations, the whole of Site C1 / L1 should have been excluded from the 'Open Land' policy designation.

Response:

The support for the Proposed Further Modification is welcomed.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mrs Gillian Bailey
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

Object to changing the designated use of the land as it further reduces open land in this area and will significantly change the whole nature of the area and create traffic problems. Additionally, all previous consultation regarding this site has been based on an incorrect plan because of a drafting error.

This proposal further reduces open land which has previously been part of the Green Belt. Green Belt land should always remain open land.

There is a serious shortage of open space in Berkhamsted. Following the public inquiry the Inspector highlighted the amount of land for recreational use in Berkhamsted as being 70 acres short of the recommended space.

This proposal will significantly change the nature of the area of Shootersway and the top of Durrants Lane. These roads will change from being country roads to busy highways and traffic congestion in the area will be a major problem.

This proposal is to remove open land designation from land to the South East of Egerton Rothesay School. A mistake was made on all previous plans showing this to be designated open land which has led people to believe that no building will occur on the two fields bordering Shootersway.

The public has been misled as to the designation of the two fields bordered by Durrants Lane, Shootersway, Coppins Close and the school site as all previous plans have shown the two fields between Egerton Rothesay School and Shootersway as being designated open land. This has led people to believe that no building would occur on these fields. Had it been known that the designated use of one of the fields was to change, our representations to the Local Plan proposals, and to the Public Local Inquiry, may have been very different. Dacorum Council intends to rectify the mistake by simply modifying the plans.

Thus, all consultation regarding the whole proposal for development of this site and its removal from the Green Belt status, has been based on incorrect information because of an error in the Planning Department.

The whole proposal for the site must be re-examined using the correct plans.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mr JM Bailey
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

Object to changing the designated use of the land as it further reduces open land in this area and will significantly change the whole nature of the area and create traffic problems. Additionally, all previous consultation regarding this site has been based on an incorrect plan because of a drafting error.

This proposal further reduces open land which has previously been part of the Green Belt. Green Belt land should always remain open land.

There is a serious shortage of open space in Berkhamsted. Following the public inquiry the Inspector highlighted the amount of land for recreational use in Berkhamsted as being 70 acres short of recommended space.

This proposal will significantly change the nature of the area of Shootersway and the top of Durrants Lane. These roads will change from being country roads to busy highways and traffic congestion in the area will be a major problem.

This proposal is to remove open land designation from land to the South East of Egerton Rothesay School. A mistake was made on all previous plans showing this to be designated open land which has led people to believe that no building will occur on the two fields bordering Shootersway.

The public has been misled as to the designation of the two fields bordered by Durrants Lane, Shootersway, Coppins Close and the school site as all previous plans have shown the two fields between Egerton Rothesay School and Shootersway as being designated open land. This has led people to believe that no building would occur on these fields. Had it been known that the designated use of one of the fields was to change, our representations to the Local Plan proposals, and to the Public Local Inquiry, may have been very different. Dacorum Council intends to rectify the mistake by simply modifying the plans.

Thus, all consultation regarding the whole proposal for development of this site and its removal from the Green Belt status, has been based on incorrect information because of an error in the Planning Department.

The whole proposal for the site must be re-examined using the correct plans.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mr John R Stier
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

Public Inquiry did not make the use of land adjacent to Coppins Close clear that this would be built upon. Such a development will increase congestion, noise and generally disturb the area. Concerned about associated traffic reducing road safety in the area.

When the original public inquiry was opened to build new homes on the site it was not made apparent that land adjacent to Coppins Close would be built upon. To now change this without a full public inquiry is wrong and unethical, preventing people from fully airing their views before a decision is made.

Vehemently protests against the plans to build on the land next to Coppins Close. To do so will put a substantial number of vehicles into the area. Not only will this increase noise and congestion, but greatly increase the risk of road accidents to local children. As a parent of three children this is a substantial concern.

Not convinced that Berkhamsted has the infrastructure with roads, schools and doctors to support another 100 houses being built in the area.

Asks the Council not to allow building of any nature to take place on land adjacent to Coppins Close.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mr N J Jones
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

Objects to the proposal that the classification of 'Open Land' should be removed from the land bounded by Durrants Lane and Shootersway. It has been a premise that was strongly supported by the Inspector, that this land should be protected from future pressure for unsuitable development given its prominence in the landscape. The Proposed Further Modification is completely contrary to this.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mr T Kerr
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

Has been informed by a neighbour about the proposed development on the field to the rear of Coppins Close. This is the first that he has heard about the development proposal.

He has been told that there was a Public Local Inquiry during 2000/2001 – if this was public and local why did he not hear about it? Why was he not notified? Why was he not consulted as part of the public consultation last year?

The Proposed Modification is to change the land from 'Open Land.' Vehemently objects to this proposal. There has been no consultation with local residents.

Has lived in the same house for 25 years and the prime reasons for remaining is the aspect / location, which will be taken away by replacing the landscape / fields / copse with the noisy, unsightly edifice of a school. How can the Council do this without consultation?

A second public inquiry involving all the residents of Coppins Close is the only option. If the Council acts without consultation it will breach its mandate, which will lead to angry representations by those adversely affected.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mr & Mrs Carlyon

Object / Support: Object

Representation:

The Proposed Modification to change the designated Open Land Policy to fields adjacent to Coppins Close should not be given consent because the impact on the local infrastructure would simply be too great.

Shootersway is not intended for large volume traffic use and the burden on the A41 trunk road has caused increasing traffic problems and will only continue to get worse.

There is also concern of noise from the proposed new school site and resultant leisure facilities, since no outline details of the access provision, nor the siting have been made clear. There are currently inadequate parking provisions along Shootersway and the road is insufficiently wide enough for passing if there were congestion and this will not only impact upon Coppins Close, but on adjacent residents.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Committer: Mr Ian Stuttard
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

This land was designated as Open Space – all of a sudden a change has been sanctioned. Already Berkhamsted is short of public play space.

Here was to be a parcel of Green Belt in the original plans between Coppins Close and any proposed buildings. Residents are now informed that there was a mistake which means that the plans have now been changed.

Cannot believe that at such short notice that full consideration has gone into the changes – especially as it is being steamrolled.

Feelings following the recent change is high in Coppins Close. Not all will write. However, there should be an independent investigation.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Committer: Mrs P S Jones
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

The Inspector's report seemed to take into account the needs and worries of all the parties concerned as well as trying to preserve the pleasant landscape of the area. However, since this report the Council have introduced further modifications which have eroded many of the beneficial points / strategies the Inspector's Report had suggested.

This further modification would remove from the Council the extra powers 'open land' designation gives, which it could use to prevent Egerton Rothesay School from ruining the landscape forever.

Is the Council not concerned that Egerton Rothesay School themselves have asked for this modification? I realise that the school / developers will have to submit a planning application, but these days it seems to be a mere formality.

Strongly opposes this modification and urges the Council to reject it, thereby retaining the 'open land' designation on this area and the extra controls that go with it, so that they can protect the landscape and the needs of the residents of Berkhamsted e.g. land for recreational purposes.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mr Mark Jones
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

Opposes the removal of the open land designation from the land bounded by Shootersway / Coppins Close / Durrants Lane.

Understands that the designation means that the land can be built on in certain circumstances e.g. educational use, but that it gives the Council extra rights in controlling this. Surely the Council should retain these extra powers to enable them to minimise the impact of any development. Is the Council not worried that Egerton Rothesay School have asked for the modification and will it not allow them to build anything, anywhere they wish on this land – subject to planning permission, which these days seems only a formality.

Urges the Council to reject the modification and retain the 'open land' status.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mrs Marion Stuttard

Object / Support: Object

Representation:

Believes this land has always been designated as open space. Does not believe that local residents have been fully consulted. Concerns over safety in Shootersway. This is already a very busy road and subject to numerous accidents. Berkhamsted is lacking 75% green land. How can the Council justify more houses and a school on this green land?

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mr N D Kelly
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

The school should remain where it is and the open land should remain Green Belt.

Cannot see the point of designating land as Green Belt if that status can be overturned at any time that suits the local Council and Government.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mrs Carol Hall
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

Confusion has arisen from a previous error in an earlier Local Plan. Had understood that the land immediately behind numbers 1-11 Coppins Close was classified as Open Land and therefore could not be built upon. Feels she has been deliberately misled.

Considers that the Further Modification is therefore unacceptable and that the whole proposal and planning for the area should be re-examined and that members of the public affected by such plans should be kept fully informed.

Feels that the plans are a 'fait accompli,' but had information been made available earlier there would have been the opportunity to make these concerns apparent at earlier inquiries etc.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mr & Mrs Tossell
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

Removal of the Open Land designation represents a fundamental change to the original plan. The initial public perception would have been that these fields would not be built upon. The Proposed Modification changes this and the public should therefore be given a further opportunity to raise objections. Feels that a comprehensive review of the entire development should be undertaken in light of the proposed modifications.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mr J A McLellan
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

Because the Further Modification arises due to an error on the plans put before the public local inquiry, considers that there should be a further hearing by the Inspector of this matter. The modification involves a major change in the stated use and nature of the land adjacent to Shootersway and Coppins Close.

Shootersway is already in a bad state of repair and subject to a considerable volume of traffic – with only a narrow footpath on one side. To re-site Egerton Rothesay School adjacent to Coppins Close and Shootersway will result in additional, excessive traffic on an already inadequate thoroughfare.

Many cars park (all day) outside the school on Durrants lane causing a serious traffic hazard. This is likely to be repeated on Shootersway and into Coppins Close. There will also be considerable disruption and inconvenience at the beginning and end of the school day around Shootersway and Coppins Close.

Because of the erroneous plans put before the Inquiry, feels that the Inspector will not have taken these facts into account when reaching his conclusions.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mrs Margaret A McLellan
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

The Further Modification arises due to an error on the plans put before the public inquiry. A dangerous precedent is being set if the Council can make changes without apparently referring back to the Inspector, on the assumption that they think they know what he intended. On this basis, the purpose of any further inquiries in any part of the town would appear to be superfluous.

Due to the error in the plan put before the inquiry, concerned that insufficient account was taken of road access and traffic volume. Shootersway is already in a bad state of repair and is not adequate for a considerable increase in traffic. Both the pavement and the road between Coppins Close and Durrants Lane are prone to flooding, causing hazards for both drivers and pedestrians. The present parking arrangements at Egerton Rothesay School are inadequate - there being regularly 15-20 cars parked on or near a narrow section of Durrant lane for most of the day. It is to be hoped arrangements will be improved to avoid the problem being repeated in Shootersway / Coppins Close.

I trust sufficient review and consultation will be made in the Development Brief.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mrs L C Reeves
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

Believed that the fields would remain open land, as originally promised. As a parent of 2 children is in desperate need of recreational land. Local children have poor facilities compared with those of Hemel Hempstead.

Do not have sufficient school places, doctors, dentists etc to accommodate further development.

Travels up and down Durrants lane to work and to the children's respective schools. Shootersway is highly congested with fast traffic avoiding other parts of town and to join the by-pass at the Ashlyns site. Durrants Lane is dangerous. Has called the police on many occasions to report dangerous parking. Has made numerous calls to the school who say they are constantly reminding parents. Has witnessed more than one accident outside the school. Shootersway is not suitable for the volume of traffic and a school entrance on a dangerous bend.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mr Mark Jones
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

Opposes the proposed Modification as it would remove the designation of open land from the land bounded by Shootersway / Coppins Close / Durrants Lane.

Understands that the designation of open land is that it can be built on in certain circumstances e.g. educational use, but that it gives the Council extra rights in controlling this. Surely the Council should retain these extra powers to enable them to minimise the impact of any development.

Is the Council not worried that Egerton Rothesay School have asked for this modification and will it not allow them to build anything, anywhere they wish on this land – subject to planning permission, which seems only a formality. Urges the Council to reject this Modification and retain the open land status.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mrs P S Jones
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

Objects to the proposed removal of the open land designation from the land bounded by Shootersway and Coppins Close.

The Inspector's Report seemed to take into account the needs and worries of all parties concerned as well as trying to preserve the pleasant landscape of the area. However, since this report the Council have introduced Further Modifications which have eroded many of the beneficial points / strategies the Inspector's Report had suggested. This Further Modification would remove from the Council extra 'powers' open land designation gives, which it could use to prevent Egerton Rothesay School from ruining the landscape forever. Is the Council not concerned that Egerton Rothesay School have themselves asked for this Modification? I realise that the school / developers will have to submit a planning application – but these days this seems to be a mere formality.

Strongly opposes this Modification and urges the Council to reject it, thereby retaining the open land designation on this area and the extra controls that go with it, so that they can protect the landscape and the needs of the residents of residents of Berkhamsted for recreational purposes.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mr Michael Boyce
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

The original consultation process and Public Inquiry were founded on a mistake. To correct this mistake and proceed as if representations from those in Coppins Close were not affected is illogical and unjust.

The mis-designation as Open Land of fields between Coppins Close and Durrants Lane is a significant mistake that challenges the whole basis of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan and the ensuing consultation process and Public Local Inquiry in 2000/1 and 2003.

The DBC proposal simply to change this Open Land designation of site C1/L1 on Map 17 and proceed unhindered is illogical and unjust, as the error impacted much of the consultation process. Representations would have been very different if it had been known that the designated use of fields was to change.

The logically correct approach is to return to the point of error and proceed from there by re-engaging with potentially affected parties via the standard consultation process. That this is not merely a minor correction of detail is evident when one considers e.g. the likely impact on Coppins Close of additional parking, obstruction and above all safety of the children who play in this quiet residential cul-de-sac.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: P A Ferguson
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

Objecting to the removal of the field adjacent to Coppins Close as open land. The field has always been shown as open land on all plans available for public inspection.

The land is an important open space at the boundary of the town. The open land designation should be preserved in order to protect this area from the pressure of future development. This Modification will set an unwelcome precedent for the future, regarding other open land in the town and for the protection of the Green Belt.

At the Public Local Inquiry all plans showed the two fields adjacent to Shootersway as designated open space. The public have not had an opportunity to express their views on the development of this land.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

Further Modification Number: 2

Commenter: Mr G Hall
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

The Proposed Further Modifications would appear to try and correct a previous error in the previous Local Plan. All previous plans have shown that the land immediately behind Nos 1-11 Coppins Close to be classified Open Land. This will have led to a belief that this land would not be built upon.

If it had been known that the designated use of the land behind 1-11 Coppins Close was to be changed, then the representations to the Local Plan proposals and Public Local Inquiry would have been very different.

It would appear that DBC intends to rectify the mis-designation by merely modifying the plans, without re-examining the whole proposals concerning the site.

Response:

See detailed response in Appendix 2.

PART 2 – EMPLOYMENT: EMPLOYMENT PROPOSAL SITES

Further Modification Number: 4

Commenter: Crown Estate (Entec)
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

The text of the Further Modification refers to a new estate for 'specialised technological industries or other activities in the national or regional interest.' This does not comply with Policy 15 of the Adopted Hertfordshire Structure Plan, which states that *priority* will be given to specialised technological activities or other activities which are in the national or regional interest.

It is considered that the text should be amended so that it is wholly consistent with the text in the Structure Plan. The text should therefore be amended to read:

~~“New estate of business, industry and storage and distribution units where priority will be given to for specialised technological industries and/or other activities in the national or regional interest.”~~

Response:

Proposal Site E4 has already been amended in line with Recommendation 8.15.12 of the Inquiry Inspector (see Proposed Modification 157). This recommendation included the revision of the ‘Proposal’ section to refer solely to specialised technological activities and activities in the national or regional interest.

Proposal E4 must be read in conjunction with Policy 35 of the Local Plan (land at North East Hemel Hempstead). This Policy provides the overall planning framework for development of the key employment site. Policy 35 of the Deposit Local Plan already includes the additional wording requested by the objectors. The phrase does not need to be repeated in E4 of the Employment Schedule as this provides guidance on the detailed site requirements, rather than repeat the strategic framework.

It is not considered that any significant new planning issues are raised as the Council’s approach toward this site is wholly consistent with that set out in the Structure Plan and accords with the Inspector’s recommendation. No changes are required to Proposed Modification 4 in the light of these objections.

Further Modification Number: 4

Commenter: English Partnerships (Jones Lang LaSalle Limited)
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

The Further Modification is intended to amend the description of Proposal Site E4 to ensure consistency with Policy 35 and the Structure Plan. English Partnerships submitted representations in September 2003 seeking such a Modification. However, the proposed wording in the Further Modification is still not consistent with the Structure Plan.

At Proposed Modifications stage English Partnerships made similar representations in respect of the need for the Planning Requirements section of the Policy statement to reflect the wording of the Structure Plan policy. This has not been reflected in the Further Modifications, but English Partnerships nevertheless request that there is consistency throughout the Local Plan policy text with the Structure Plan.

The description of Employment Proposal Site E4 should be amended to read as follows:-

“New estate units where priority will be given to specialised technological activities or other activities which are in the national or regional interest.”

Response:

Proposal Site E4 has already been amended in line with Recommendation 8.15.12 of the Inquiry Inspector (see Proposed Modification 157). This recommendation

included the revision of the 'Proposal' section to refer solely to specialised technological activities and activities in the national or regional interest.

Proposal E4 must be read in conjunction with Policy 35 of the Local Plan (land at North East Hemel Hempstead). This Policy provides the overall planning framework for development of the key employment site. Policy 35 of the Deposit Local Plan already includes the additional wording requested by the objectors. The phrase does not need to be repeated in E4 of the Employment Schedule as this provides guidance on the detailed site requirements, rather than repeat the strategic framework.

It is not considered that any significant new planning issues are raised as the Council's approach toward this site is wholly consistent with that set out in the Structure Plan and accords with the Inspector's recommendation. No changes are required to Proposed Modification 4 in the light of these objections.

Further Modification Number: 4

Commenter: Gazeley Properties
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

The text of the Further Modification refers to a new estate for 'specialised technological industries or other activities in the national or regional interest.' This does not comply with Policy 15 of the Adopted Hertfordshire Structure Plan, which states that priority will be given to specialised technological activities or other activities which are in the national or regional interest.

It is considered that the text should be amended so that it is wholly consistent with the text in the Structure Plan. The text should therefore be amended to read:

"New estate of business, industry and storage and distribution units where priority will be given to specialised technological industries and or other activities in the national or regional interest."

Response:

Proposal Site E4 has already been amended in line with Recommendation 8.15.12 of the Inquiry Inspector (see Proposed Modification 157). This recommendation included the revision of the 'Proposal' section to refer solely to specialised technological activities and activities in the national or regional interest.

Proposal E4 must be read in conjunction with Policy 35 of the Local Plan (land at North East Hemel Hempstead). This Policy provides the overall planning framework for development of the key employment site. Policy 35 of the Deposit Local Plan already includes the additional wording requested by the objectors. The phrase does not need to be repeated in E4 of the Employment Schedule as this provides guidance on the detailed site requirements, rather than repeat the strategic framework.

It is not considered that any significant new planning issues are raised as the Council's approach toward this site is wholly consistent with that set out in the

Structure Plan and accords with the Inspector's recommendation. No changes are required to Proposed Modification 4 in the light of these objections.

PART 4 – SECTION 7: TWO WATERS & APSLEY INSET

Further Modification Number: 5

Commenter: Prudential Assurance Company Limited
Object / Support: Support

Representation:

Support the Proposed Further Modification. The Modification is consistent with the advice of both Hertfordshire County Council's Highways Division and of Prudential's own consultants that explicit reference to a link road across the Homebase/Wickes site is not appropriate for inclusion in the Local Plan.

Response:

The support for the Proposed Further Modification is welcomed.

Further Modification Number: 6

Commenter: Prudential Assurance Company Limited
Object / Support: Support

Representation:

Support the Proposed Further Modification. The Modification is consistent with the advice of both Hertfordshire County Council's Highways Division and of Prudential's own consultants that explicit reference to a link road across the Homebase/Wickes site is not appropriate for inclusion in the Local Plan.

Response:

The support for the Proposed Further Modification is welcomed.

Further Modification Number: 6

Commenter: G B Kent & Sons Ltd (Aitchison Raffety)
Object / Support: Object

Representation:

It is acknowledged that the Council have now deleted the requirement for General Employment Area zoning on the land owned and occupied by G B Kent & Sons at London Road in accordance with the Inspector's Report and recommendations.

The Inspector's Report and recommendations however did not go any further in suggesting a particular form of development or the need for a comprehensive redevelopment of the area concerned.

Since the previous discussion and amendment to the plan circumstances have again altered. At present there appears that there may be a proposal that the existing Homebase store should be reoccupied by Dunelm, a fabrics retailer. In the circumstances of G B Kent wishing to relocate from the site concerned the development proposals for their site might be thwarted by the inappropriate and unnecessarily cumbersome additional wording which has been added to the policies which are not in accordance with the Inspector's recommendations.

As a result of consideration of the uncertainty regarding comprehensive redevelopment within the Plan period, the following amendments should be made to the suggested Further Modifications:-

Further Modification No. 6

The last sentence of the initial paragraph to be deleted which states as follows -
"Any development proposal should examine the potential of the adjoining Kent Brushes site. Development brief required."

In the final sentence of the third paragraph of the Proposed Modification 425 the last sentence should be deleted which states *"The site can be considered together with the adjoining site in any comprehensive redevelopment of the wider area."*

It is considered that whilst the Council have gone along with the principle of the Inspector's original recommendation that the G B Kent & Sons site should not be included within the Plan as a General Employment Area, the Council are unnecessarily seeking to link the whole area with a comprehensive redevelopment.

The remaining wording is considered adequate since the words *"whilst existing uses can remain on the site future development proposals will be judged against other policies in the Plan"* is considered an adequate and appropriate wording in itself. The additional wording could make individual redevelopment of part or parts of the site either impossible to achieve or inappropriate in the context of the present circumstances which now relate to the sites in question.

The additional wording is considered to be inappropriate and *ultra vares*, having regard to the Inspector's recommendations.

Response:

Proposed Further Modification 6 clearly states how the Local Plan would consider a development proposal on this site, *namely "An area consisting of Kents Brushes... are unallocated for a specific use in the Plan. Whilst existing uses can remain on the site, future development proposals will be judged against other policies of the Plan."* This statement provides considerable flexibility and a range of possible uses, subject to satisfying relevant planning policies.

The Proposed Further Modification then goes on to say that that the *site "can be considered together with the adjoining site in any comprehensive redevelopment of the wider area."* The objector is mistaken in construing that this statement could be used to prevent the redevelopment of the Kent site in isolation. The key word in this

proposed wording is 'can.' There is no specific requirement for a comprehensive development scheme. The proposed wording merely highlights that a wider redevelopment opportunity may exist.

The remaining wording of Proposed Modification 6 states that *"Any redevelopment proposal should examine the potential of the adjoining Kents Brushes site. Development Brief required."* Contrary to the objector's concerns, the onus is on the adjoining Homebase / Wickes site to consider the potential of including the Kent site in a comprehensive redevelopment scheme and is a requirement of the redevelopment of the Homebase / Wickes site. It does not apply the other way round.

Agents acting on behalf of Prudential Assurance Ltd who own the Wickes and former Homebase site have submitted representations supporting this Proposed Further Modification.

Given that the wording does not prevent the reuse of the Kent site on its own, it is not considered that any significant new planning issues are raised. No changes are required to Proposed Modification 6 in the light of this objection.

Further Modification Number: 7

Commenter: Prudential Assurance Company Limited
Object / Support: Support

Representation:

Support the Proposed Further Modification. The Modification is consistent with the advice of both Hertfordshire County Council's Highways Division and of Prudential's own consultants that explicit reference to a link road across the Homebase/Wickes site is not appropriate for inclusion in the Local Plan.

Response:

The support for the Proposed Further Modification is welcomed.

Further Modification Number: 8

Commenter: Prudential Assurance Company Limited
Object / Support: Support

Representation:

Support the Proposed Further Modification. The Modification is consistent with the advice of both Hertfordshire County Council's Highways Division and of Prudential's own consultants that explicit reference to a link road across the Homebase/Wickes site is not appropriate for inclusion in the Local Plan.

Response:

The support for the Proposed Further Modification is welcomed.

Further Modification Number: 9

Committer: Prudential Assurance Company Limited
Object / Support: Support

Representation:

Support the Proposed Further Modification. The Modification is consistent with the advice of both Hertfordshire County Council's Highways Division and of Prudential's own consultants that explicit reference to a link road across the Homebase/Wickes site is not appropriate for inclusion in the Local Plan.

Response:

The support for the Proposed Further Modification is welcomed.

Response to Objections to Proposed Further Modification 2 Part 2 – Policy 3: Development Strategy – The Green Belt

The issue at this stage in the Local Plan review is whether or not the field adjoining Coppins Close should be designated as open land.

Designation of Coppins Close Field:

The Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 (Deposit Draft) contains three proposals for land at Durrants Lane / Shootersway:-

1. Proposal H52 for 100 new dwellings (and its removal from the Green Belt)
2. Proposal C1 for a replacement school and playing field
3. Proposal L1 for new leisure space

It is important to note that the Council proposed to retain the area relating to proposals C1/L1 (i.e. west of properties along Coppins Close) within the Green Belt in the Deposit Local Plan and defended this position at the public local inquiry.

This field is clearly identified in both Proposals C1 and L1 in the Deposit Local Plan as the preferred location for a new Egerton Rothesay School. The existing school already has planning permission to extend and the relocation would involve the construction of a larger building to incorporate those parts of the school currently located on the Charles Street site.

When these proposals were advertised (in late 1998, early 1999) a number of objections were received. These objections were considered at the Public Inquiry between March 2000 and May 2001. The Inspector's report on the Inquiry was published by the Council in September 2002. The Inspector made a number of recommendations to the Council and the Council considered these recommendations and advertised the resulting Proposed Modifications in November 2003.

In relation to the proposals on the Durrants Lane/Shootersway site, the Inspector's main recommendations were as follows:

- (a) amend the Green Belt boundary to exclude proposal site C1/L1 (which includes the Coppins Close field) from the Green Belt and include it within the urban boundary of Berkhamsted. He considered this change necessary as a school would be regarded as inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
- (b) amend the proposals map to separately identify the housing proposal site H52 from the C1/L1 allocation.

The changes were agreed at Full Council on 25 June 2003. They confirmed that the school would be proposed on the field west of Coppins Close. The precise location of the school within this field is to be determined at a later date. In deciding to remove the C1/L1 field from the Green Belt, the Council also decided to give the field an 'open land' designation, as this would be consistent (once the school was built) with other schools/playing fields in the Borough. However, it is important to note that this was not an Inspector's recommendation. His report only refers to the field immediately adjacent to Durrants Lane and to Cox's Dell (paragraphs 14.19.22 to 14.19.24).

When the Proposed Modifications were advertised, an objection was received to this open land designation, as the objectors argued that the change did not reflect the intent of the Inspector. The Council considered objections to the Proposed Modifications and accepted that the open land designation would not be appropriate for Proposal C1/L1 based on the interpretation of the Inspector's Report. The Council has advertised Proposed Further Modifications to remove the 'open land' designation from this specific field.

Whether or not this field should be designated as open land or be left without notation under Policy 7 (Land Use Division in Towns and Large Villages) is a matter of judgement. It is important to note that:-

- The proposal for the school (C1) remains unaltered.
- The Inspector did not consider that all land within the urban areas need have a Policy 7 notation.
- The Inspector made no recommendation that the Coppins Close field should be open land.

The Council's Proposed Further Modification 2 reflects the above points. It has always been, and remains, the Council's intention that the new school should occupy the field adjoining Coppins Close. Whether or not this field is designated as open land has no impact upon the principle of the development of a new school. The Council's Proposed Further Modification 2 more accurately reflects the Inspector's conclusions on the areas to be designated as open land.

Other Matters:

In addition to the question of the open land designation, a number of other issues have been raised by objectors. These relate to the principle of releasing the land from the Green Belt, the effect of additional traffic, the impact on local schools, the need for open space, the relocation of Egerton Rothesay School, the issue of precedent and the availability of other sites. All of these issues were discussed at the Public Local Inquiry held between March 2000 and May 2001. The Inspector's consideration of these issues and resulting conclusions are set out in sections 4.19, 7.45, 11.7 and 12.24 of the Inspector's Report.

Paragraph 4.19.15 of this Report states that there is an exceptional need to release some additional land on the periphery of Berkhamsted to meet future

housing needs. The Inspector considered that the release of land at Durrants Lane/Shootersway would not have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt or the main purposes behind its designation. He did not consider that the impact of proposed development, in terms of traffic or pressure on local services, would cause harm to the Green Belt. Furthermore, he was not satisfied that any more suitable sites existed within Berkhamsted, nor that the release of this land would set an undesirable precedent for the development of adjoining land. The Inspector acknowledged that the release of this Green Belt land was part of a comprehensive redevelopment package (paragraph 4.19.12). This involved the expansion and relocation of Egerton Rothesay School, the re-use or redevelopment of buildings in Charles Street, currently occupied by the Lower School, for housing and the provision of an extensive area of public open space. He therefore concluded that overall, these benefits were sufficient to outweigh the site's disadvantages in terms of its accessibility.

In terms of highway issues, the Inspector concluded that the Deposit Plan adequately addresses the need for possible road improvements. He did however suggest an amendment to the planning requirements for the Proposal Sites C1 to indicate that the submission of a school travel plan will be required in conjunction with any relocation and/or expansion of Egerton Rothesay School. The Council has accepted this recommendation. Subject to this amendment the Inspector was satisfied that the increase in traffic levels on the surrounding road network would have an unacceptable impact on the safety and convenience of other road users (paragraph 7.45.17).

The Inspector acknowledged that there is currently a deficiency of open space within Berkhamsted. He considered it extremely unlikely that any additional playing fields would be provided without the proposed development and that rather than increasing the existing deficit, the proposals would actually help to address the shortfall. The provision of this new formal leisure space was therefore identified as one of the significant benefits arising from the proposed scheme (paragraph 7.45.20).

The Inspector considered that the development would not put an intolerable burden on local educational facilities. This conclusion is supported by evidence put before the Inquiry by the Local Education Authority

As Proposals C1, L1 and H52 - and therefore the amount and nature of new building proposed on the site - remain unaltered, all relevant issues have already been taken into account by both the Council and the Inspector. As the representations to the Proposed Further Modifications raise no new significant planning issues, a second Public Local Inquiry is not justified.

The timing of any school development is dependent on the programming of housing development on site H52 (a Part II site scheduled for release after 2006) and the preparation of a detailed Development Brief. This document will set out detailed requirements relating to issues such as the density and height of housing, issues of parking provision, the availability of open space, the precise location of the school, access roads etc.

The draft of this Development Brief will be subject to extensive consultation and all local resident and interested parties will be invited to comment on the draft of this document and set out any detailed concerns they may have. Once this Development Brief has been agreed by the Council, a detailed planning application will need to be approved before any development can commence.