



Youth Environment Forum

25th September 2008

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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 Senior Voice Forum and a variety of other community groups in our Borough.

2. Youth Forum Workshop

Initially, the forum voted on a new name for the 'Youth Environment Forum' and the 'Dacorum Green Team' was declared the winning name. The students listened to presentations on the Regional Plan and the Core Strategy before being split into four workshop groups. Each group covered one of the following themes:

- Providing new homes
- Managing the countryside
- Shopping and Leisure
- Access to work, services and facilities

They were given some context to the workshop theme that they covered and then they were asked to answer some questions. The answers that they gave are listed under the facilitator's note below for each of the workshops.

3. Workshop 1: Providing new accommodation

Briefing note and questions for facilitators

The Council must plan to provide around 17,000 dwellings between 2006 and 2031, at a rate of about 680 dwellings every year. This is about double the current rate of provision each year, and in total is the equivalent of half of Hemel Hempstead. Many people think this is a 'bad thing'. However people do need homes, and for many years now people have had to move away from the borough to find accommodation. The growth rate implies some immigration (i.e. people moving into the borough), but around 95% of the demand would come from local people.

We are told a large proportion of the growth should be at Hemel Hempstead and the Green Belt boundary must be changed here.

Gypsies and travellers also need places to live, about 60 pitches compared to the 17,000 dwellings. This would occupy the space of around 3-4 football pitches. Any suggestion of provision has brought out opposition and prejudice, usually based on actual experience or media observation of unauthorised encampments. The aim is to have 4 or more sites, which can be properly designed and managed.

Questions

1. Where would you put the main housing areas around Hemel Hempstead? (Think about the locations on the map and see Q2 in addition) What factors do you think are important? [*Use map for Q1 and Q2*]
2. Would you locate any new housing on the edge of Berkhamsted and Tring and the large villages in Dacorum, and where? What scale of housing should be planned for (e.g. approximate numbers, numbers in relation to the size of the settlement, approximate land area that should be used – *ref maps showing Berkhamsted, Tring, Kings Langley and Bovingdon, and montage showing housing densities and sites*)
3. What new housing should be allowed within these places and where – e.g. by infilling (i.e. filling in gaps between buildings) or by redevelopment of existing property?
4. Should villages be treated any differently from towns (in terms of the scale and type of housing)? If so, how?
5. How should we integrate new (housing) development with existing communities? (or should new development be kept separate?)
6. How and where should we accommodate Gypsies and Travellers? (Do you see this as a big issue? What factors would you take into account?) [*Use AO Map of potential Gypsy Sites and montage showing a typical site*]

Supplementary question - What do you think are the most important things to take into account in designing new buildings?

[Visual aids

- *AO Borough Map showing settlements and their boundaries and the key housing options at Hemel Hempstead: where you live – red dot; 3 selected housing locations – blue dots; where elsewhere – yellow dot*
- *Montage showing housing densities and sites*
- *AO Borough Map or other maps showing potential Gypsy sites – pick 4 – green dots*
- *Montage showing a typical 15 pitch Gypsy site]*

Feedback from Workshop 1: Providing new accommodation

Schools involved:

- Adeyfield
- Broadfield Primary
- St Albert the Great

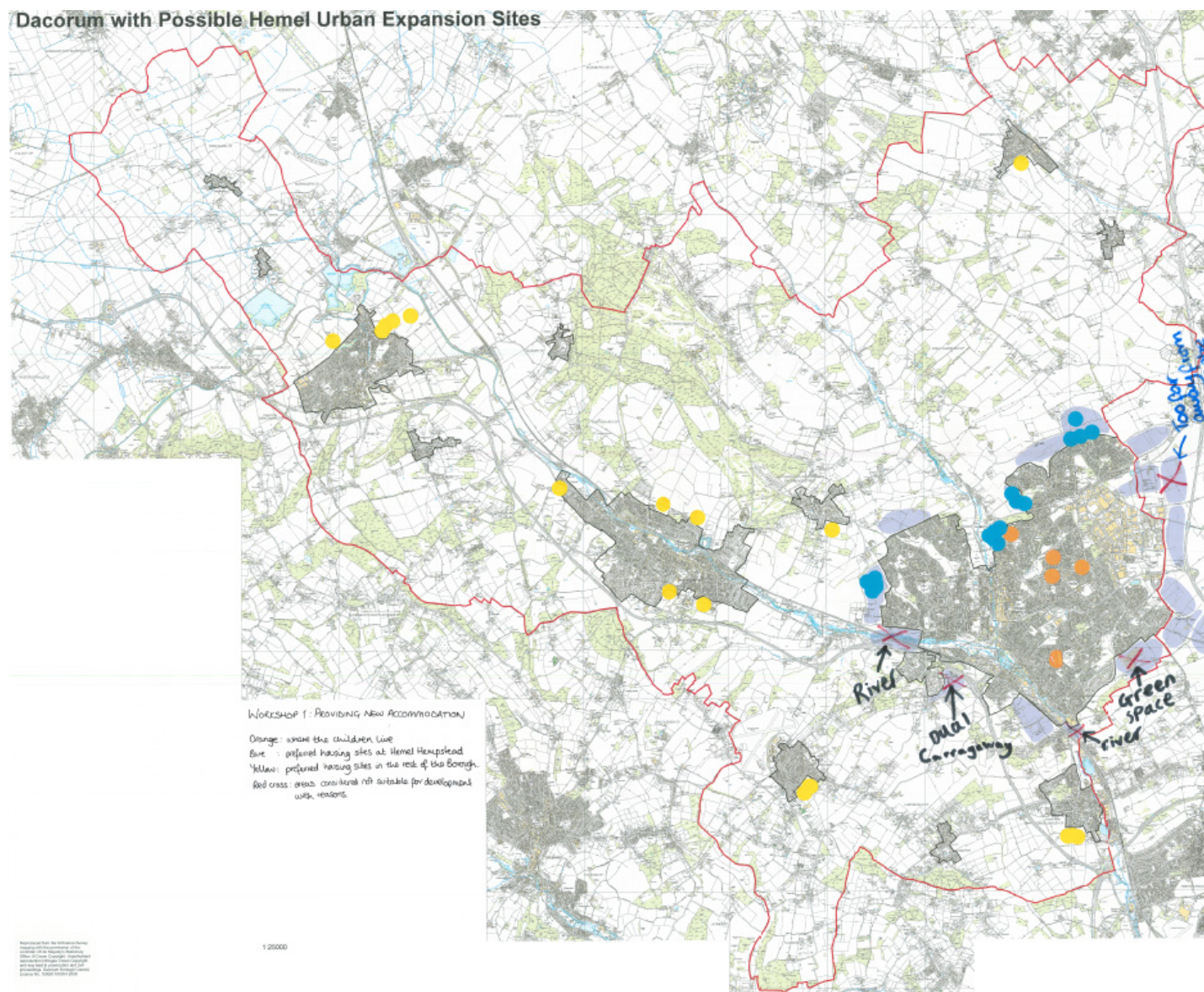
Q 1. Where would you put the main housing areas around Hemel Hempstead? (Think about the locations on the map and see Q2 in addition) What factors do you think are important? [*Use map for Q1 and Q2*]

Please see **Figure 1** for areas in Hemel Hempstead that were considered appropriate.

Factors considered important:

- If there are more houses, we need more schools;
- Houses should not be near rivers or canals;
- There should be quiet areas for elderly people;
- They should be near green areas;
- They should not be next to the dual carriageway;
- They should not be on fields, as we need fields for crops; and
- The types of housing should be divided as follows: 1/10 flats, 1/10 bungalows, 8/10 houses.

Figure 1 – Main Housing Areas around Hemel Hempstead



Q 2. Would you locate any new housing on the edge of Berkhamsted and Tring and the large villages in Dacorum, and where? What scale of housing should be planned for (e.g. approximate numbers, numbers in relation to the size of the settlement, approximate land area that should be used – *ref maps showing Berkhamsted, Tring, Kings Langley and Bovington, and montage showing housing densities and sites*)

Yes. Most of the houses should be in Hemel Hempstead but there should be some split between Tring and Berkhamsted. See map for preferred locations

Berkhamsted has a big population already so shouldn't be increased too much. Houses should be built near main roads. It needs more facilities e.g. leisure centres. 2000-5000 dwellings.

Kings Langley is close to Hemel Hempstead and near to the motorway. Areas around the village that could be infilled (like a jigsaw). 200-1000 dwellings.

Bovington should be made bigger and have a greater population. There is an area on the edge of the village that was considered suitable. 200-500 dwellings.

Nettleden is close to Hemel Hempstead and would be a good place for families.

Q3. What new housing should be allowed within these places and where – e.g. by infilling (i.e. filling in gaps between buildings) or by redevelopment of existing property?

Houses should be built on the outskirts so that it is less stressful for people.

Don't want to lose green space so some development should be inside the towns.

It would be too busy if areas were infilled.

Don't build houses on old factories; renew them for businesses.

Refurbish old houses.

Q 4. Should villages be treated any differently from towns (in terms of the scale and type of housing)? If so, how?

No time to answer.

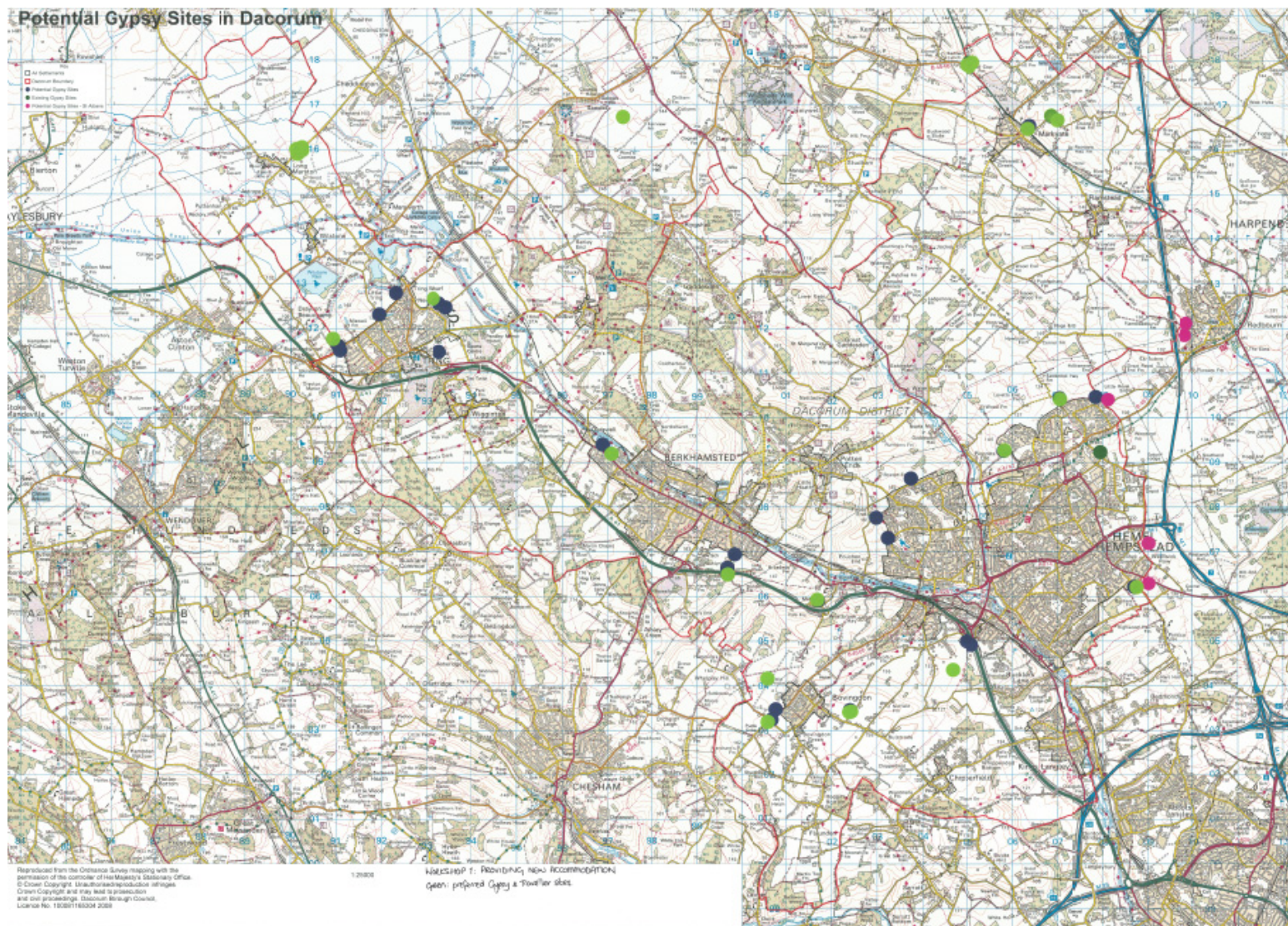
Q 5. How should we integrate new (housing) development with existing communities? (or should new development be kept separate?)

No time to answer.

Q 6. How and where should we accommodate Gypsies and Travellers? (Do you see this as a big issue? What factors would you take into account?) [*Use AO Map of potential Gypsy Sites and montage showing a typical site*]

See Figure 2. Sites should be located on the edge of the Borough.

Figure 2 – Main Gypsy and Traveller Sites



5. Workshop 2: Managing the countryside

Briefing note and questions for facilitators

The countryside covers the greater part of Dacorum, with the scarp slope of the Chiltern Hills near Tring and dip slope with valleys to the south. A small area at Long Marston and Wilstone is relatively flat claylands in the Vale of Aylesbury. Many of the changes in the appearance of the countryside stem from changes in

- agriculture, changes in consumer behaviour (e.g. more vegetarians) and viability of agriculture itself
- woodland management, and
- urban pressures (e.g. conversion of buildings to homes in the country, visitor pressures on sites).

Our challenges are to promote positive management of the countryside:

- promoting green infrastructure (a network of space for wildlife, recreation and cultural experience)
- promoting biodiversity (Dacorum is an important area within the region)
- conserving the landscape of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (part of the Chiltern Hills)
- promoting the sustainable use of soils and agriculture
- increasing woodland;
- management of water supply and drainage, and
- adapting to climate change

The countryside is a resource for our settlements, including where minerals are, where a lot of our waste is/would be buried, where large scale renewable energy plant would be located.

Questions:

1. What do you like and what do you dislike about the countryside around us?
2. In 20 years time, what do you want the countryside to
(a) look like; [*Use montage as a prompt*] and
(b) be used for?
3. How do we make this happen?
4. How should urban pressures (e.g. buildings, cars trampling, horseculture) be controlled, if at all?
5. Given that Hemel Hempstead will be extended, how would you select the areas of countryside for development? [*Use Map as prompt*]

[Visual aids

- AO Borough Map showing key housing options at Hemel
- Montage of types of countryside]

Feedback from Workshop 2: Managing the Countryside

Schools involved:

- Brockswood Primary
- Grove Road Primary

Q 1. What do you like and what do you dislike about the countryside around us?

Like: Open space, views, bigger gardens

Dislike: smell, weeds, no shops or toilets

Q 2. In 20 years time, what do you want the countryside to
(a) look like; [*Use montage as a prompt*] and
(b) be used for?

- a) More hedges.
- b) Farming

Q 3. How do we make this happen?

Community volunteers

Q 4. How should urban pressures (e.g. buildings, cars trampling, horseyculture) be controlled, if at all?

Use cars wisely
Use buses

Q 6. Given that Hemel Hempstead will be extended, how would you select the areas of countryside for development? [*Use Map as prompt*]

Key:

Green: where they live

Yellow, Blue, Orange: areas preferred for development.

- See **Figure 3** on next page

Figure 3 - Areas of preferred development



6. Workshop 3: Shopping and Leisure

Briefing note and questions for facilitators

The population will grow quite substantially – by over 20,000 people. Most of this growth will be at Hemel Hempstead. In places where there is no new housing the population will decline because each household is on average becoming smaller.

Food and basic provisions are always needed. People want more material (non-food) goods and the forecast recession aside, we can expect in the longer term to have money to spend on material goods, home improvements, eating and drinking out and various other leisure activities. Open space and provision for active leisure assists health and general well-being. Arts and cultural facilities provide diversity and meet a different range of leisure needs.

Questions

Shopping

1. How do you foresee shopping changing in the next 20 years?
2. What changes would you make to the town centres and to local or village centres?
3. What else would you like to see in your town/local centre(s)?

Leisure

4. What recreational needs are not being met for young people? If any deficiencies are met immediately, will you be using the facilities in 20 years time, and will they still be needed? (What are your reasons?)
5. Should Leisureworld be demolished? What are your reasons? (If yes, what should it be replaced with?)
6. Are there any (other) new large scale leisure facilities that should be provided? If so, what and where? [*Use AO Borough Map to answer where*]
7. What do you think of open spaces (e.g. parks, playgrounds and playing fields) generally? Should they be managed any differently (compared to now)? If so, how?

[Visual aid

- *AO Borough Map*]

Feedback from Workshop 3: Shopping & Leisure

Schools involved:

- Bovingdon Primary
- Cavendish
- Lockers Park

Shopping

Q 1. How do you foresee shopping changing in the next 20 years?

- Designer clothes
- Less variety
- More expensive
- Less open space
- More grow your own
- Smaller shops
- Order stuff in
- Internet
- Some shops will close – ‘credit crunch’
- Travel more to get to shops e.g. London
- Competition might mean that shops consolidate
- Big companies take over the market and control
- People buy less luxuries e.g. toys
- Value for money

Q 2. What changes would you make to the town centres and to local or village centres?

- Free stuff for local people
- Lower prices for facilities
- Facilities all in one place
-

Q 3. What else would you like to see in your town/local centre(s)?

- Free fun outdoor (healthy) activities
- Something (e.g. gym classes) for old people
- More little local shops
- More privately/family run shops
- Pick your owns

Leisure

Q 4. What recreational needs are not being met for young people? If any deficiencies are met immediately, will you be using the facilities in 20 years time, and will they still be needed? (What are your reasons?)

- Opens space – flat and mowed
- Improve canal
- Bike racks
- Cycle paths/routes off road
- Free bikes (with rules) or fees
- Restaurants just for young people or at least with discounts
- Set menus for set amounts
- Lego/play stuff

Q 5. Should Leisureworld be demolished? What are your reasons? (If yes, what should it be replaced with?)

For demolition: manky and ugly

Against demolition: good facilities, fun for all ages

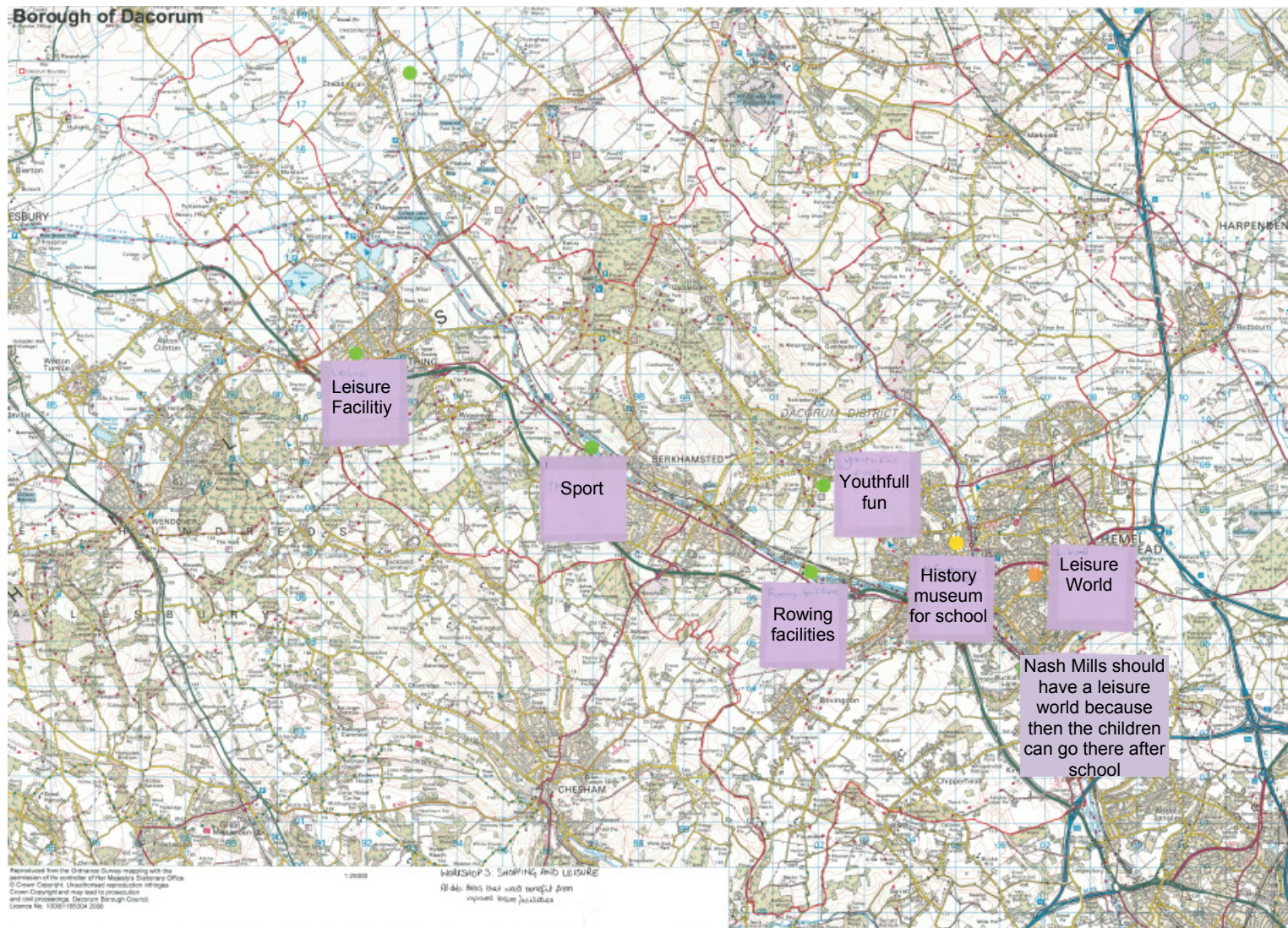
Q 6. Are there any (other) new large scale leisure facilities that should be provided? If so, what and where? [*Use AO Borough Map to answer where*]

- See **Figure 4** on the next page

Q 7. What do you think of open spaces (e.g. parks, playgrounds and playing fields) generally? Should they be managed any differently (compared to now)? If so, how?

No time to answer.

Figure 4 – Large scale leisure facilities that should be provided



7. Workshop 4: Access to work, services and facilities

Briefing note and questions for facilitators

The population will grow quite substantially – by over 20,000 people. Most of this growth will be at Hemel Hempstead. In places where there is no new housing the population will decline because each household is on average becoming smaller.

With new homes we need jobs and services and facilities. We need social and physical infrastructure (for example community halls, open space and doctors' surgeries or drainage and roads). It should be possible to plan some new development within existing built up areas, together with extension of the built up area into the countryside. At Hemel Hempstead these will be the equivalent of new neighbourhoods (each with 1,000-1,250 dwellings). The challenge is to improve the planning of all areas.

The two issues are where new infrastructure and facilities should be located and how easy it is to get to and use them.

Questions

1. What facilities and services do you regard as important for each residential area?
2. What would you expect within walking distance?
3. How would you get to other facilities and services?
4. If there are deficiencies (in the provision of facilities and services) in existing areas, how do you think they can be tackled?
5. How should we integrate new (housing) development with existing communities?

Feedback from Workshop 4: Access to work, services and facilities

Schools involved:

- Bridgewater Middle
- Dundale Primary

Bold items were voted the most popular by the groups

Q 1. What facilities and services do you regard as important for each residential area?

Post offices, buses, new trains, **leisure activities**, parks, pharmacy, wind turbines, shops, roads, parking spaces, doctors, countryside, sports centre, larger schools or more schools, supermarkets, offices, football pitch, swimming pool, leisure, **public transport**, clinic, roads, **community areas**, public transport

Q 2. What would you expect within walking distance?

Post offices, buses, leisure activities, parks, pharmacy, shops, roads, countryside, sports centre, larger schools or more schools, supermarkets, offices, football pitch, swimming pool, leisure, community areas

Q 3. How would you get to other facilities and services?

- Facilities are important for each residential area which would be within walking distance, provide travel to other facilities.
- new trains, wind turbines, parking spaces, supermarkets, doctors, clinic, public transport - all of these could be reached by car or any public transport
- See **Figure 5** on next page

Q 4. If there are deficiencies (in the provision of facilities and services) in existing areas, how do you think they can be tackled?

- Red road linking current estates to new facilities, new estates
- Upgrade facilities in current estates
- **Footpaths that lead to the country**
- New cycle-lanes connecting old and new estates / facilities
- **New roads connecting old and new estates / facilities**
- **A medium sized town centre with smaller versions dotted around the town that serve a number of estates (for convenience)**
- See **Figure 6** on next page

Q 5. How should we integrate new (housing) development with existing communities?

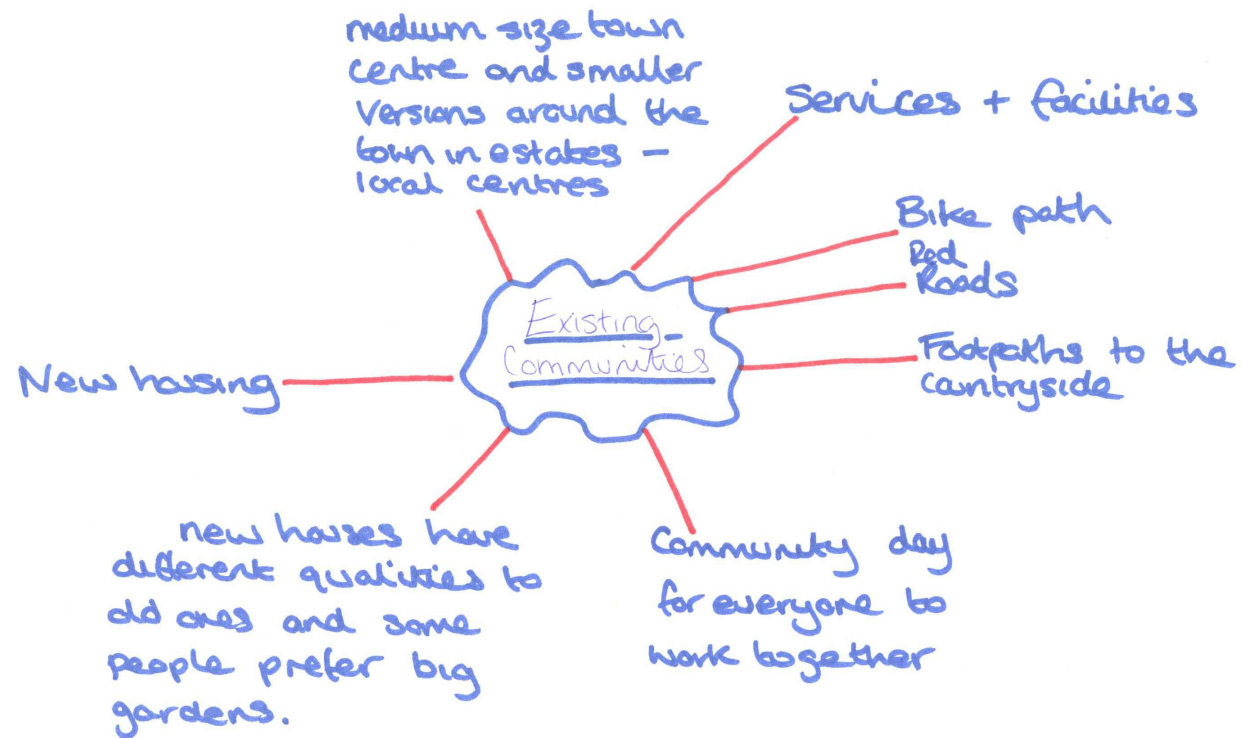
- Match people with the relevant type of housing for them, some like older houses with big gardens, some prefer modern ones with smaller gardens.
- **Facilitate Community Days between the estates**

Figure 5 – How would you get to facilities and services?



Figure 6 – What are the deficiencies in facilities and services?

Q4.



8. Key Issues raised

- More leisure activities for children, such as rowing on the canal in Boxmoor
- More flat open spaces needed
- More bike racks are needed around the town and a bike pool which offers free bikes for use with rules or a fee
- Public transport should be improved so that it is more accessible and provides a more frequent service
- Community areas are important and should be enhanced
- Facilitate community days between estates
- More quiet spaces for the elderly
- Housing should be delivered 1/10 flats, 1/10 bungalows and 8/10 houses
- Avoid infilling

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

The students who attended the Youth Forum included representatives from the following primary schools:

- Adeyfield
- Broadfield Primary
- St Albert the Great
- Brockswood Primary
- Grove Road Primary
- Bovingdon Primary
- Cavendish
- Lockers Park
- Bridgewater Middle
- Dundale Primary