

Providing Homes and Community Services

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Strategic Objectives

- To provide a mix of new homes to meet the needs of the population.
- To provide for a full range of social, leisure and community facilities and services.

14. Providing Homes

- 14.1 Decent homes are fundamental to people's wellbeing and quality of life, and the foundation for achieving balanced and sustainable communities. Sufficient homes should be available for all sectors in the community, including the travelling community. Their design should help support the move towards a low carbon future and adaptation to climate change. Homes should be served by appropriate facilities and services.
- 14.2 The existing stock of housing is generally of good quality and there are very low levels of vacancy. Owner-occupied housing predominates, though there is also a large proportion of Council owned housing in comparison to other districts in the county. This reflects Hemel Hempstead's New Town legacy. The borough has a mix of house types that includes a large proportion of terraced housing, modest levels of detached properties, and lower proportions of flats and semi-detached properties relative to adjoining districts.
- 14.3 House prices are high due to the borough's proximity to London and its attractive local environment. House prices are high relative to incomes, which means that many local people find it difficult to access suitable accommodation. Most new completions are for open market housing, and levels of housing need within the borough continue to exceed the supply of affordable housing, particularly for first-time buyers. The economic downturn did not significantly affected market affordability.
- 14.4 The supply of affordable housing has been growing over the last few years, but the amount and proportion in relation to the total housing supply has remained low. The existing supply of affordable homes has also been affected by the Right to Buy, leading to a continuing reduction in stock available to those in housing need, although take up of this scheme has declined in recent years.
- 14.5 The borough's population is changing with growing numbers of elderly residents forecast as a result of increased life expectancy. Household size is projected to continue to fall (from 2.36 in 2006 to 2.15 in 2031), particularly as a consequence of an increase in one person households.

- 14.6 The potential supply of housing has been assessed through the South West Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and subsequent updates. The Council has reviewed the SHLAA in consultation with the development sector, firstly through the Housing Land Availability Papers, and through annual monitoring of sites. It shows there is significant housing potential in the borough and illustrates where sites are expected to come forward for development. Urban capacity (that is sites within the existing settlement boundaries) is important to supply, but its potential contribution reduces later in the plan period.
- 14.7 Demand and need for housing has been assessed through the London Commuter Belt (West) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2010 (covering six Hertfordshire authorities, including Dacorum). The SHMA provides information on the type and tenure of housing required to meet need and market demand across different housing markets. The housing market areas are defined, with Dacorum chiefly affected by the Hemel Hempstead sub market that partly overlaps into the adjoining districts of St Albans and Watford. The northern fringes of the borough fall into the St Albans and Luton sub markets, whereas the southern tip falls within the Watford sub market.
- 14.8 The impact of affordable housing and other planning obligations on the viability of development schemes has been analysed through the Affordable Housing and Section 106 Viability Study (November 2009). The analysis has helped to set targets and thresholds in relation to the delivery of affordable housing.

Housing supply

- 14.9 The housing target in Policy CS17 sets a level of housing which the Council expects to achieve and exceed. The target alone suggests 10,750 new homes will be provided over the plan period. The housing trajectory in Appendix 2 shows when this provision is likely to be made.
- 14.10 The elements of the prospective housing supply comprise completions (to date), various commitments and local allocations (see Table 7). The Council's policy and actions will be aimed at delivering those commitments.
- 14.11 The retention of existing residential sites and accommodation is a cornerstone of the housing supply and a basis for the net increase in homes.

Table 7: Prospective Housing Supply 2006 – 2031

Element of Supply	Included in the Target (Policy CS17)	Included in the Distribution (Table 8)
1. Completions	✓	✓
2. Commitments		
(a) Defined urban sites*	✓	✓

(b) Defined locations in Hemel Hempstead**	✓	✓
(c) Rural housing sites (Policy CS20)	✓	✓
(d) Gypsy and traveller pitches (Policy CS22)	✓	
(e) Windfall		
(i) For 10 years ***		✓
(ii) After the first 10 years	✓	✓
3. Local Allocations (Table 9)	✓	✓

* They include the strategic sites in Table 9.

** The town centre and East Hemel Hempstead are key regeneration areas, for which a target has been set in addition to existing defined sites and completions.

*** i.e. from the date of adoption of the Core Strategy.

14.12 Windfalls (i.e. previously unidentified sites which usually provide fewer than five dwellings each) will inevitably occur and are an element of supply. No allowance has been made for windfall for the first ten years in setting the target for housing. It means that there is leeway to exceed the target by up to about 6%.

14.13 The Council expects delivery to be around the total shown by Table 8. Housing supply will not however be open-ended and will be managed.

14.14 The Council will maintain a continuous 5-year¹ and 15-year rolling housing land supply. Action may be required to influence factors governing the supply in the light of progress. This will be reported through the Annual Monitoring Report.

14.15 Delivery will be phased so that the development of housing sites can be co-ordinated with associated infrastructure and services. The broad approach to phasing is set out in Policy CS2, with more detailed requirements in the Site Allocations DPD. The management of local allocations will build some flexibility into the housing programme (Policy CS3).

14.16 The choice of housing target, with its likely delivery level, takes a balanced approach to housing. The Council has considered:

- the amount needed to meet forecast household growth in the borough;
- the ability to deliver a sufficient, flexible and steady housing supply;
- the opportunities to ensure a mix of housing (both in terms of tenure and type);
- local needs and opportunities, and potential benefits;
- the timing of key infrastructure to support new housing;
- the balance between jobs and homes;
- the support to the local economy and achievement of regeneration targets;

¹ Plus any additional percentage figure required by national policy.

- the effect of new developments (i.e. the land used);
- the relationship to environmental constraints and impact upon the character of particular settlements; and
- the desire to protect the countryside.

14.17 Should major new development proposals arise (i.e. over and above those set out within the adopted local plan), the Council will have regard to the overall housing supply, in particular its delivery and its management. The factors in paragraph 14.16 above will be relevant.

14.18 The broad distribution of new housing is guided by the settlement hierarchy (Policy CS1). Hemel Hempstead will continue to be the focus for higher levels of growth. Development in the remaining towns and larger villages will be geared towards meeting their locally generated needs. There will be limited opportunities in the smaller villages, although rural housing sites (Policy CS20) are encouraged.

14.19 Opportunities for using previously developed land in urban areas will be optimised. However these alone will not maintain a sufficient and steady supply of housing over the lifetime of the plan. Some contribution from greenfield land is planned for within the urban areas and through extensions to some settlements (referred to as local allocations). The development of these local allocations will require small-scale changes to the Green Belt boundary.

14.20 Table 8 summarises the prospective distribution of housing. This provides a yardstick against which to judge the delivery of new housing and its distribution.

Table 8: Prospective Distribution of Housing 2006-2031

Place	Number of Dwellings indicated in each Local Objective
Hemel Hempstead	8,800
- <i>Town Centre</i>	1,800
- <i>East Hemel</i>	1,000
- <i>Rest of Town</i>	6,000
Berkhamsted	1,180
Tring	480
Bovingdon	130
Kings Langley	110
Markyate	200
Countryside	420
Total	11,320

14.21 Important housing sites include:

- strategic sites defined within the Core Strategy; and
- local allocations

Table 9 gives the location and estimated number of new homes for each site. Site requirements are set out with the relevant Place Strategy.

Table 9: Strategic Sites and Local Allocations

Place	Location	Number of Homes
Strategic Sites		
Berkhamsted	Durrants Lane / Shootersway	180
Markyate	Hicks Road	90
<i>sub-total</i>		<i>270</i>
Local Allocations		
Hemel Hempstead	Marchmont Farm	300
	Old Town	80
	West Hemel Hempstead	up to 900
Berkhamsted	Hanburys, Shootersway	60
Tring	Icknield Way, west of Tring	150
Bovingdon	Chesham Road / Molyneaux Avenue	60
<i>sub-total</i>		<i>1,550</i>

14.22 Local Allocations fulfil a number of purposes:

- They would extend the character and nature of housing supply, particularly for family housing.
- They would provide affordable housing locally.
- They can be planned in line with infrastructure capacity, particularly primary schools.
- They can be used to address local infrastructure deficits.
- They would also help maintain local population and the viability of settlements away from Hemel Hempstead.

14.23 Many housing sites will be allocated through the Site Allocations DPD, and a few in the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan. Site boundaries, the phasing and mix of housing and other uses, and other specific conditions will be set out. Fuller detail on the local allocations will also be given in the Site Allocations DPD.

POLICY CS17: New Housing

An average of 430 net additional dwellings will be provided each year (between 2006 and 2031).

The new housing is planned to come forward in phases. Should housing completions fall below 15% of the housing trajectory at any time and review of the deliverability of planned sites indicates that the housing trajectory is unlikely to be recovered over the next 5 years, the Council will take action to increase the supply of deliverable housing sites.

Existing housing land and dwellings will normally be retained.

Monitoring:

Indicator(s)	Target(s)
Net additional dwellings per year and over the plan period	430 net additional dwellings per year
Land available – for 5 years ahead and 15 years ahead	-
Proportion of homes on greenfield sites	38% or less

Delivery will be achieved by:

- identifying housing allocations, their planning requirements and expected phasing in the Site Allocations DPD and East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan;
- preparing masterplans for important sites;
- implementing the Council's Housing Strategy;
- monitoring of development progress in the Annual Monitoring Report;
- working with developers and landowners, and other partners such as the County Council and Registered Providers; and
- using the Council's resources in co-ordination with investment plans of key organisations such as the Homes and Communities Agency.

Housing Mix

14.24 New homes should match the needs of the community in terms of its size, type and affordability. Ideally they should also be adaptable and accessible to all occupiers. Planning for a mix of housing types is very important.

- 14.25 The Strategic Housing market Assessment (SHMA) recognised a need for supported housing for vulnerable groups across south and west Hertfordshire (i.e. London Commuter Belt [West]). With an ageing population, special attention must be given to the needs of elderly people. Hertfordshire County Council (Health and Community Services) aims to provide sufficient support for elderly people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible i.e. through aids and adaptations in the home, and/or support from a careworker/personal assistant. This will affect the overall demand for specialist and sheltered elderly persons' accommodation.
- 14.26 The County Council has indicated that there will be accommodation needs for people in younger age groups, particularly for supported housing (e.g. special needs housing, short term hostels, and individual flats) and for independent living. Specific requirements have been identified for Extra Care (flexicare) housing places, people with learning disabilities and mental health issues, and residential care (mainly private beds). The Council will permit appropriate schemes for new accommodation. It will expect applicants to liaise with the relevant sponsoring and support agencies.
- 14.27 The SHMA's projection of household types to 2021 indicated a requirement for a mix of properties by size and tenure, This varies between tenure with more 3-bed properties being required in market housing, and more 1-bed homes being needed for social renting. Future housing market assessments and needs surveys will help update and refine information on housing mix.
- 14.28 The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will provide a broad indication of priorities and will be used to guide decisions on the housing mix. Individual cases will be affected by the mix of affordable housing needed, as well as site and design considerations.
- 14.29 Housing should be designed to a life-time homes standard, i.e. it is built with accessibility and adaptability in mind. This means that the home should be flexible to the changing needs of the occupiers (be they elderly, disabled or not), and can be adapted at minimal cost and disruption to them. This approach accords with Policy CS29: Sustainable Design and Construction.
- 14.30 There may be a small role for live-work units, depending on demand. They can provide an opportunity for households to combine home and work within the same premises, and reduce the need to travel for the occupiers. Such units are often attractive to office-based businesses such as media, design, IT and consultancy.

POLICY CS18: Mix of Housing

New housing development will provide a choice of homes. This will comprise:

- (a) a range of housing types, sizes and tenure;**
- (b) housing for those with special needs; and**
- (c) affordable housing in accordance with Policy CS19.**

Decisions on the appropriate type of mix of homes within development proposals will be guided by strategic housing market assessments and housing needs surveys, and informed by other housing market intelligence and site-specific considerations.

Monitoring:

Indicator(s)	Target(s)
Size of new dwellings completed	
Number of dwellings completed	

Delivery will be achieved by:

- allocating housing sites and targets for affordable housing through the Site Allocations DPD and East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan;
- policies in the Development Management DPD;
- guidance in Supplementary Planning Documents, including the Affordable Housing SPD;
- implementing the Council's Housing Strategy; and
- working in partnership with developers, the parish councils, local communities, landowners, developers, the County Council, and Registered Providers.

Affordable housing

14.31 Affordable housing is subsidised. It comprises:

- social rented;
- affordable rented; and
- intermediate housing (shared ownership and intermediate rented).

It excludes all market housing.

- 14.32 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment estimated that there will be a significant requirement for social rented housing in Dacorum between 2007 and 2021 (3,100 homes) to achieve a balanced housing supply by 2021. This represents nearly 40% of the housing requirement of 7,800 that the SHMA estimated for all homes over the same period. No specific requirement was identified for intermediate housing. There are a large number of residents on the Council's Housing Register and lengthy waiting times for accommodation. The full affordable housing requirement over the plan period (2006-2031) would be around 5,300 homes. While this level of provision is unlikely to be deliverable, the aim should still be to maximise the provision of affordable housing in the borough². A target of 35% is realistic and achievable, when compared with past achievement, economic conditions and costs associated with new building. The level and mix of housing will be updated through housing needs surveys.
- 14.33 In some areas it will be reasonable to exceed the normal level for affordable housing. Land values vary and so does viability. The opportunity to provide affordable housing is lower outside Hemel Hempstead, because there are fewer sites available. The most should be made of these sites. Supplementary work may well justify higher levels of affordable housing, and this would be specified, normally in the Site Allocations DPD.
- 14.34 There may also be genuine circumstances where a lower level of affordable housing is appropriate, e.g. because of viability, site characteristics and abnormal costs. This would need to be justified in each case. The viability of a scheme will be tested on the basis of an open book financial appraisal, considering the residual value of the land and the profitability of the scheme.
- 14.35 Affordable housing should be provided on the application site. However where this is not feasible, off-site provision or a financial contribution will be accepted instead.
- 14.36 Intermediate housing is considered to be part of a balanced mix of affordable housing over the plan period and will be sought where it is justified by local circumstances.
- 14.37 Homes will be provided in the villages to enable people who are in housing need to stay locally and maintain their local connections with family and work. This in turn will help support the viability of rural services and amenities. Development opportunities will largely be on sites within and adjacent to the selected small villages identified in the settlement hierarchy. Villages are normally able to absorb modest, well-planned schemes without significant harm to their character or the setting of the countryside.
- 14.38 Detailed guidance on viability, commuted payments, eligibility criteria for the occupation of affordable housing and other matters will be provided in supplementary guidance and advice.

² Based on the housing supply information in Table 7, it is estimated that approximately 3,900 affordable homes will be delivered over the plan period.

POLICY CS19: Affordable Housing

Affordable homes will be provided:

- on sites of a minimum size 0.3ha or 10 dwellings (and larger) in Hemel Hempstead; and
- elsewhere on sites of a minimum size of 0.16ha or 5 dwellings (and larger).

A financial contribution will be sought in lieu of affordable housing on sites which fall below these thresholds.

35% of the new dwellings should be affordable homes. Higher levels will be sought on sites which are specified in a development plan document, provided development would be viable and need is evident. 100% of all new homes will be affordable on rural housing sites (Policy CS20).

A minimum of 75% of the affordable housing units provided should be for rent.

Judgements about the level and mix of affordable homes will have regard to:

- (a) the Council's Housing Strategy and other evidence (see Policy CS18);**
- (b) the potential to enlarge the site;**
- (c) the overall viability of the scheme and any abnormal costs; and**
- (d) more detailed guidance in the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.**

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the benefit of all affordable housing units will pass from the initial occupiers of the property to successive occupiers.

POLICY CS20: Rural Sites for Affordable Homes

Small-scale schemes for local affordable homes will be promoted in and adjoining selected small villages in the countryside (see Policies CS6 and CS7), and exceptionally elsewhere with the support of the local Parish Council.

Development will only be permitted if:

- (a) it meets an identified local need for affordable housing;**
- (b) the housing is for people who have a strong local connection with the village or parish through work, residence or family; and**
- (c) the scheme is of a scale and design that respects the character, setting and form of the village and surrounding countryside.**

Any site on the edge of a village must represent a logical extension to it.

Monitoring:

Indicator(s)	Target(s)
Number of new affordable homes	35% of all new dwellings
Tenure of new affordable homes	A minimum 75% of the affordable units to be for rent
Number of affordable homes delivered through rural housing schemes	-

Delivery will be achieved by:

- allocating housing sites and targets for affordable housing through the Site Allocations DPD and East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan;
- policies in the Development Management DPD;
- guidance in supplementary documents, including the Affordable Housing SPD which will consider dwelling mix, tenure and the formula for calculating financial contributions;
- implementing the Council's Housing Strategy; and
- working in partnership with developers, the parish councils, local communities, landowners, developers, the County Council, and Registered Providers.

Travelling Communities

14.39 Three travelling communities live in and visit Dacorum:

- people living in caravans: i.e.
 - Gypsies and Travellers; and
 - travelling showpeople
- people living in boats on the Grand Union Canal.

14.40 Their needs can be met by retaining existing accommodation and providing new sites.

Table 10: Estimated Requirements for People Living in Caravans

2006 Stock		2006-2031 Total Increase
Gypsies and Travellers (Residential Pitches)		
Dacorum	36	59
Hertfordshire	244	522
Gypsies and Travellers (Transit Pitches)		
Hertfordshire	15	20
Travelling Showpeople (Plots)		
Hertfordshire	60	48

Source: Based on the revision to the former Regional Spatial Strategy (July 2009)

Gypsies and Travellers

14.41 The need for more, residential pitches is shown in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for South and West Herts (2005), and more pitches are recommended in the longer term to address natural growth. New pitches will provide a more settled base for Gypsies and Travellers, giving them better access to health and education services, and employment.

14.42 A small number of transit pitches should be provided across Hertfordshire, and local authorities, including Dacorum Council, will work together to determine their distribution.

14.43 The Council intends that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers should be progressively met and that all sites should be located, designed and managed on the basis of fairness, integration and sustainability: i.e.

- (a) fairness to both the Gypsy and Traveller community and the settled community;
- (b) to achieve acceptance by the two communities of each other, social coherence and a wider, shared sense of place and community; and

- (c) proximity to services, social inclusion, protection of heritage and important environmental features and conservation of natural resources.

14.44 The Council will collaborate with other agencies, such as the County Council, Police and community support groups, and site owners/managers to assist the assimilation of residents on new sites with the settled community nearby.

Travelling Showpeople

14.45 Initial provision for travelling showpeople is directed towards Broxbourne and East Herts. The Hertfordshire local authorities will work together to determine the distribution of the longer term growth. There is no identified demand within Dacorum itself, and more opportunity to accommodate plots within other areas of Hertfordshire.

Boats

14.46 Demand for residential and visitor moorings has followed supply. Opportunities for the construction of new residential and visitor mooring basins in the Dacorum section of the canal will be very limited. However through the gradual improvement of online moorings and adjoining facilities in settlements along the canal, more provision will be made for visitors.

CS21: Existing Accommodation for Travelling Communities

Existing pitches, plots and mooring basins will be safeguarded from alternative development unless:

- (a) a satisfactory replacement is provided; or**
- (b) there is no further need for the facility.**

CS22: New Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers

New sites will be:

- (a) distributed in a dispersed pattern around settlements;**
- (b) located close to facilities;**
- (c) of varying sizes, not normally exceeding a site capacity of 15 pitches;**
- (d) planned to allow for part occupation initially, allowing subsequent growth to full site capacity; and**
- (e) designed to a high standard with:**
 - (i) an open frontage similar to other forms of housing; and**
 - (ii) landscaping or other physical features to provide an appropriate setting and relationship to existing residential areas.**

Priority will be given to the provision of sites which are defined on the Proposals Map. If other proposals come forward, they will be judged on the basis of the need for that provision.

Any new transit pitches should also:

- (a) achieve good access to the M1 or A41 main roads; and**
- (b) minimise potential disturbance to adjoining occupiers.**

Monitoring:

Indicators	Targets
Number of new pitches (net)	59
Number of new plots (net)	0

Delivery will be achieved:

For Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople:

- by the identification of sites in the Site Allocations DPD;
- by provision of sites through multi-agency partnership (including the Dacorum Partnership), and through the Council's Housing Strategy and take up of available Government grants; and
- by private owners, Registered Providers or a local authority managing sites [relevant Government advice applying to design and management].

For Canal Moorings:

- by development management and collaboration with British Waterways.

15. Meeting Community Needs

Delivering community services and facilities

- 15.1 The fundamental day-to-day living needs and the well-being of society are dependent on having the appropriate social infrastructure (Figure 14) to deliver the required social and community services and facilities.

Figure 14 Social infrastructure

Social infrastructure includes:

- early years education to further education;
- primary and secondary health care;
- open space, outdoor leisure and indoor sports facilities;
- libraries;
- community buildings and facilities for childcare, community care, general welfare, worship, social contact, culture, leisure and civic duties;
- specialist facilities such as prisons;
- job centre and related facilities; and
- cemeteries and emergency services and related facilities such as fire hydrants.

- 15.2 The Dacorum Sustainable Community Strategy and the local planning system both aspire to promote and improve community well-being and help to provide the mechanisms to deliver the social infrastructure needed. The Council also aims to help agencies who provide social infrastructure to supply the right facilities in the right place.
- 15.3 Collaborative working, consultation and a variety of technical studies have helped to understand the opportunities and issues concerning social infrastructure. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan has reviewed the existing social infrastructure in the borough and established future requirements of a growing population to 2031. Through consultation with infrastructure providers, the work established where the demands for certain services and facilities are not being met and where there are oversupply issues. Infrastructure providers' future service plans and requirements arising from projected population levels give a schedule of infrastructure requirements to 2031.
- 15.4 For the purposes of the Core Strategy, local communities were consulted at 'Place Shaping' workshops to help identify for social infrastructure or social services and facilities requirements around the borough. The workshops also helped to prioritise needs and helped to develop strategies for different places (see sections 20-27).

Education

- 15.5 A collaborative partnership has been established between the Council and Hertfordshire County Council departments to develop a comprehensive plan for school places to 2031.
- 15.6 The work considered the need for more nursery, primary, secondary and higher education places and educational facilities for children and young people in the borough, as a result of a recent birth rate forecast. It has also considered the additional demand from housing growth in the borough, together with recent population forecasts.
- 15.7 As a result, Hertfordshire County Council have identified key educational constraints and threshold issues in the county and reassessed the method used to calculate school places in growth areas. Further work is underway. This will reconsider the future of the primary schools closed as part of the Hertfordshire County Council Primary School Review in 2007. It is expected that the affected primary schools (Jupiter Drive, Barncroft and Martindale) will either be reopened when the need arises, redeveloped to deliver new social and community facilities, or redeveloped for housing purposes. Two 'Education Zones' for new school provision have been identified on the edge of Berkhamsted. These are illustrated on the vision diagram (Figure 22) for the Berkhamsted Place Strategy (section 21).
- 15.8 The Councils have also identified the need to accommodate additional nursery, primary, middle and secondary school places on existing school sites; the need for a number of new primary schools; and the need for a larger replacement college to serve both young people and adults within the borough.
- 15.9 The Borough Council will also be working with Hertfordshire County Council on their investment programme to refurbish and remodel a number of existing secondary schools and secondary age special schools.
- 15.10 The private sector also has a strong presence in the borough and plays an important role in providing independent school places.

Health

- 15.11 The Council has been working with the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) NHS Hertfordshire to identify existing issues with primary and secondary health care services. The PCT is currently responsible for improving the health of local people and delivering primary care services, such as services provided by GPs, community nurses, health visitors or school health advisors. The PCT also arranges healthcare for people in hospitals, care homes, clinics, community settings and in the patient's home. Government healthcare reforms will lead to the abolition of PCTs, with the majority of their functions transferred to GPs through fund-holding surgeries by 2012.
- 15.12 The PCT and West Hertfordshire Hospital NHS Trust have recently delivered a new 24/7 Urgent Care Centre and a new GP-led health centre in 2009, as part of a

programme of works at Hemel Hempstead hospital site combined with the centralisation of acute facilities to Watford Hospital. This redevelopment programme will deliver a new local general hospital on the existing hospital grounds on a reduced footprint. The remaining part of the site will accommodate new homes and a primary school together with improvements to pedestrian, highway and green links with the town centre and the wider area.

- 15.13 Further collaborative working with the PCT has helped to produce the 'Investment Asset Management Strategy' for Dacorum. This summarises where the primary and secondary health service issues are likely to be in the borough and where new facilities are required. It also examines the quality of health service buildings in Dacorum (excluding the hospital) and explains how the provision of health services is calculated. With this information, the Council has established a need for suitable practise buildings and delivering new practises near to areas of housing growth.

Community

- 15.14 The 'Place Shaping' workshops around the borough identified a need to improve existing facilities and consider further provision of community services and facilities. These facilities were primarily for young people and the elderly, with the requirement for new large community centres/halls, cultural centres, space for local faith groups, and more open space. Specific needs are identified in the Place Strategies.
- 15.15 As well as considering opportunities to help improve and rectify these issues, the Council is beginning a programme of refurbishing many of the local centres in Hemel Hempstead. Improvements will be carried out as part of the neighbourhood centres regeneration programme and will include soft landscaping.
- 15.16 In addition to these issues, wherever new housing growth is planned there will be a need to expand existing social infrastructure or provide new services and facilities. New development will be expected to contribute towards these needs. For larger-scale development this could include the provision of a new local centre.
- 15.17 Another fundamental community service the Council will be expanding is its provision of cemetery space in Hemel Hempstead. A suitable location will be identified through the Site Allocation DPD.

Delivering leisure and cultural facilities

Leisure

- 15.18 Other than the important open space available for informal sport and recreation (section 16), the borough also contains a variety of leisure space, including public and private outdoor sports facilities for children and young people, allotments and parks and gardens. Deficiencies in leisure space in the borough have however been identified³.

³ Open Space Study, 2008

- 15.19 In 2009, a working group was established to help ensure the borough had sufficient quality and distribution of leisure facilities and makes best use of them. The working group included a number of representatives from the Council, the Dacorum Sports Trust, Sport England, Hertfordshire County Council, PCT, and Dacorum Sports Schools Partnership. Their work helped develop the Facilities Improvements Strategy⁴. The strategy examined the idea of a new sports facility in Hemel Hempstead as part of a strategic approach to the development and provision of leisure facilities, at the same time as targeting areas suffering from higher than average obesity levels.
- 15.20 Whilst the Facilities Improvements Strategy provides a good basis for improvements and new opportunities for leisure, the Council will need to use existing land and buildings to rectify the deficiencies in leisure space and help respond to changing recreational and leisure demands. Land already identified as existing open space and leisure space will be protected and enhanced. Other opportunities, such as the new sports facility for the town will be supported, to help deliver new sport and recreational facilities.
- 15.21 The County Council's schools improvement programme will also support this ethos by delivering additional public sports facilities on the basis that they can be shared with other users. Opportunities for other dual use facilities will also be supported.

Cultural Facilities

- 15.22 The borough's cultural facilities in a place are strongly linked to the leisure tourism sector (see section 11). The facilities on offer in Dacorum include arts and entertainment facilities, buildings and facilities for community events, built heritage and natural landscape, and important open space and leisure space, like the Chiltern Beechwoods and the Grand Union Canal. Culture is also delivered by individuals, community groups, arts organisations, sports teams and creative entrepreneurs who embed culture in the daily life of the borough.
- 15.23 There are a wide range of benefits in providing and promoting a variety of cultural activities and facilities. These include:
- creating a rich, vibrant and diverse mix of uses which can act as a catalyst for regeneration in town centres;
 - encouraging a sense of personal well-being, pleasure and enjoyment;
 - enriching the quality of life of the community and visitors to the borough;
 - generating tourism and creative industries which can contribute to the local economy;
 - conserving the cultural and historic heritage;
 - improving mental and physical health of residents;
 - providing many and varied social benefits through the development of work and projects with local community organisations and with groups at risk of exclusion;

⁴ Facilities Improvements Strategy, 2010

- supporting citizenship and community identity and safer and stronger communities; and
- providing an opportunity to build on Dacorum’s cultural diversity.

15.24 The regeneration of Hemel Hempstead town centre is a springboard for the delivery of further cultural and tourist facilities. Its key ambitions include the provision of a new library, community facilities, additional open space and improvements to the accessibility of existing green space and the River Gade (see section 20). These will benefit the local communities and visitors alike.

15.25 New opportunities for heritage, arts and cultural businesses and links between local schools and communities will also be supported, particularly as part of mixed use developments and regeneration schemes.

Policy CS23: Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure, providing services and facilities to the community, will be encouraged.

New infrastructure will:

- (a) be located to aid accessibility; and
- (b) provide for the multifunctional use of space.

The dual use of new and existing facilities will be promoted.

The provision of new school facilities will be supported on Open Land and in defined zones in the Green Belt. Zones will be defined in the Green Belt where there is clear evidence of need: the effect of new building and activity on the countryside must, however, be minimised.

Existing social infrastructure will be protected unless appropriate alternative provision is made, or satisfactory evidence is provided to prove the facility is no longer viable. The re-use of a building for an alternative social or community service or facility is preferred.

All new development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of social infrastructure. For larger developments this may include land and/or buildings.

Monitoring:

Indicator(s)	Target(s)
Net increase in the forms of entry provided at First and Primary schools	-
New health facilities delivered	-

Net loss of existing services or facilities	-
Increase in the area of leisure space	
Retention of social and community facilities	No net loss of floorspace

Delivery will be achieved by:

- identification of infrastructure and planning requirements through the Site Allocation DPD;
- the Development Management DPD;
- masterplans for strategic sites;
- application of the Planning Obligations SPD;
- partnership working with infrastructure providers including the Children Schools and Families (CSF) and Property Services at the County Council, health agencies, the Sports Trust and Sport England, and the voluntary sector;
- implementation of the Facilities Improvement Strategy (FIS); and
- implementation and monitoring of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).