



# **Senior Voice and Community Groups Workshop Report**

**16<sup>th</sup> January 2009**

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## **1. Introduction**

This workshop was part of a series of workshops that have been undertaken to help inform the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework (LDF). The other workshops engaged with local residents and organisations of the towns and large villages (Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted, Tring, Kings Langley, Bovingdon, Markyate and the Countryside) in the Borough of Dacorum. A workshop was also held to consider the views of the children of Dacorum.

## **2. Senior Voice and Community Groups Workshop**

There was an initial presentation setting the context for planning in Hemel Hempstead, which was followed by 2 group sessions covering the topics 'Your People' and 'Your Place'. Each of the group sessions covered a range of questions. In order that all of the questions were discussed within an allotted time the participants were split into 3 groups answering relevant topics. The first group session was split as follows: Group 1 covered Question 1; Group 2 covered Question 2; and Group 3 Question 3. During the second session people stayed in the same groups and answered the same question about housing.

After the participants had answered their questions, the groups had to determine and identify the most important responses made (# highlights an important issue). A nominated person or the facilitator from each group recounted the question and the most important issues to all of the participants in the room. The other groups were then given an opportunity to add any further responses. The responses that were given by the workshop participants are given in Sections 3 to 4 of this report. Answers to the questions have been noted per group underneath the relevant questions.

Workshop participants were also asked to write their top 5 priorities for the Borough on sticky notes and then to place them on the Priority Boards 1 to 5, Priority 1 being the highest. These are identified under Section 5 'Visioning Priorities'. An analysis of the priorities has been calculated attributing a sliding scale of points for each priority i.e. 5 points for priority 1, down to 1 point for priority 5 (shown in Section 7). The 5 priorities with the most points overall will then be taken further through the LDF process.

Any other additional comments made during the event were listed on the 'Park It' and can be found under 'Other Comments'.

A list of attendees and groups can be found at the end of this feedback report.

### 3. Workshop 1 - *Your People*

#### Group 1 – Facilities and Services

1a) What facilities and services should be accommodated in local centres, residential development and town centres?

##### Local Centres

- Day Centres in all areas; and
- Enough space for GP surgeries to expand, or new sites to enable easier access to Doctors/Practice Nurses.

##### Residential Development

- need for better road access (Woodhall Farm, Manor Estate mentioned);
- wider roads in new and existing neighbourhoods would help improve bus access and other service vehicles; and
- cars should be limited to parking off road or on one side of the road only.

##### Town Centres

- an integrated transport system is needed especially in HH town centre with good bus links, a bus station, and links to the railway stations; #
- frequency of bus services is important (Arriva need to ensure timetables are adhered to – no service runs should be kept);
- dial-a-ride is important; and
- removal of acute Hospital services to Watford provides a few problems for this district: there access issues getting to Watford via the car or public transport; there is an increasing population with growing needs; and precedence shows that Hemel will be the largest Herts town without an A & E department;
- in terms of a “new site” for Hemel Hospital – ensure space for expansion (and bringing back of A & E and other services).

1b) If there are deficiencies in existing areas, how do you think they can be tackled?

- extra facilities in Gossoms End;
- by providing accessibility to local shopping areas/cultural leisure facilities, such as community centres in walking distance; #
- additional sports/leisure provision for areas outside HH, Bekhamsted and Tring;
- make better use of canal/rivers for informal leisure use;
- policing of ‘blue badge’/disabled parking spaces to avoid misuse and more

control over who is issued badges;

- improved accessibility to facilities, such as Jarman Park/Sports Centre by public transport; #
- more sports/leisure facilities in HH town centre;
- income gap may grow if people cannot afford to travel to different areas of the Borough; and
- challenge to accommodate needs \* of disabled people (including young ones) and elderly often housebound people.  
\* leisure, stimulation, basic needs

## **Group 2 – Design and Renewables**

2a) How should we integrate new housing and employment with new communities?

- New housing should have a neighbourhood centre with facilities such as shops and a community centre #
- Wide roads with adequate off-street parking #
- No 'Cul-de-Sacs'
- Family homes with garages #
- Support to Park & Ride
- More public transport with access for the disabled and pushchairs
- Strengthen public transport links to Watford General Hospital with frequent and low cost services
- Manageable green space and gardens
- Family Accommodation (not flats)
- Not flats for the elderly, but housing that is integrated into the community and close to community facilities
- Elderly people need bigger rooms
- Better pedestrian access to community facilities
- Varied choice of design – traditional and modern
- Designed for security
- Sensory lighting, toilets and taps

- Downstairs W.C
- Use of natural light in homes
- Energy efficient homes

2b) What do you think are the most important things to take into account in designing new buildings?

See above

2c) What types of renewable energy should be encouraged in development?

See above

### **Group 3 – Recreational and Open Space**

3a) Are there any recreational deficiencies in the Borough? If so what and where?

Yes

- Cultural and community facilities in the Borough #
- Access to swimming facilities for the disabled is poor
- Replacement Pavilion #
- Deficiency in parking at community meeting places #
- Cycle ways deficiency in Tring & Borough. More cycle ways are needed to encourage cycling to school and healthy lifestyles
- A separate sports centre for Tring
- Key playing space for young children is missing in Tring (like Canal Fields, Berkhamsted)
- Wheelchair access is poor in the Borough #
- Allotments needed – dotted around settlements rather than larger sites #
- Green spaces to be included in new development – soft landscaping is missing in new development #

3b) What changes do we want to see with our open spaces in the Borough?

- Parking by open spaces
- Retain flowers and flowerbeds around the towns/villages #
- Improve maintenance of roads and pavements in the Borough i.e. litter, dog mess and glass #
- Do not build on open space #
- Disabled access to open space
- Play areas
- Additional allotments
- Do not merge settlements i.e. Berkhamsted and Bourne End #

## 4. Workshop 2 - *Your Place*

All of the groups answered the same question:

1) How and where do we accommodate all of this growth?

### Group 1

- HH – avoid developing in the river valleys
- Berkhamsted/and smaller settlement – Green Belt provides a valuable area of open space for the town (because of local deficiencies of open space this land should not be developed)
- Prevent coalescence of settlements, and keep as much of the Green Belt as possible
- Consider less attractive areas of GB
- HH options – focus on (1) Pouchen End and (2) East Hemel
- Very important to ensure adequate infrastructure – is there an optimum size?
- Minority view – northern option with access essential to the northern by pass

### Group 2

- Should be phased
- Proper infrastructure should be in place
- Facilities more important than location BUT Green Belt should be protected
- Preserve separation of communities
- Housing should be close to employment (e.g. Maylands)
- Prefer Eastern option
- Need good transport links

### Group 3

- Option – northern or dispersed
- Infrastructure, community facilities and local centres for new neighbourhoods are vital
- Support a new road, whether northern bypass or another road

## 5. Visioning Priorities

### Priority 1

- Provision of an integrated traffic system and utilities, with 7.5 ton limits in new areas
- Avoiding building too near to Buncefield
- Public transport – e.g. Hop on Hop off bus (free preferably) – going to major areas e.g. shopping/leisure/station etc
- Consult older people for their needs
- Phase areas of development
- Adequate infrastructure is needed including transport, health, schools and community
- Dacorum/Hemel Hempstead Acute General Hospital is needed to serve the district now and in the future
- Provide good public transport to serve the existing area and new development i.e. an increase in bus services is required
- Provide adequate disabled access
- Provide a Hospital and appropriate health services
- Existing Hospital services should remain open
- Large community centres are needed for a variety of functions (offices, etc.)
- Access – in general for the disabled, mums with children etc. (buses, cycle route etc.)
- Better use of Gossoms End (Elderly Care Unit) Day Centre in Berkhamsted
- A better transport system
- Family homes with gardens are essential to help combat childhood obesity
- Community halls/concert halls should be included for all social in future developments
- No building near Buncefield
- No extension to the Green Belt around Berkhamsted – it is accepted that Berkhamsted is under served with recreation space within the town
- Affordable housing provision
- Retain green spaces – to lift the spirits and keep the flowerbeds throughout the Borough
- What has happened to all the shops in Hemel Hempstead? Maintain a variety of occupied shops
- Pavilion replacement - large meeting place for 400+ people with cultural entertainment space
- New growth areas to include community infrastructure
- What about the hospital, is it going?
- Blue Badge Council should be able to check how many BB holders there are and Dacorum should provide enough parking spaces for them.
- A Hospital with full facilities such as A&E, operating theatres and adequate parking
- Urgent Regeneration of “Old Town” and new “Civic Centre” with Transport Centre, major cultural facility, health facility, education facility, leisure centre (not more housing)

## Priority 2

- Save Hemel Hospital – travelling from Tring to Watford is too far
- Provide a residential home for elderly persons sensitive to cultural needs
- New housing needs to include not just a proportion of social housing, but also a proportion of houses with wider doorways and corridors, rooms large enough for a wheelchairs turning circle, and large bathrooms to accommodate hoist facilities needed for disabled children
- Pavilion – access to cultural events
- Good public transport to all parts of Dacorum
- Build new communities with facilities, rather than “adding on” houses without facilities
- Adequate infrastructure
- Enough activities for young people which are sensitive everyone’s needs
- Health, schools and community infrastructures must be provided in new areas
- Preserving Green Belt e.g. Bulbourne Valley
- Multi-cultural centres and community meeting places
- Better bus services and reinstatement of Park and Ride
- Developments to be in keeping with the character of the local area
- Social care facilities available throughout the borough (HH, Berkhamsted, Tring and villages)
- More parking
- Retain green spaces where practicable
- Local Hospital
- Allow for future development but keep open space as it is a good quality of Hemel
- Prefer West rather than East development areas in HH
- Northern area for small buildings etc. i.e. bungalows/small flats
- Maintain green area between settlements
- Accessible local transport includes Park and Ride
- Develop new Civic area
- Health (hospital) and community support systems – (vital if 17,000 new homes to be built)
- Hospital – Hemel needs its own hospital and have more centres for walk in and out doctors

## Priority 3

- Remember older housebound people when planning new and existing estates
- Parking, road links commuting facilities
- Good access and transport
- Affordable reliable public transport
- Decent transport
- Improve public transport system especially Tring and the villages. Tring to Aldbury and Wigginton bus is under threat of termination
- Goof primary health care for all residents old and young

- New build to concentrate on East of town – up to Motorway – plus smaller amount West of town also avoid flood plains, brownfield areas to be investigated
- Houses to be built
- Accelerate program of Civic Zone Development
- Northern option 3,200
- Principle – negate the concept of NIMBY – i.e. don't let it sway the decisions (in relation to Traveller Sites)
- Transport links to be in place to cope with new build – include cycle ways
- Consultation with older people re. their community
- Cultural centre
- Better health facilities
- Follow the rules of the Sustainable Communities Act to keep services as local as possible
- Eastern area through to Western
- Well managed open spaces with access for all must be a condition of all new development
- Disability access to community and leisure facilities as well as open spaces. Important to consider wheelchair users who do not use standard NHS size wheelchairs, and also mobility scooters. The nature of the surface on paths is important too! Wheelchairs and pushchairs do not move well on stone/shingle!
- Space for people parking at health care premises including hospital;
- Transport – more frequent transport throughout the whole borough
- Affordable housing

#### **Priority 4**

- Security safety and policing, cleaner town
- Better internal design of housing – find priorities of various age groups
- Ensure adequate community facilities that cater for all the community
- Maintain accessibility in all existing and install in new neighbourhoods
- Provide easily accessible schools, community centres, concert halls etc. – need for transport
- Facilities – community, shops and schools – leisure social service provision
- Town appearance important – design to avoid concrete boxes and Water Gardens to be upgraded (litter collections improved)
- All areas should have small shopping amenities
- Look to the future:- encourage healthier lives by: more cycle ways, more allotments, easier access to green areas i.e. parking, wheelchairs & buggy access
- Development to East and West of HH – 2 larger developments
- Integrated transport facilities including cycle ways in new neighbourhoods
- Adequate parking both in housing areas and local facilities
- Eastern options
- Principle – Integrated transport system – reduce cars. No new “Northern Bypass Road” – oppose i.e. link with Sustainability and low carbon plan
- School playgrounds

- Hold all existing facilities and land used by hospital and NHS Services until alternative available
- Replace the Pavilion ASAP
- Future housing must include housing for those with learning disabilities/difficulties who wish to live independently also include small (3/4) people community homes for those with LDD who need to live with resident carers
- Through roads in new development
- Excellent shopping facilities
- As much as possible the Green Belt to remain
- Decent infrastructure, hospital and schools

### **Priority 5**

- A good bus service – access for all
- Do not put young families in flats without gardens!
- Take into account the feel of well-being in the communities
- Promoting community
- Need for safer walking, cycling routes round the town – can also be safe routes to school, wheelchair/mobility scooter routes etc.
- Flower beds and green areas deserve higher maintenance and litter cleared away to make people feel better !!
- Leisure pursuits for different cultures required such as Bollywood films
- Do not develop all the infill opportunities – gaps are important
- More money
- Good infrastructure in place for existing and future communities
- Facilities for disables
- More community centres
- Houses in two estates on west and east sites 6 [Pouchen End] & 14b [Leverstock Green - Blackwater}
- Principles – maintain Green Belt as far as possible, given that Green Corridors between settlements to be maintained with the housing development in all of 3 major settlements – Hemel, Berkhamsted and Tring
- Facilities for youth – not youth clubs
- Use rivers and canal to enhance the whole of Dacorum. Remember that Hemel should be an attraction – to hold its own
- Tramway system would be great, and improvements to the pedestrian accessibility at the circular crossing (Plough Roundabout) to the centre of the town
- New housing ecologically sustained. Low C footprint if possible
- Road to skirt from west to east – north – around Grovehill to Bourne End
- Build up and improve all local centres

## 6. Analysis of Priorities

Issue	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5	Total Score
HH Acute General Hospital and health facilities	5x5	4x4	2x3			47
Good frequent public transport systems in the Borough - free bus to major destinations in HH and park and ride,	3x5	3x4	4x3		1x1	40
Provision of community facilities such as large community centres/halls and cultural centres	3x5	1x4	1x3	1x2	2x1	26
Adequate safe access and parking for the disabled, and parents with small children	3x5		1x3	2x2	1x1	25
Affordable homes	1x5	1x4	2x3			15
Retain and preserve open space, green space and flowerbeds	1x5	2x4			1x1	14
Provision of integrated traffic and transport systems to cope with new development	1x5		2x3	1x2		13
Adequate infrastructure	1x5	1x4		1x2	1x1	12
Develop new Civic Centre with transport centre, cultural educational and health facilities and a leisure centre	1x5	1x4	1x3			12
More parking		1x4	2x3	1x2		12
Avoid building too near to Buncefield	2x5					10
Performing Arts Centre for HH	1x5	1x4			1x1	10
Older peoples' needs	1x5		1x3			8
Family homes	1x5				1x1	6
Preserve Green Belt		1x4			2x1	6
Social care facilities		1x4		1x2		6
An eastern and western option preferred			1x3	1x2	1x1	6
Activities for young people		1x4			1x1	5
Maintain a variety of shops in HH	1x5					5
Regeneration of the Old Town	1x5					5
Better use of Gossoms End Elderly Care Day Centre	1x5					5
Manage open spaces and make them			1x3	1x2		5

accessible to all						
Phasing growth	1x5					<b>5</b>
Lifetime homes		1x4				<b>4</b>
New communities with facilities, rather than communities with no facilities		1x4				<b>4</b>
Culturally sensitive residential home for elderly persons		1x4				<b>4</b>
Incorporate local character in new developments		1x4				<b>4</b>
Prefer developing to the west rather the east		1x4				<b>4</b>
Northern area of HH for smaller buildings like bungalows		1x4				<b>4</b>
Maintain green spaces between settlements		1x4				<b>4</b>
Build to the east of HH			1x3			<b>3</b>
Limit northern option to 3,200			1x3			<b>3</b>
Don't let NIMBYism influence the siting of Gypsy and Traveller sites			1x3			<b>3</b>
Consult the elderly sector of the community			1x3			<b>3</b>
Follow the sustainable Communities Act to keep services local			1x3			<b>3</b>
Encourage healthier lifestyles and the well-being in communities - more cycle ways, more allotments etc				1x2	1x1	<b>3</b>
Security, safety and policing				1x2		<b>2</b>
Better internal design of housing				1x2		<b>2</b>
Provide community facilities such as shops and schools				1x2		<b>2</b>
Improve the town's appearance – avoid concrete boxes and litter collection important				1x2		<b>2</b>
Local centres important				1x2		<b>2</b>
Include cycle ways				1x2		<b>2</b>
Eastern option				1x2		<b>2</b>
No Northern Bypass				1x2		<b>2</b>
School playgrounds				1x2		<b>2</b>
Prevent redevelopment of the hospital site until alternative facilities available				1x2		<b>2</b>
Homes for people who need live-in carers				1x2		<b>2</b>

Through roads in new development				1x2		<b>2</b>
Excellent shopping facilities				1x2		<b>2</b>
Appropriate leisure pursuits for different cultures – Bollywood films at the cinema					1x1	<b>1</b>
Do not develop all the infill opportunities – gaps are important					1x1	<b>1</b>
Money					1x1	<b>1</b>
Facilities for the disabled					1x1	<b>1</b>
Use rivers and canals to enhance Dacorum					1x1	<b>1</b>
Low-carbon housing					1x1	<b>1</b>
Tram system in the town centre					1x1	<b>1</b>
Northern Bypass is needed					1x1	<b>1</b>
Build up and improve local centres					1x1	<b>1</b>

\*Total score is calculated by giving an issue points for each time it was mentioned on a priority board. 5 points are given for each time it appeared on Priority board 1, 4 points for each time it was on Priority board 2, 3 points for each time it was on Priority board 3, 2 points for each time it was on Priority board 4 and 1 point for each time it was on Priority board 5.

The priority summary table groups the key priorities according to what was written on the Priority boards 1 to 5. The number of times an issue was raised on each priority board is shown in the table above and each issue is then given a total score.

The table above highlights the top 5 priorities suggested by workgroup attendees. The top priority is to bring back a hospital to Hemel Hempstead with full acute service facilities, to avoid lengthy and sometimes expensive travel to Watford General Hospital. The second priority for Hemel Hempstead and the Borough is for an improvement to public transport. This includes improving links to places, improving frequency of services and making the service more affordable. The third priority is to provide more community facilities such as community centres, concert halls and cultural centres.

Safe and access and parking for the disabled and parents with young children is also sought, as well as the provision of more affordable homes with gardens.

## **7. Key issues from workshop questions**

### **Facilities and Services**

- Deliver further cultural and community facilities
- Replace the Pavilion

### **Accessibility**

- HH town centre needs an integrated transport system with good bus links, a bus station and links to the railway stations
- Improve accessibility to local shops, services and facilities
- More parking at community meeting places
- Wheelchair access across the Borough

### **Borough management**

- Improve maintenance of roads and pavements
- Retain flowerbeds and flowers around the towns and villages

### **New development/neighbourhoods**

- should have local centres with shops, and services and facilities
- should have wide roads with adequate off-street parking
- should have a large proportion of family homes with garages
- green spaces and soft landscaping to be included in new developments
- do not build on open space
- do not merge settlements

### **Development Options**

- development in the east was preferred by 2 out of the 3 groups
- infrastructure and new transport links/roads are needed
- good quality Green Belt should be protected from development

## **8. Other Comments**

- Some people could not hear very well.

## **9. What happens next?**

Some of the issues and priorities raised at this workshop will be considered further through the formulation of the Local Development Framework, whilst others will need to be passed to other departments within the Council or to external authorities such as Hertfordshire County Council.

## **10. Attendees**

<b>Title</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Company Name</b>
	Anil	Padania	
Ms	Anne	Janes	Dacorum Action on Disability
Ms	Zena	Bullmore	Dacorum Hospital Action Group
Mr	Derek	Baulch	Grovehill Church
Ms	June	Crawley	Dacorum Senior Voice - Older Persons Forum

Mr	Bob	Hewitt	Dacorum Senior Voice - Older Persons Forum
Ms	June	Street	Age Concern
Ms	Marion	Cowe	St Johns Church / HACRO
Mr	Ken	Hayes	Shopmobility
Ms	Margaret	Fricker	
Ms	Audrey	Newbould	Breathe Easy Dacorum
Ms	Eleanor	Jones	Tring University of the Third Age
Ms	Betty	Harris	Dacorum Hospital Action Group
Ms	Hilda	Pittman	Age Concern
Ms	Denise	Chennell	Adeyfield Free Church / Red Cross
Mr	Jim	Sheth	Dacorum Indian Society
Ms	Pamela	Haynes	Shopmobility
Ms	Terri	Burfield	
Ms	Nicky	Flynn	
Ms	Elizabeth	Rathbone	
Ms	Elizabeth	Bendall	Tring University of the Third Age
Mr	Derek	Grant	Tring Lions Club
Ms	Beth	Palfrey	Dacorum Senior Voice - Older Persons Forum
Miss	N W	Garnham	Age Concern
Miss	L J	Ibett	Civil Service Retirement Fellowship (Hemel Group)
Ms	Rosemary	Freestone	

## 10. Groups

<b>Group 1- Facilities &amp; Services</b>	<b>Group 2 – Design and Renewables</b>	<b>Group 3 – Recreational Space</b>
Zena Bullmore	Audrey Newbould	Elisabeth Bendall
Anne Janes	Eleanor Jones	Derek Grant
Derek Baulch	Pat Gray	Chris Thomson
June Crawley	Betty Harris	Beth Palfery
Bob Hewitt	Audrey Pittman	N Garnham
June Street	Denise Chennell	Josephine Day
Doreen Halford	Jim Sheth	Anal Padania
Marion Cowe	Pamela Haynes	L Ibett
Ken Hayes	Terri Burfield	Dennis Blay
Margaret Fricker		