

Our ref: RP/4107

18 January 2007

Development Plans Section
Planning and Regeneration Service
Dacorum Borough Council
Civic Centre
Hemel Hempstead
Herts
HP1 1HH

Dear Sir

SITE ALLOCATIONS

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – CORE STRATEGY
SUPPLEMENTARY ISSUES AND OPTIONS PAPER - GROWTH AT HEMEL
HEMPSTEAD**

We have recently submitted an on-line response to the above consultation made on behalf of our client, Taylor Woodrow Developments Limited.

The response refers to the planning potential for a new neighbourhood at Fields End Farm and we enclose 3 copies of a Planning Statement which elaborates upon this proposal.

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned if you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Richard Parsons

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FOR VINCENT AND GORBING
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Received: 19/1/07

Delivered by: post
(email/post)

Entered

Acknowledged

Enc

cc Mr T Lynam

PLANNING STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF A PROPOSED URBAN EXTENSION AT FIELDS END FARM, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

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PLANS

1. Location plan
2. Site plan
3. Development principles
4. Existing and proposed community facilities

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The emerging draft East of England Plan (RSS 14) identifies Hemel Hempstead as a 'Key Centre for Development and Change' and proposes 12,000 additional dwellings in Dacorum borough over the period 2001-2021.
- 1.2 In order to accommodate this scale of housing growth, it is recognised in draft RSS 14 that Green Belt releases will be required and provision is thus made in the plan for a strategic review of the Green Belt boundary around Hemel Hempstead.
- 1.3 In response to draft RSS 14, Dacorum Borough Council has published for comment an 'Issues and Options Paper on Growth at Hemel Hempstead'. This paper identifies a requirement for 3,200 new dwellings in the Green Belt 2001-2021 (and 5,700 new dwellings in the Green Belt 2001-2031).
- 1.4 The options paper proposes that provision for this new development should be by way of new neighbourhoods around the edge of Hemel Hempstead, each of around 1,000+ dwellings, this being the required scale of development to support a range of community facilities. Some 14 potential locations for new neighbourhoods are identified in the paper.
- 1.5 The majority of the proposed locations for new neighbourhoods are on the eastern side of Hemel Hempstead, with only four on the western side. In our view, in determining the location of the new neighbourhoods, it will be important to ensure an appropriate east / west balance in order that locally generated needs can be met as far as possible in the locations in which they arise.
- 1.6 Additionally, a number of the proposed locations will have long lead-in times before they can start to deliver the required new housing. We

thus believe that the choice of locations should also reflect the need for a continuous supply of housing over the next 15+ years.

1.7 In our accompanying representations on the Issues and Options Paper, made on behalf of Taylor Woodrow Developments Limited, we propose a readily deliverable new neighbourhood of 1,000 + dwellings at West Hemel Hempstead (termed 'Fields End Farm' in this statement).

1.8 This new neighbourhood would comprise (**Plan 1**)

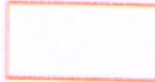

- The recently completed housing development at The Avenue, plus adjacent housing areas (some 600 dwellings in total).
- The area of agricultural land to the immediate west of the above, between Pouchen End Lane and Long Chaulden, with environmental capacity for some 450 dwellings.

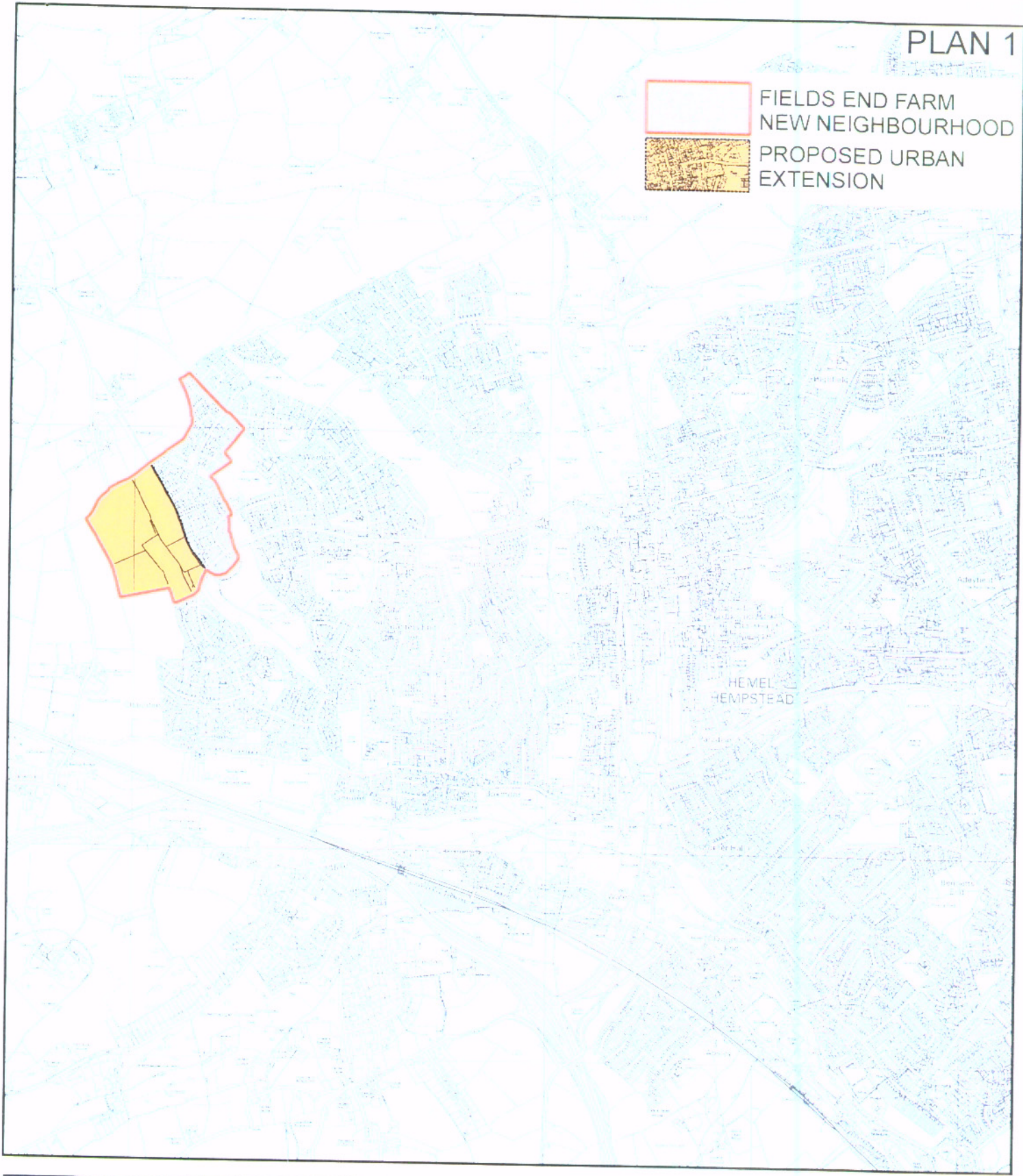
1.9 The planning benefits of this new neighbourhood may be summarised as follows

- Housing development at The Avenue was built without community facilities and is not served by public transport. The opportunity exists through the development of the adjacent area of land to make the development at The Avenue part of a coherent New Town neighbourhood, properly served with community facilities and public transport.
- The proposed new development area would be well contained within the existing landscape infrastructure of the area and would not undermine the purposes of the Green Belt.
- The proposed new development would be capable of being served from the existing transport and service infrastructure of

West Hemel Hempstead and would not require construction of a Northern By-pass.


- 1.10 Our development proposals for the Fields End Farm neighbourhood are described and appraised in more detail in the following sections of this statement.

 FIELDS END FARM
 NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD
 PROPOSED URBAN
 EXTENSION



PROJECT TITLE
 Land at Fields End Farm
 HEMEL HEMPSTEAD
 Hertfordshire

DRAWING TITLE
 Location plan

SCALE	DATE	CHECKED
1:25000	JANUARY 2007	
PROJECT No	DRAWN	DATE
4107	HNA	
		001C

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2.0 EXISTING SITE CONTEXT

Site location (Plan 1)

- 2.1 The location of the existing and proposed development is indicated on the accompanying Plan 1.

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

- 2.2 The existing residential development at The Avenue comprises some 400 dwellings built in the late 1980's / early 1990's as an addition to the New Town Master Plan.
- 2.3 A community facility proposed to serve this development was never built and its site was subsequently developed in the mid-1990's for housing. Consequently, there are no community facilities serving this large development.
- 2.4 The approved layout for the development at The Avenue anticipated that the development would eventually be extended onto the agricultural land to the west, as evidenced by the fact that
- The main spine road of the development, The Avenue, terminates abruptly at the western boundary of the site.
 - A 30 metre planting belt to the north of the development extends significantly further west of the approved development, to Pouchen End Lane and beyond.
- 2.5 The failure to complete the development means that, at the present time, the distributor road The Avenue is a cul-de-sac and as a result no public transport services currently run along the road.
- 2.6 Immediately to the south of the development at The Avenue is an area of original New Town development (c. 200 dwellings) served off

the distributor road, Roseheath, which would also logically form part of the proposed new Fields End Farm neighbourhood.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Site area and ownership

- 2.7 The land lying to the west of the existing development at Fields End Farm is some 22.24 hectares ((54.95 acres) in extent and is wholly within the ownership / control of Taylor Woodrow Developments Limited.

Site description (Plan 2)

- 2.8 The site extends from Pouchen End Lane in the north to Long Chaulden in the south and is currently in agricultural use, mainly as part of the Fields End Farm holding.
- 2.9 The site comprises a number of separate fields of different sizes and slopes from north to south, from 157 metres AOD in the north to 133 metres AOD in the south.
- 2.10 There are no watercourses within the site although there is a minor dry valley feature. The southernmost part of the site, adjacent to Long Chaulden contains a surface water balancing pond which attenuates surface water run off from the site.
- 2.11 The outer boundaries of the site are defined by mature hedgerows and there are remnants of mature hedgerows along a number of the internal field boundaries. Along the site's western and southern boundaries, the existing mature hedgerows have been recently supplemented by 30 metre belts of advance strategic planting.
- 2.12 As stated previously, immediately to the north of the site is an existing 30 metre planting belt on a low bund planted in 1986 in association with the neighbouring residential development at The Avenue.

Rights of way

- 2.13 Two definitive footpaths run alongside the site as follows
- Footpath 21 runs along the north-eastern boundary of the site, linking the housing area at The Avenue with Pouchen End Lane.
 - Footpath 20 runs along the eastern boundary of the site, between the existing and proposed Fields End developments, and provides a link between Long Chaulden and Footpath 21.

ADJOINING USES

- 2.14 To the north and west and south of the site, beyond the site's mature hedgerow boundaries, is open agricultural land.
- 2.15 To the south of the site is housing comprising part of the Chaulden neighbourhood.
- 2.16 To the south-east of the site, across the distributor road, Long Chaulden, is the Shrubhill Common Open Space Area (a Local Nature Reserve), containing an adventure playground at its northern end.



PROJECT TITLE
 Land at Fields End Farm
 HEMEL HEMPSTEAD
 Hertfordshire

DRAWING TITLE
 Site plan

SCALE NOT TO SCALE	DATE JANUARY 2007	CHECKED
	DRAWN HNA	DATE
PROJECT No 4107		131

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3.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

3.1 Preliminary development proposals for the extension of the existing development at Fields End Farm are illustrated at **Plan 3** and described below.

Residential development area

3.2 Plan 3 indicates a new residential development area of 10.33 hectares (25.52 acres) immediately to the west of the existing development at The Avenue. At an average density of 45 dwellings per hectare, the site could thus accommodate around 450 dwellings in a range of mix and tenure.

Local centre

3.3 Plan 3 also indicates a site for a proposed local centre (0.41 hectares, 1.0 acres), located centrally within the proposed residential development area.

3.4 In this location, the centre will be easily accessible to both the existing and proposed development at Fields End Farm, with no areas being more than 800 metres distant from the centre and the majority within 400 metres.

3.5 Potential uses for the local centre include a community hall, a doctor's surgery and local shops.

Vehicular access

3.6 Two points of vehicular access to the development area are proposed, from The Avenue and Long Chaulden.

3.7 As stated previously, the recent residential development at The Avenue made provision for such a future access, the existing road being of local distributor standard and terminating close to the

boundary of the proposed new development site. An extension to this road will need to cross Footpath 20.

- 3.8 The provision of a direct link between The Avenue and Long Chaulden will enable existing public transport services to be diverted through the site, benefiting the existing dwellings at The Avenue as well as the proposed new development. No existing or proposed dwelling will be more than 400 metres from this new public transport route.

Open space / wildlife corridor

- 3.9 An area of informal open space is proposed in the southern part of the site, effectively a northward extension of Shrub Hill Common which lies to the south of Long Chaulden. This area of open space will prevent the coalescence of the proposed development with the existing Chaulden neighbourhood and will provide a link for wildlife between Shrub Hill Common and the open agricultural land to the north and west of the subject site.
- 3.10 An equipped children's play area could be included within this area, as indicated on Plan 3.

Landscaping

- 3.11 Within the proposed residential development area, the existing north / south hedgerow is proposed for retention, together with a generous landscape margin that will form part of a wider footpath / cycleway network.
- 3.12 Further structural planting is proposed in order to help assimilate the proposed development into the wider landscape, including a west – east planting belt across the centre of the site to complement the west – east belts on the northern and southern boundaries of the site.




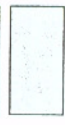



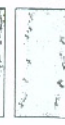


These belts, upon maturity, will greatly assist in softening long views of the site from the south.

Footpath / cycleway network

- 3.13 As indicated on Plan 3, a high degree of footpath / cycleway permeability around and within the site is proposed, new facilities incorporating and complementing existing footpaths (upgraded as necessary). Full links are proposed to the existing residential areas to the east.

Drainage and services

- 3.14 The existing balancing pond in the southern part of the site will be incorporated into the surface water drainage strategy for the site.
- 3.15 Investigations of the major statutory providers have indicated that a 450 dwelling development on this site could be economically drained and serviced by the extension of existing facilities, enhanced as required.

-  SITE BOUNDARY
22.24ha 54.95ac
-  RESIDENTIAL AREAS
10.33ha 25.52ac
-  COMMUNITY FACILITY
0.41ha 1.01ac
-  OPEN SPACE/
WILDLIFE CORRIDOR
-  CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA
-  ESTABLISHED PLANTING
-  RECENT STRATEGIC PLANTING
-  PROPOSED STRATEGIC
PLANTING
-  PROPOSED ROADS
-  PROPOSED FOOTPATHS

PROJECT TITLE
**Land at Fields End Farm
 HEMEL HEMPSTEAD
 Hertfordshire**

DRAWING TITLE
Development principles

SCALE	DATE	CHECKED
NOT TO SCALE	JANUARY 2007	
PROJECT NO	DRAWN	DATE
4107	HNA	
		
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4.0 APPRAISAL OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- 4.1 An appraisal of the development proposals in terms of the prevailing national and local planning policy context is set out below.

GREEN BELT POLICY

Green Belt boundary defensibility

- 4.2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG 2) requires that when new and revised Green Belt boundaries are defined, they should be clearly defined, using readily recognisable physical features.

- 4.3 As described previously, the outer boundaries of the proposed urban extension would be formed by existing mature hedgerows, enhanced by recent planting. It is suggested that these field boundaries should form the new Green Belt boundaries of the Fields End Farm development. As such, they would meet the PPG 2 requirement for readily recognisable Green Belt boundaries.

Green Belt purposes

- 4.4 Whilst the principle of Green Belt release around Hemel Hempstead has already been accepted, it will clearly be important to ensure that any such releases do not have a significant impact upon the purposes of including land in the Green Belt in the first place.
- 4.5 In respect of the development proposals at Fields End Farm, it is pertinent to note that
- The proposals would not result in the coalescence of Hemel Hempstead with the neighbouring settlements of Pouchen End or Bourne End.
 - The proposals would respect the separate identity of the Chaulden neighbourhood.

- The amount of encroachment into the open countryside would be strictly limited and would largely represent a 'rounding off' of existing development.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 4.6 As indicated on **Plan 4**, all of the existing and proposed development in the Fields End Farm neighbourhood would lie within 800 metres of the proposed new Local Centre (the majority within 400 metres). All development would be within 400 metres of the proposed bus route.
- 4.7 As also illustrated on Plan 4, the proposed new development would also be very well related to a wide variety of existing community facilities in West Hemel Hempstead, including
- The Warners End and Chaulden Neighbourhood Centres, which lie 800 – 1000 metres to the east and south respectively. These centres contain a wide variety of shops and services, together with other facilities including community hall, churches, doctors' surgery and public houses.
 - The Micklen, Martindale, Chaulden and Pixies Hill primary schools, which lie within 600 – 1,000 metres of the development.
 - The Cavendish and John F. Kennedy secondary schools.
 - The Shrubhill Common open space area and adventure playground.
- 4.8 All these facilities have capacity to accommodate further development and will be accessible by residents of the proposed development by sustainable modes of transport (walk / cycle / bus). The existing frequent public transport services along Long Chaulden will also provide good access to the town centre, railway station and other facilities within the wider Hemel Hempstead urban area.

- 4.9 Additionally, the existing and proposed footpath network around and through the development would also offer many opportunities for local residents to gain access to the open countryside.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Landscape and visual impact

- 4.10 The land onto which the Fields End Farm urban extension is proposed is not designated as being of special landscape value.
- 4.11 The presence of the ridgeline and planting belt to the north of the proposed urban extension will mean that it will not be visible from this direction.
- 4.12 The local ridgeline to the west, together with the mature hedgerow boundary, will also mean that the proposed urban extension will have limited visibility from this direction.
- 4.13 The main views of the proposed development will be from the south, particularly from a number of specific vantage points on the opposite side of the Bulbourne Valley. By restricting built development to the areas indicated on Plan 3, however, and taking into account the screening provided by the existing mature hedgerows and the recent / proposed strategic planting, it is considered that any impact on long views from the south will be strictly limited and certainly not harmful.

Nature conservation

- 4.14 The land onto which the urban extension is proposed is not the subject of any existing nature conservation designation. Indeed, the nature conservation interest of the site is extremely limited, being restricted to the mature hedgerows around and within the site.
- 4.15 The proposed open space / wildlife corridor through the site and the recent / proposed areas of strategic planting will, in contrast, provide

important opportunities for local fauna and flora as an extension to Shrubhill Common.

Archaeology

- 4.16 The site is not the subject of any statutory or non-statutory designations and has been previously agreed by the County Archaeologist to be of limited archaeological potential.

Agricultural land value

- 4.17 The agricultural value of the land has been previously classified by the Ministry of Agriculture as Class 3b and thus does not fall into the category of the best and most versatile land.

Flood risk

- 4.18 No part of the site is liable to flooding and, as mentioned above, the site is capable of being developed whilst retaining the function of the existing balancing pond on the site.

Ground conditions

- 4.19 Preliminary investigations have revealed no contamination or adverse ground conditions.

HIGHWAY IMPACT

- 4.20 A Transport Assessment previously carried out for the site and agreed with the Local Highway Authority has established that a development of 450 dwellings in this location could be accommodated on the local highway network with only a need for limited improvements, all of which can be contained within existing highway land.
- 4.21 This assessment took into account the very real benefits of the proposed new public transport route through the development and the potential for persuading local residents to use public transport rather than the private motor car.

SUMMARY

- 4.22 The urban extension proposals for the site may thus be considered to be fully consistent with well established national and local planning policy principles.

- FIELDS END FARM
- NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD
- PRIMARY SCHOOL:
- MICKLEN J.M.I.
- PRIMARY SCHOOL:
- MARTINDALE J.M.I.
- PRIMARY SCHOOL:
- CHAULDEN JNR & INFANTS
- PRIMARY SCHOOL:
- PIXIES HILL J.M.I.
- SECONDARY SCHOOL:
- JOHN F. KENNEDY
- SECONDARY SCHOOL:
- CAVENDISH
- PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
- ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND
- LOCAL CENTRE:
- WARNERS END
- LOCAL CENTRE:
- CHAULDEN
- LOCAL CENTRE:
- PROPOSED

- MAIN BUS ROUTES (EXISTING)
- MAIN BUS ROUTES (PROPOSED)
- BUS STOPS



PROJECT TITLE

Land at Fields End Farm
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD
Hertfordshire

DRAWING TITLE

Existing and proposed community facilities

SCALE

1:10000

DATE

JANUARY 2007

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HNA

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DATE

HNA

PROJECT NO

4107

ORIENTATION

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107C

5.0 PREVIOUS LOCAL PLAN INSPECTOR'S COMMENTS

5.1 It is recognised of course that a previous proposal by the Borough Council for some 550 dwellings at West Hemel Hempstead was rejected by the last Local Plan Inspector.

5.2 Since that time, however, there have been two important changes in circumstances as summarised below

Revised site definition

5.3 Many of the Local Plan Inspector's objections to the previous development proposals related to the inclusion in the proposals of the large field to the immediate south of the current proposal.

5.4 The inclusion of housing development on this large field was considered by the Inspector to bring about the coalescence of the Warners End and Long Chaulden neighbourhoods and to threaten the coalescence of Hemel Hempstead and Bourne End. It was also considered to have a significant impact upon long views of the site from the south. The additional 100 or so dwellings were also considered by the Inspector to have implications for the local highway network.

5.5 The exclusion of the large field from the current urban extension proposals has been largely made in response to the Inspector's criticisms. As elaborated in the previous section, the proposed urban extension illustrated at Plan 3 now performs extremely well in Green Belt policy, sustainable development and environmental terms.

Increased scale of housing requirement

5.6 Additionally, the previous Local Plan Inspector's rejection of the West Hemel Hempstead location was made in the context of a very limited overall requirement for Green Belt release to meet Dacorum's housing requirements over the period to 2011.

- 5.7 At that time, such a limited requirement was capable of being met by the development of Green Belt sites which the Local Plan Inspector considered preferable to the land at West Hemel Hempstead, such as Manor Estate. These more preferable sites are now committed for development and thus no longer available.
- 5.8 The scale of housing requirements now included in the emerging RSS 14 will clearly necessitate significant Green Belt releases around Hemel Hempstead, hence the policy requirement for a strategic review.
- 5.9 In the light of the above material changes in circumstances, the West Hemel Hempstead location is considered to warrant very serious consideration by the Borough Council as the site for the consolidation of a new residential neighbourhood at Fields End Farm involving up to 450 new dwellings.

6.0 SUMMARY

- 6.1 The proposed new Fields End Farm neighbourhood described in this statement is considered to be fully consistent with well established national and local planning policy principles relating to Green Belt definition, sustainable development and environmental impact.
- 6.2 Technical investigations have indicated that the proposed additional development proposed in this location can be satisfactorily accessed, drained and serviced. The proposed public transport link between The Avenue and Long Chaulden will be of great benefit to existing as well as proposed future residents.
- 6.3 Criticisms of the general location made by the previous Local Plan Inspector have been addressed in the proposals, specifically by the exclusion of the large field to the immediate south of the site.
- 6.4 Given the greatly increased scale of the Green Belt release now required at Hemel Hempstead under the terms of the emerging East of England Plan, our proposals for the Fields End Farm neighbourhood are commended to the Borough Council.