

## 15. Meeting Community Needs

### Social Infrastructure

- 15.1 The well-being of Dacorum's communities depends on having the appropriate social infrastructure. The infrastructure described in Figure 14 is essential to provide the facilities and services which underpin quality of life and deliver day-to-day living needs.

**Figure 14: Social infrastructure**

Social infrastructure includes:

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

- 15.2 The Dacorum Sustainable Community Strategy aspires to improve community well-being, although it recognises there are resource constraints. The Council will work with the agencies that 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, and will continue to do so. The first Infrastructure Delivery Plan reviewed existing social infrastructure in the borough and established future requirements of a growing population to 2031. Work on this plan established where demands for certain services and facilities were not being met and where there was any oversupply. The service plans of infrastructure providers and requirements arising from projected population levels effectively yield a schedule of infrastructure requirements to 2031.
- 15.4 The Government asks councils to plan positively for the provision and use of shared space and social infrastructure (facilities and services). The Council will be guided by the relevant infrastructure providers for some types of facility and will undertake its own assessment for others (e.g. for leisure). Up to date information will help determine future provision and opportunities. Particular importance is attached to the delivery of school places and health services. Linking planning policy with infrastructure capacity and spending will help resources to be more effectively deployed and thus support healthy, inclusive communities. Effective use of facilities

is important. The retention of existing facilities, whether in their present use or a suitable alternative, is encouraged. New facilities should be capable of dual use and multipurpose use where reasonable. Multipurpose use can more readily be achieved in buildings and leisure space, but is not always possible (for example, in some single faith buildings).

- 15.5 For the purposes of the Core Strategy, local communities were consulted at 'place workshops' to help identify social infrastructure and services and facilities required around the borough. The workshops also helped to prioritise needs and helped to develop strategies for different places (see Sections 20-26).

## **Delivering Education, Health and Community Services and Facilities**

### **Education**

- 15.6 A collaborative partnership has been established between the Council and Hertfordshire County Council departments to develop a comprehensive plan for school places to 2031.
- 15.7 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.
- 15.8 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).
- 15.9 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.
- 15.10 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.
- 15.11 The private sector also has a strong presence in the borough and plays an important role in providing independent school places.

## Health

- 15.12 The Council worked with the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) NHS Hertfordshire to identify issues with primary and secondary health care services. The PCT has been 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 arranged healthcare for people in hospitals, care homes, clinics, community settings and in the patient's home. Government healthcare reforms have resulted in the abolition of PCTs, with the majority of their functions affecting Dacorum transferring to a Clinical Commissioning Group in 2013.
- 15.13 The PCT and West Hertfordshire Hospital NHS Trust established a new 24/7 Urgent Care Centre and a new GP-led health centre in 2009 at Hemel Hempstead hospital site. Acute facilities have been centralised at Watford Hospital. A redevelopment programme will deliver a new local general hospital on the existing Hemel Hempstead 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.
- 15.14 The PCT helped to produce the 'Investment Asset Management Strategy' for Dacorum. This summarised primary and secondary health service issues in the borough and where new facilities would be required. It also examined the quality of health service buildings (excluding the hospital) and explained how the provision of health services was calculated. Using this information, the Council has established a need for suitable practice buildings and delivering new practices near to areas of housing growth.

## Community

- 15.15 Place workshops around the borough identified a need to improve existing community facilities and consider further provision of both facilities and services. These facilities should primarily be for young people and the elderly. Specific needs for new large community centres/halls and space for local faith groups, as well as cultural centres and more open space, were identified. Some new provision is indicated in the Place Strategies, and additions are possible.
- 15.16 As well as considering opportunities to help address 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.
- 15.17 Wherever new housing is planned, there will be a need to expand existing social infrastructure and/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.
- 15.18 Another fundamental community service the Council will be expanding is its provision of cemetery space, particularly in Hemel Hempstead. A suitable location will be identified through the Site Allocations DPD.

## Delivering Leisure and Cultural Facilities

### Leisure

- 15.19 The borough 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 been identified<sup>1</sup>.
- 15.20 A working group was established in 2009 to help ensure the borough had sufficient quality and distribution of leisure facilities and made 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 Strategy<sup>2</sup>: this provided a good basis to plan for improvements and new opportunities for leisure. 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.
- 15.21 The Council will use existing land and buildings to rectify 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 for sport and recreation will be supported.
- 15.22 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

- 15.23 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.
- 15.24 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;
  - increasing awareness of the countryside, traditional crafts and local food production;

<sup>1</sup> Open Space Study, 2008

<sup>2</sup> Facilities Improvements Strategy, 2010

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

15.25 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).

15.26 New opportunities for heritage, arts and cultural activities 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 be:**

- **located to aid accessibility; and**
- **designed to allow for different activities**

**The dual use of new and existing facilities will be encouraged wherever possible.**

**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 Green Belt 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:**

<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Target(s)</b>
Net increase in the forms of entry provided at First and Primary schools	-
New health facilities delivered	-
Increase in the area of leisure space in the borough and the main towns (in hectares)	-
Net change in the floorspace for leisure, community and cultural facilities	No net loss of floorspace

**Delivery will be achieved by:**

- identification of infrastructure and planning requirements through the Site Allocations DPD and East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan;
- the Development Management DPD;
- master plans 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).