## 21. Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy

## How have we got to this point?

Your consultation responses have told us that you support our general approach to the Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy. You have told us you support the more detailed policy approach for the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan. These responses have helped us focus the strategy on regenerating the town centre and Maylands Business Park. Concerns have been noted about the particularly high level of growth considered during the 2006 consultation for Hemel Hempstead, and the level of infrastructure required to support that growth. The alternative housing options put forward therefore propose substantially fewer homes.

#### Context

- 21.1. Hemel Hempstead is a Mark One New Town designed by Geoffrey Jellicoe in the 1940s with development starting in the 1950s. It is the largest town in the borough and has a population of just over 82,000 (2001 Census). The town is quite compact and is surrounded by Green Belt. Distinctive landscape features include the Grand Union Canal, and the Gade and Bulbourne Valleys with rivers that converge at Two Waters, south of the town centre. The topography of the town and the design of the neighbourhoods draws the countryside in, allowing views of open space, woodland and parkland from residential areas to the west, east and south of the town centre.
- 21.2. The town has excellent links to London and the Midlands, via the M1 and M25 motorways and the main railway line stations in Boxmoor and Apsley. Other than the town centre, the focus for employment is the Maylands Business Park, which is the largest business park in the eastern region and lies to the east of the town. A wide range of shops, services and facilities are provided by local centres. The main leisure and sports facilities comprise Leisure World, Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre, Esporta and The Snow Centre.
- 21.3. The accessibility of the town centre is one of Hemel Hempstead's assets. However, there is a need to maintain and improve pedestrian routes between adjoining residential areas, car parks and bus stops. The linearity of the town centre remains a barrier to integration of the various zones. The Old Town at the northern end, and the Plough Zone to the south, are currently the focus of the evening economy.
- 21.4. Regeneration is a main priority for the Council. As an original New Town, many buildings and the public realm in the town centre are now tired and some areas require significant regeneration. Regeneration is also required in the east of Hemel Hempstead at the Maylands Business Park to aid economic recovery since the Buncefield explosion.

#### 21.5. The following are the key regeneration projects:

- Town centre this includes the regeneration and refurbishment of the town centre. The ambitions for the area are explained in the vision for the town centre.
- 2. **Maylands** to rejuvenate the Maylands Business Area to deliver a first choice employment location with some residential development, leisure space and a Green Energy Centre. The ambitions are explained in the vision for East Hemel Hempstead.
- 3. **Neighbourhood Centres** to regenerate, reinvigorate and green the neighbourhood local centres.
- 4. **Green spaces** the main priorities are to improve the networks of open spaces, and create a new urban park largely in the green gateway area to the south of Hemel Hempstead.

#### The Visions

#### Vision for Hemel Hempstead town

Hemel Hempstead will embrace new development and aim to promote pride of place, taking forward the 1947 Hemel Hempstead New Town Development Corporation motto 'Greater, Richer, More Beautiful'. Its long-term strategy as a main centre for development and change will be to meet the housing and economic challenges of the borough. Extensions to the town will contribute fully to its success. The town will provide a better quality of life and prosperity for its residents and business community. There will be improved public transport links between Maylands Business Park, the town centre and the main railway station in Hemel Hempstead, and a new covered bus station in the town centre. The regeneration of the town centre will be complete. More employment opportunities will be available through the expansion of Maylands Business Park.

Community needs will be met. People will have access to shops and services locally. New schools will be built and new leisure facilities provided, including sports facilities and an urban park. A performing arts venue will serve the town and additional leisure activities will be encouraged in the town centre and at Jarman Park, along with new business opportunities. A new cemetery will also be necessary to accommodate the needs of the town and wider area. New buildings incorporate energy efficiencies and low carbon technology: developments in high density areas will take advantage of district heating or combined heat and power.

#### Vision for Hemel Hempstead town centre

The town centre will be a vibrant place where people will want to shop, work, live, learn, and visit during the day, evening and night. This will be achieved through economic regeneration and new housing to maximise footfall, whilst ensuring a distinctive identity based upon its New Town history. Through regeneration, new

development will deliver a legible and attractive physical environment that makes maximum use of its pedestrian connections and environmental and built assets. The key priorities will be to provide better public realm connections to the Old Town from the rest of the town centre, and strengthen green links along the River Gade and to Gadebridge Park, the new Urban Park, Paradise Fields and the Nickey Line. New facilities and services will include a new hospital, school, college, performing arts venue, multi-cultural facility and an office hub for small offices. The public realm and building fascias along the Marlowes will also be significantly improved and the pedestrianised area extended, following relocation of the bus station. Public art and culture will be promoted.

#### Vision for East Hemel Hempstead (Maylands Business Park)

East Hemel Hempstead will be the home to a vibrant, dynamic and premier business-led community. It will be a first choice investment location capitalising on and strengthening its role as a sub-regional economic hub.

The area will be the focus for high quality, energy efficient development permeated by open space. It will provide a better environment and more leisure facilities and will be easily accessible by a range of transport modes. Passenger transport will improve connections to key destinations not only around the town but to those in other urban centres. Those living and working in the area will enjoy a high quality of life as a result.

## Local Objectives

#### In the town as a whole, the objectives are to:

- meet the full housing target of 7,530 (Option 1) or 8,800 (Option 2) new homes;
- provide an efficient public transport interchange between the town centre, the railway station and Maylands; and
- ensure sufficient wastewater treatment and sewerage infrastructure.

The following objectives relate to different parts of the town.

- In **Hemel Hempstead town** (excluding the town centre and East Hemel Hempstead) the objectives are to deliver:
  - a) 4,730 (Option 1) or 6,000 (Option 2) homes;
  - b) Several new primary schools, each with 2 forms of entry;
  - c) a new urban park;
  - d) a sports facility;
  - e) improvements to the main railway station;
  - f) improvements to local centres; and
  - g) a new cemetery.
- In **the town centre** the objectives are to deliver:
  - a) around 1,800 homes;
  - b) a new General Hospital;
  - c) 1 primary school with 2 forms of entry;
  - d) a bus interchange;
  - e) a new college;
  - f) a supermarket;
  - g) a performing arts venue;
  - h) a cultural facility;
  - i) new civic facilities; and
  - j) a better footpath network.

- In **East Hemel Hempstead** the objectives are to:
  - 1. deliver:
    - a) around 1,000 homes;
    - b) new jobs;
    - c) a new local centre;
    - d) new open space within the Heart of Maylands;
    - e) new primary schooling;
    - f) a district heating network, linked to an energy and waste park;
    - g) a low carbon economy;
    - h) new transport infrastructure, linked to 'park and ride' facilities
    - i) the north-east Hemel Hempstead relief road; and
    - j) a new access road from Breakspear Way to Boundary Way;
  - 2. allow for modest extensions to the town to be planned\*; and
  - 3. seek new sports facilities to serve the area.

[\* If taken forward by St Albans Council, they would provide homes and jobs, and transport and various community facilities].

#### **Delivering the Vision: Hemel Hempstead Town**

- 21.6. After taking into account potential levels of development in other settlements Hemel Hempstead will have the scope to deliver around 7,530 (Option 1) or 8,800 (Option 2) homes over the period 2006–2031. Three local allocations (in Option 2) are proposed. The level of change will be sufficient to accommodate the natural population and household growth. The higher amount of housing will enable the Council to secure the right mix and tenure of homes, to address the affordable housing shortage in the borough and to better balance homes and jobs. Homes will be concentrated near to existing physical and social infrastructure to minimise the need for additional facilities and services for new homes and residents, such as wastewater treatment and sewerage infrastructure<sup>1</sup> and schools.
- 21.7. New development will aim to enhance the pride and image of the town through high quality regeneration and development, and through the provision of new open space, outdoor leisure space, public realm improvements and co-ordinated public transport interchanges. New development will also accommodate renewable energy generation and energy efficiency technologies to reduce carbon emissions. However, the greatest opportunities for zero and low carbon technologies are associated with high density developments, which will be delivered in the town centre and to the east of the town.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Local Water Authorities (Thames Water Utilities Ltd and Veolia Water Central) manage the collection of wastewater mainly at Maple Lodge Wastewater Treatment works and the supply of potable water. New housing growth infrastructure in Dacorum will not be taken into consideration by the Local Water Authorities until post 2015.

#### **Delivering the Vision: Hemel Hempstead Town Centre**

- 21.8. The key role of new development in the town centre will be to facilitate regeneration and maximise pedestrian activity during the day, early evening and night. A variety of employment, shopping and leisure uses will be delivered to suit the income levels of local residents. Multiple retailers will be attracted to strengthen the economy and there may also be an opportunity for an additional department store<sup>2</sup>.
- 21.9. To help drive regeneration in different parts of the town centre, character zones have been identified (described in Figure 17 and illustrated in Figure 21). Each zone accommodates similar uses or built/natural landscape.

### Figure 17: Town Centre Character Zones and Development Opportunities

Developers must consider the relationship of the proposed development with its character zone and opportunities available.

**The Old Town** - is based around the High Street, Queensway and the northern tip of the Marlowes. The main businesses include professional services, quality specialist shops and a strong evening economy with a variety of pubs, restaurants and cafes. The quality of the built environment in this zone is recognised for special architectural or historic importance and the notable landmark of St Mary's Church. This zone offers opportunities to improve north/south pedestrian links and refurbishment of the building fascias along the northern tip of the Marlowes.

**The Gade Zone** - includes the north western section of the town centre from Queensway to Combe Street. Notable features include the River Gade and the Marlowes Methodist Church. This zone holds significant regeneration opportunities for educational, civic, residential and multi-cultural uses, along with opportunities for decentralised heating systems or Combined Heat and Power (CHP).

**Original Marlowes Zone** - contains part of the north eastern section of the Marlowes. Its notable feature is its listed villas. It includes services for the town centre such as a large doctors surgery and food stores Asda and Iceland. This zone holds some redevelopment opportunities for residential and part of the pedestrian gateway areas would be a suitable location for an office hub. There are opportunities for more sympathetic architecture and improvements to the building fascias of the listed buildings.

**Jellicoe Water Gardens** - encompasses the whole of the listed Water Gardens area designed by Jellicoe, running from Combe Street to Moor End Road. This zone has the opportunity to restore the Water Gardens, deliver a new centralised covered bus station and include improvements to the pedestrian environment along Waterhouse Street.

L

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> These are the fundamental design and retail principles associated with towns that have similar characteristics. The paper 'After the Goldrush' written by Hewdon Consulting calls these 'Clone Towns' and gives guidance on how to make a Clone Town successful.

The Hospital Zone - includes the hospital site, Paradise employment area, the offices, hotel and surgery opposite. Notable features include Paradise Fields, which is mostly to be retained as open space. The hospital zone holds significant regeneration opportunities for residential, education and health uses, and two suitable locations for an office hub, along with opportunities for new open space, improved pedestrian/cycle links, and decentralised heating systems or CHP.

The Marlowes Shopping Zone - is consolidated around the Marlowes Shopping Centre, the pedestrian area and ramped area, and the stretch north on the other side of the Marlowes to Coombe Street. It is part of the prime retail pitch of the town centre and is in need of major regeneration and refurbishment. This zone holds significant regeneration opportunities with the potential to restore the Market Square and create additional leisure uses and active frontages along the ramped area (at ground level) and Waterhouse Street. Part of the pedestrian gateway around the Market Square is also suitable location for part of an office hub. There are also opportunities to create a new covered public meeting space along the pedestrianised area, make improvements to building fascias, de-clutter the pedestrian environment, revamp the children play area and deliver decentralised heating systems or CHP.

**The Plough Zone** - is focussed around the Plough Roundabout. It is an important gateway to the Town Centre and has recently been enhanced by the Riverside retail and residential development with restaurants along River Gade riverside walk. The redevelopment of Kodak will include important residential, office and restaurant uses.

## Delivering the Vision: East Hemel Hempstead

- 21.10. East Hemel Hempstead will focus on regenerating the employment area and becoming the economic beacon for the town. It will have an attractive environment that will draw in new employers, organisations and HQ offices, offering opportunities to develop 35 hectares of land, sufficient for 130,000sqm of new office space. These different character zones are described in Figure 18 and illustrated in Figure 22.
- 21.11. The East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan (AAP) will provide further details about cross-boundary working with St. Albans District Council and the extent of the AAP area. It will expand upon opportunities for cross-boundary regeneration projects and the need to deliver more high quality housing, facilities and services to support the business area and the borough.
- 21.12. The AAP will also provide more detailed information regarding the amount of floorspace to be delivered for different uses and the amount of jobs likely to come forward from future development in the Face of Maylands, the Engine Room and the Service Centre. The Maylands Masterplan, the Maylands Gateway Development Brief and the Heart of Maylands Development Brief currently provide

further background guidance on the aims and aspirations for the area.

#### **Cross-Boundary Working**

The Council supports development which will enhance the Maylands Business Park and allow it to grow.

Further extension of Hemel Hempstead's residential areas may be necessary or appropriate. The best opportunity, with least impact, lies to the east of Spencers Park and south of the Nickey Line.

In both cases St Albans Council would be the local planning authority. It would be responsible for decisions on the level of development and the eastern boundary of the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan.

The Council believes any development should be jointly planned and integrated with the town. It should benefit the residents of the enlarged town, have limited impact on the countryside and provide green infrastructure as a leisure and biodiversity resource. It should take full advantage of the opportunity to use district heating.

The planning of Maylands Business Park is complex. There are a range of facilities which are difficult to accommodate within it, and for which an eastward extension could help – including sports provision, park and ride, waste management and energy generation.

# Figure 18: East Hemel Hempstead Character Zones and Development Opportunities

Developers must consider the relationship of the proposed development with each of the following character zones and the opportunities available within them.

**Maylands Gateway** - is based along the northern side of Breakspear Way and includes land in St. Albans District. This area is recognised as a primary route and green gateway into Maylands Business Park, and the town itself. This includes greenfield and some brownfield land, together with existing businesses.

This zone offers opportunities to provide an additional access road into Marylands Business Park and to deliver prestigious landmark buildings at key nodes.

The types of uses suited to this area will be primarily HQ offices, conference facilities and a hotel. There may also be opportunities for other development that accords with its high-status and green character, such as a green energy centre, and a park and ride facility, along with opportunities for decentralised heating systems or CHP.

Maylands Gateway has the potential to deliver around 130,000sqm, which will deliver around 5,700 jobs. (This excludes the as-yet undeveloped PeopleBuilding phases).

**The Heart of Maylands** - includes the immediate area surrounding the crossroads of Maylands Avenue and Wood Lane End. This area is close to existing residential development to the east and west and includes a cluster of shops and services for the workforce and residential area.

This zone holds significant regeneration opportunities for Maylands including opportunities to form a functional local centre with financial and commercial services, restaurants, cafes, leisure uses and a public square to encourage pedestrian activity. Around 250 homes will be provided. There are also opportunities for decentralised heating systems or CHP.

**The Face of Maylands** - contains the buildings fronting Maylands Avenue but excludes the sites surrounding the gateway entrance to the avenue off Breakspear Way and the key buildings at the junction of Wood Lane End. This area currently includes a range of large office buildings.

Along with Maylands Gateway, this zone is expected to be a core office location suitable for HQ offices and large organisations. There is scope for general industrial, storage and distribution uses in less prominent areas. Improvements to the public realm will be delivered to provide a more inviting landscape for pedestrian and cyclists.

**The Engine Room** - includes three areas; land either side of Mark Road; land to the west and north of Eastman Way; and land north of Boundary Way and around Maxted Road.

This area currently includes a mix of industrial and commercial uses, as well as more flexible business uses and should continue to offer these uses in the future. Areas on the periphery of Maylands, adjoining residential areas, offer more flexibility for bulky non B-class uses and an area of residential opportunity lies directly north of the Nickey Line.

**The Service Centre** - includes three areas; land known as Swallowdale; land south and south west of Buncefield; and land north of Buncefield, which includes land south of Punch Bowl Lane in St. Albans District.

This area currently includes storage, distribution and warehousing and some and this is expected to continue. A strip of land between Boundary Way and Buncefield Lane (not currently within the Service Centre) is an office location that was affected by the Buncefield explosion and this land offers opportunities for an extension to the Service Centre for storage, distribution and warehousing, as a long-term strategy.

Other forms of industrial uses, such as office and general industrial should be limited to the Swallowdale area in the future and a lorry park will be delivered along their main access route as part of the north-east relief road. The large expanse of roofs in the service centre also offers opportunities for renewable energy generation. Redevelopment opportunities also off the opportunities for decentralised heating systems or CHP.

**Spencer's Park** – lies south of Hunters Oak and north west of Buncefield. The land is currently greenfield and is expected to extend into St. Albans District.

This area is prime land for residential development. A new primary school will serve the area. Development on greenfield land also offers opportunities for decentralised heating systems or CHP.

## Urban Design

21.13. Figures 19 and 20 illustrate the town's key urban design characteristics, which reinforce borough-wide policies. Policies CS33 and CS34 provide further design guidance to guide development in the town centre and Maylands, with the aim of maximising regeneration and development opportunities. These policies are guided by a wish to restore its New Town character and identity and create a contemporary and attractive environment. When considering the town centre it is important to recognise its role as a focal point for the town, providing a hub for commercial activity and public transport. The town centre is also a neighbourhood of Hemel Hempstead. This role will be reinforced through new housing development. Existing and new residents require access to a similar range of facilities as other neighbourhoods. The Town Centre Masterplan will provide further guidance and focus on areas of anticipated greatest change and activity.

#### Policy CS33: Hemel Hempstead Town Centre

#### New development will:

- a) contribute fully to the achievement of town centre uses, movement and design principles; and
- b) meet relevant opportunities for zones within the town centre.

The town centre design principles below will guide all future actions for:

#### 1. use:

- (a) delivering a mix of uses in the regeneration areas to support the prime retail function;
- (b) securing an additional anchor store i.e. department store;
- (c) maintaining a public sector presence in the town centre;
- (d) creating a new office hub;
- (e) delivering new leisure and cultural facilities; and
- (f) retaining and restoring existing important spaces and squares and creating new public meeting space.

#### 2. movement:

- (a) securing an integrated public transport hub with appropriate traffic management; and
- (b)continuing the riverside walk from the Plough Zone through to the Gade Zone.

#### 3. design:

- (a) emphasising the importance of pedestrian and movement gateways through bolder building design, height and landscaping;
- (b) providing active street frontages;
- (c) restoring existing mosaics and decorative panels and creating new pieces of art as part of the design process for new buildings;
- (d) using high quality materials and public art to complement the existing palette of materials and features;
- (e) unifying the zones through a co-ordinated design approach and an integrated movement and streetscape design; and
- (f) delivering district heating and additional large-scale/high capacity renewable energy generation technologies.

Specific opportunities for each zone are identified in Figure 17: Town Centre Character Zones and Development Opportunities.

A Town Centre Master Plan will be prepared to elaborate this policy.

#### Policy CS34: Maylands Business Park

#### New development will:

- a) contribute fully to the achievement of use, movement and design principles; and
- b) meet relevant opportunities for zones within Maylands Business Park.

Maylands Business Park design principles below will guide all future actions for:

#### 1. use:

- (a) securing HQ offices in Maylands Gateway;
- (b) delivering services and facilities to support small and large businesses in appropriate character zones;
- (c) delivering a local centre in the Heart of Maylands to support residents and workers:
- (d) creating an energy and waste park; and
- (e) retaining and improving the Nickey Line and creating new public meeting spaces.

#### 2. movement:

- (a) securing an integrated public transport network between the town centre and Hemel Hempstead railway station with appropriate traffic management;
- (b) establishing an area-wide Green Travel Plan;
- (c) creating a new access point off Breakspear Way to link to Boundary Way:
- (d) completing the north-east Hemel Hempstead relief road; and
- (e) securing a lorry parking facility near the north-east Hemel Hempstead relief road.

#### 3. design:

- (a) emphasising the importance of movement gateways through appropriate features and bolder building design, height and landscaping;
- (b) distinguishing between character zones whilst unifying the zones through a co-ordinated approach to building design, movement and streetscape; and
- (c) delivering district heating and additional large-scale/high capacity renewable energy generation technologies.

Specific opportunities for each zone are identified in Figure 18: East Hemel Hempstead Character Zones and Development Opportunities.

The East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan will provide further guidance.

#### **Monitoring:**

Indicator(s)				Target(s)
Achievement milestones.	of	key	development	To be determined.

#### Delivery will be achieved by:

- designation of development sites and their planning requirements through the Site Allocations DPD and the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan;
- A range of Supplementary Planning Documents, development briefs and other guidance e.g. the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan SPD, Marlowes Shopping Zone Improvements Plan, Maylands Masterplan, Maylands Gateway Development Brief, Heart of Maylands Development Brief and Urban Design SPD;
- partnership working with the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Economic Development team at Hertfordshire County Council, the local business community, West Herts College, Hertfordshire Forward, Hertfordshire Works and business support partners; and
- targeted expenditure on improvement works in the town centre, Maylands Business Park and elsewhere.

## Local Allocations (included under Housing Option 2 only)

Location reference	LA1	
Site location	Marchmont Farm	
Proposals	Approximately 300 new homes	
	Extend Margaret Lloyd Park	
Principles	<ul> <li>A mix of two storey and three storey housing including around 40% affordable homes.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>A contribution must be made towards educational and community facilities.</li> </ul>	
	The layout, design, density and landscaping must create a soft edge with the adjoining Green Belt boundary.	
	<ul> <li>Impact on the local road network mitigated through the promotion of sustainable travel options, including pedestrian links to the local centre.</li> </ul>	
Delivery	<ul> <li>The proposal will be delivered as an allocation in the Site Allocations DPD where detailed planning requirements will be established.</li> </ul>	

Location reference	LA2	
Site location	Old Town	
Proposals	Approximately 80 new homes	
Principles	A mix of two storey and three storey housing including	
	around 40% affordable homes.	

	<ul> <li>A contribution must be made towards educational and community facilities.</li> <li>The layout, design, density and landscaping must be in keeping with the Old Town.</li> <li>Impact on the local road network mitigated through the promotion of sustainable travel options, including pedestrian links onto Fletcher Way.</li> </ul>
Delivery	<ul> <li>The proposal will be delivered as an allocation in the Site Allocations DPD where detailed planning requirements will be established.</li> </ul>

Location reference	LA3	
Site location	West Hemel Hempstead	
Proposals	<ul> <li>Between 450 (northern area only) and 900 new homes.</li> <li>Shop, doctors surgery and additional social and community provision, including a new primary school</li> </ul>	
Principles	<ul> <li>A mix of two storey and three storey housing including around 40% affordable homes.</li> <li>Contributions must be made towards improving local services and facilities.</li> <li>The layout, design, density and landscaping must create a soft edge to the Green Belt and the extended open space.</li> <li>Impact on the local road network mitigated through the promotion of sustainable travel options, including improved pedestrian links with adjoining areas.</li> <li>Local road junction improvements.</li> <li>Extend Shrubhill Common Nature Reserve.</li> <li>Consider potential for inclusion of a new cemetery to serve the town.</li> </ul>	
Delivery	The proposal will be delivered as an allocation in the Site Allocations DPD where detailed planning requirements will be established.	

# Question 16

Do you consider that the Local Allocations in Section 21 (which are in Housing Option 2) are appropriate?

#### Yes/No

If **not**, please state which Local Allocation(s) you wish to comment on:

Please state the change(s) that should be made, giving your reasons:

# Question 17

Do you support the approach to 'Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy' set out in Section 21?

#### Yes/No

If **not**, please state the policy(ies) and/or paragraph(s) you disagree with, giving your reasons:

Please also specify the changes you think should be made:







