## West Hemel TiA3

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP
FINAL REPORT July 2013


## West Hemel LA3

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

DRAFT REPORT June 2013


The workshop event was an opportunity for a range of stakeholders to influence and shape the proposed development in a way that helps meet their aspirations and concerns.
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Feria Urbanism is a planning + design studio that specialises in urban design, urban planning, urban strategies, public participation and community engagement. Established in 2007, we have been involved in a diverse range of projects across the UK and have developed key skills in organising community engagement events that inform urban and rural strategies.
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report designed and produced by Feria Urbanism

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The LA3 allocation, seen in the distance on the left, as viewed from the south.

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## 01 InH\&RODUCHHON



Part of the LA3 allocation at Chaulden, adjacent to Chaulden Lane (top) and the central section of the allocation, adjacent to the Long Chaulden Road and the adventure playground (above).

## Background

Dacorum Borough Council has an obligation to deliver development which meets the economic housing and other needs of the borough. In response to this, the Council proposes to accommodate more than 11,000 new homes between 2006 and 2031

While a large part of the provision is being directed to built-up areas, the Council estimates that land for around 1,550 homes needs to be found on new Green Belt sites (known as the "local allocations"). These are located around the main settlements, principally Hemel Hempstead. These allocations include land at west Hemel Hempstead. This will include development between Pouchen End Lane and the western side of Hemel Hempstead, at Chaulden and Fields End.

Space within this broad area will be set aside for open space, primary school with school playing fields, land drainage and landscaping and existing homes will remain.

## The Proposal

The proposal includes about 900 homes and supporting mixed-use non-residential development. The proposal is contained in the Council's Core Strategy. It is known as a local allocation and referenced as Proposal LA3 as set out in Section 20 of the Core Strategy

At this stage in the process, no planning permissions have been granted. The Council does not intend the first homes to be completed until 2021. However, because of its size, the development will take around ten years to build out fully. It must be underway in 2021 to enable completion within the plan period (i.e. by 2031).

The proposal cannot be built until a planning application has been submitted and approved Policies in the local planning framework will guide any such planning application. The Council expects any application to conform to the local planning framework. The landowner will decide exactly when a planning application will be submitted.

## Core Strategy Context

Proposal LA3 for West Hemel Hempstead is part of the Core Strategy that has been the subject of examination by a Planning Inspector. The Inspector's job is to examine, on the evidence, whether the Core Strategy is sound. He has considered very carefully the evidence provided to him, the need for more housing and the effect on the Green Belt.

He has suggested that the Core Strategy should move forward with the proposed housing target, provided the Council commit to an early review of the Core Strategy. The Inspector has indicated no issue of soundness with Proposal LA3.

The Inspector wanted the Council to consult on some modifications, which it has done. None of the modifications directly affect LA3

Representations received on the main modifications were passed to the Inspector on $5^{\text {th }}$ April 2013. The Council is now waiting for the Inspector's Report. It is expected that the report will declare the Core Strategy sound. If so, then the location will be agreed and the issues that remain will be the form and layout of the development.

## Landowners + Developers

Various parcels of land have been sold or have been subject to options agreements to enable the proposal to come forward. There are three principal freeholders - the Gardiner Family Trust, Barratts and Hertfordshire County Council. Two house builders are also involved, Taylor Wimpey and Barratts.

It is possible that other small pieces of land could be brought into a precisely defined proposal but that would be a matter for individual landowners. Discussions are continuing between the house builders and land owners where appropriate.

The Council has agreed a "Statement of Common Ground" with the landowners to assist the Planning Inspector. This demonstrates that the proposal can be delivered and its impacts controlled. It also provides a useful guide to the information available and indicates some of what needs to be done next. Together with community and stakeholder engagement, this will inform the master plan.

## Design + Development Questions

Particular questions the Council needs to address are:

- how development fits together including an indication of what it will be like to live in;
- how it integrates with the existing town and the community;
- how it relates to the landscape and surrounding countryside;
- the precise Green Belt boundary (which will be shown on a map);
- the precise extent of the development proposals (which will be shown on a map).

The first step in addressing these issues was a public engagement and consultation exercise conducted on $15^{\text {th }}$ May 2013. This report is the summary of that event. The event has provided a key set of ingredients to the subsequent phases, that will include the preparation of a preparation of a Site Allocations document accompanied by a master plan for the proposal.

## Site Allocations Document

The Site Allocations document, like the Core Strategy, will form part of a new local plan for Dacorum Borough. The Council must submit the Site Allocations document for independent examination, just like the Core Strategy.

The Site Allocations document will delineate the Green Belt boundary and precise extent of each local allocation, including Proposal LA3. It will say more about the timing and delivery of each of the developments.


The LA3 Local Allocation site is visible from the land controlled by the Boxmoor Trust across the valley to the south. The impact of this needs to be considered through the design and development stages.


The land adjacent to the adventure playground marks a key connection point with the wider area.

## Master Plan

A master plan will be prepared. Joint responsibility for its preparation will be with the developer/land owner and Council. The master plan will support each local allocation. This master plan will say more about the character of the proposed development and how it will work and fit in with its surroundings (e.g. the existing urban fabric and strategic landscaping). The Council will be responsible for considering consultation responses and approving the master plan.

## Range of Accommodation

The Government requires local authorities to make provision for all homes, including the identification of a target and five year land supply. Sites must be identified. This applies to both the settled community and travellers. The Council's policies do not exclude provision of homes for members of the travelling community within Proposal LA3 or on other loca allocations. What will ultimately be considered appropriate will depend on the particular site circumstances and need over the plan period.

## Green Belt Revisions

The land at west Hemel Hempstead is currently within the Green Belt. The Core Strategy proposes removal of an area from the Green Belt between Pouchen End Lane and the town to accommodate the proposed development.

The Council intends to delineate the new boundary of the Green Belt and the town itself in the Site Allocations document. The Core Strategy establishes the general principle of the type and scale of development. The Site Allocations will help define the proposal. A master plan will inform that process, providing further guidance on layout, strategic landscaping and so on.

The Council must take into account Government advice when it draws a new line for the Green Belt. Boundaries should use physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

The Council considers that the outer edge of Proposal LA3 will represents the western limit of the town. It will remain important to protect the surrounding countryside from further building, to maintain Bourne End/Winkwell and Potten End as separate communities and to protect the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Special Area of Conservation (the Chiltern Beechwoods).

## Mixed-Use Proposal

The proposal specifies a shop, doctors surgery, new open space/playing fields and additional social and community provision, including a new primary school. The detail of the proposal and supporting facilities will be the subject of further deliberation and consultation with stakeholders and the local community.

## Consultation + Engagement

The Core Strategy has been subject to extensive consultation over a number of years, as follows:

- 2006 Growth at Hemel Hempstead
- 2008 Site Allocations
- 2010 Consultation Draft of the Core Strategy
- 2011 Pre-Submission Draft of the Core Strategy

The Core Strategy and issues associated with it are very wide ranging. The Council uses its web site, adverts, press releases and more recently social media to publicise the Core Strategy. The Council also uses an independent Citizens' Panel for feedback.

The Council has advised people of consultations through its magazine, Dacorum Digest, including pull out supplements. The Autumn/Winter edition 2010 helped advertise consultation on the "Consultation Draft Core Strategy" and specifically referred to a local development option at west Hemel Hempstead.

## Further Consultation

The principle of the development has been accepted by the Council. There is still a lot to consider however. There will be consultation on the master plan and Site Allocations document during 2013 and 2014.


View along Musk Hill, a no-through-road accessed from Honeycross Road and Lindlings. The site lies beyond the trees at the end of the street.


## O2WORKSHOP SIHRUCHURE

## "The decision on the principle of development at this location is confirmed, but there is still a long way to go in terms of planning and design"

Quote from the local planning authority used during the introduction to the workshop event.

## Roles + Responsibilities

The workshop series for the local allocations LA1, LA3 and LA5 was organised by Dacorum Borough Council but it was structured and managed by an independent facilitator team from Feria Urbanism, a Bournemouth-based design practice with extensive experience of such a role

All workshops were attended by representative stakeholders, including local residents, representatives of community groups and the County Council. The workshop series was observed by Dacorum Borough Council planning officers and andowner representatives.

The background to each workshop was informed by Core Strategy Proposal and other information.

## Task BasedWorkshop

The LA3 workshop was run over a single afternoon at the South Hill Centre, Hemel Hempstead on Wednesday $15^{\text {th }}$ May 2013. Given the limited amount of time, the facilitator team were keen o maximise the opportunities for participants to develop and share their ideas. This meant less talk from the planning officers and facilitators to give space to more discussion and debate from the participants.

The introduction was therefore kept to a maximum 15 minutes to help set the scene before handing over to a series of group tasks. These tasks comprised $4 \times 30$ minute tasks that progressively got more detailed as regards design detail and planning

There was a break after the second task, that combined refreshments with a shared feedback session. The afternoon concluded with a 30 minute shared feedback session (after the fourth and final task) plus explanation of the next steps.

## Setting The Scene

The workshop opened with a welcome from Richard Blackburn, planning officer at Dacorum Borough Council. He introduced the people involved and their roles together with a brief explanation of the starting point to the local allocation as given by the Dacorum Borough Council Core Strategy.

The lead facilitator then explained that the purpose of workshop was to try to establish a basic set of design principles for the development of the site. These principles were to be captured in the form of a set of words and a series of sketch drawings and diagrams that will capture an assessment of the site's potential and opportunities.

The workshop structure was designed to identify areas of consensus and common ground but also allow for a variety of opinions and ideas.

## Technical Corner

The lead facilitator very briefly explained the technical data relevant to the site (such as topography, landscape, views, drainage, existing roads and paths etc) during the introduction. This was only a very brief overview to help set the scene.

Participants were encouraged to refer to the technical data throughout the afternoon - in the form of aerial photos, plans, maps, charts and diagrams - that was pinned on the walls of the workshop venue in the form of a "technical corner" and was used as a resource base.

## Shared Feedback Sessions

The lead facilitator provided a summary of the first two tasks at the halfway point. This feedback was enabled through the use of photos taken of each groups' outputs projected onto a big screen. Group members were invited to share their thoughts with the wider room as their plans and work are presented. A similar technique was used at the end of the afternoon, after the fourth and final task, when the lead facilitator talked through the common ground and the points of difference. Groups and individuals were again asked to contribute to the debate and discussion.

In conclusion, the next steps in the process were explained by Laura Wood, planning officer at Dacorum Borough Council. These next steps include the preparation of the workshop report, the master plan work in support of the Site Allocations Document and the proposed informal consultation via a local exhibition for the LA3 local allocation.


The workshop was designed to help get participants involved in a range of development issues at an early stage in the process.

NOTE: Larger copies of the workshop task sheets can be found in the Appendix B, pages 38-41.


## TASK 01

What Is There Now? [30 mins]
What makes this place special? Participants were asked to use their local knowledge to mark on the plan a series of important features, both on the site itself and in the surrounding areas. These features could be natural (e.g. views, woodland areas etc), social (e.g. local schools, clubs, pubs) or commercial (e.g. local shops, services and facilities). Participants were also encouraged to add useful insights such as roads that are difficult to cross, areas of antisocial behaviour and so on.

Developing a pattern of uses and activities on a plan helps to reveal the gaps in local facilities and also the features worthy of retention, such as landscape features.

This first task was also designed to move the workshop away from a "constraints-led planning" to "opportunities-led planning" which is a more positive approach.



## TASK 02

Visioning + Priorities [30 mins]
Based on the results of the first task, participants were asked to set out in words a vision for the site and the priorities as regards what the development should deliver in terms of social, community and environmental infrastructure.

How can this development address existing issues as well as creating new opportunities? Participants were asked to select a set of phrases or characteristics from a range provided to help develop a defining characteristics for the new development

This task also asked about other places, either nearby in Hertfordshire or further afield, that could provide a positive inspiration for the new development or a steer away from mistakes from the past that should not be repeated.

## TASK 03

Access + Movement [30 mins]
The next challenge for participants was to effectively connect the local allocations site with the adjacent urban context. The lead facilitator used a short slideshow (see pages 16 - 17) to give participants some ideas on the techniques that could be used. For example, safe pedestrian-only routes, shared surfaces and decent quality cycle routes.

The aim of this slide show was to broaden the debate away from just cars and parking towards more integrated thinking about streets and how they can help connect communities.

Groups were asked to layer into this task the technical data, such as slopes, topography, ecology and so on. The outputs by this stage in the afternoon were a sketch network of routes that showed ways in which the site can be plugged into the existing urban fabric.

## TASK 04

Structure, Form + Detaill [30 mins]
Once the network of streets and spaces had been established in the previous task, the final challenge for the groups was to add details regarding land uses, housing form, density and other details, as they felt appropriate based on their visioning work in the second task.

For example, groups were encouraged to mark on the sketch plans where they felt the nonresidential uses could best be placed, where and what type of recreational routes could be introduced and how built form should address the adjacent landscape e.g. look outwards or turn its back and look inwards.

Groups were asked to take the final task as far as they felt able, with the help of the facilitation team. This final task concluded the workshop in terms of the productive element of the event, and was followed by a shared feedback session.

## Best Practice in Urban Design

... or things to consider over the next 60 minutes

After the completion of Task 01 and Task 02, the lead facilitator explored the group results through a shared feedback session. Photographs of each of the group's work was projected onto the big screen so that all workshop participants could see the results.

This was followed by a short slideshow that gave all participants a brief insight into the issues they should consider during Task 03 and Task 04, when they were asked to examine the issues of access and movement together with urban structure, form and detail. The purpose of this slideshow was to provide a break in proceedings, give participants a chance to reflect on their work and give them some useful design ideas before they began the next phases in the process. Shown here are some key extracts from that slideshow.

## Integrated Thinking

Think about these four key issues in sequence, clockwise from the top. This will ensure no design principle is overlooked and that each issue is addressed at the appropriate time.


## Walkable Neighbourhoods

Can mixed-uses areas that comprise shops, community facilities and schools, be surrounded by residential areas to create a compact walkable neighbourhood? This is vital if we are to reduce dependency on the private car.


## Green Spaces

If green spaces are to be retained within the development, think carefully about how they can be integrated. Some spaces can be overlooked by new development (see illustration) in the form of a green or pocket park to ensure they are cared for and feel safe to use. Others can be more remote and isolated but they are likely to be used less often and less intensively.


## Different Generations

Think about how different generations might use the new place. This includes the elderly as well as young children and families. Many recent housing developments have failed to consider the wide range of abilities, likes and dislikes of different demographic groups yet one of the measures of successful of place-making is how effectively different groups are integrated.

As an example, this toy shop in Spain (below) has been designed with a door for children and one for adults, adding an element of delight to the street scene. Meanwhile, a new housing development outside Bristol (bottom) has an expensive new green space but has banned ball games and bicycles. Why? Who is this space for? These issues need to be considered early in the design process.


## Fragmented Networlk

Avoid creating a fragmented network of big fast roads (below middle) with few connections as these can easily get congested at key junctions and deter walking and cycling. Avoid pedestrianonly alleyways (bottom) as these feel unsafe for many people and only make car use more likely.


## Integrated Network

Create a flexible grid of well-connected streets and lanes to ensure good opportunities for walking and cycling; use cul-de-sac streets sparingly and carefully integrate car parking (both photos) into the street scene


## Streets Last A Long Time

While land uses change fairly frequently (e.g. a shop can become an office) and buildings can be demolished and rebuilt after many years, streets tend to stay forever. Getting them in the right place is therefore more important than knowing exactly which vehicles will use them and when.


## Character Areas + Density

On larger sites, it may be possible to think about different areas of character rather than a place of more uniform design. This character could be informed by different housing density. Can the more dense areas of development be clustered around the mixed uses areas to help deliver a walkable neighbourhood? Can lower density development be located along a rural edge? What sort of edge condition will result? How will the development be viewed from afar?



The workshop format was a way of making rapid progress on multiple issues.

## "These aren't easy decisions but all places are either growing or declining"

Quote from the introductory slideshow to the workshop event.
> "Taking part in this event does not necessarily equate to acceptance of the development" ${ }^{\prime \prime}$

Quote from the shared feedback session that concluded the workshop.

## Consensus + Common Ground

There was a general consensus around the need for the new development to make good connections eastwards back towards Warner's End and Chaulden local centres. These are the primary areas of community-based activity and mixeduse development in the local vicinity and if these business and facilities are to benefit from the new development, then new residents need to access them easily and conveniently. The design challenge is to provide that easy access without unduly impacting on existing residents that live along the potential connected routes, such as Lindlings, Musk Hill, the Avenue and Long Chaulden.

Further consensus was reached on the need for new and existing residents to access the countryside to the west of the site. This is best achieved by providing good west-east links across the development to allow existing residents - currently living on the westerly edge of the Hemel Hempstead urban area - continued access to countryside. The extension of Shrub Hill Common into the new site was also agreed by all groups.

There was also broad consensus of the need to establish a strong rural character. This was expressed through the second task, when other places with an established green identity were referenced as examples that should inspire the new design.

A final area of consensus was around the need for a new cluster of mixed-uses to create a new community heart, appropriate in scale and size to the new development. Participants felt this would
best be located in a central location. Higher density development could be located to the north of this new heart, with lower density development to the south, including formal sports provision.

## Points of Difference

Only one group engaged with the need for accommodating a traveller site. The group that did felt it would be best located adjacent to the new community heart. Another area of difference between groups was the size and type of green space. A variety of different types were listed (e.g. orchard, play areas, village greens, pocket parks and landscape tree belts) and defining which type is best suited to which part of the site is a key task for the next stages in the design process.

## Areas for Further Examination

This report incorporates an urban design concept plan (page 29) that captures the overall results in a spatial diagram. It makes clear reference to where the allocation site needs to connect to the existing urban area but is careful not to be too prescriptive as regards the different modes of travel that will use each connection or link.

Further testing work is required to understand the implications. However, this plan encourages multiple flexible connections are made (with options to manage different modes over time) in order to ensure good integration with the existing neighbourhoods. The master planning work should also explore new housing typologies that can successfully combine higher densities with a more rural feel.

## Task 01

What Is There Now?

## Clusters of Local Facilities

The first task asked participants to indicate where the local shops are situated. This revealed two clusters of convenient facilities located adjacent to the main bus routes and broadly distributed between the northern part of the adjacent urban area (i.e. Warner's End) and the southern edge (i.e. Chaulden).

These clusters of local services also comprise health and medical uses, schools and community-based spaces such as open space and allotments. The main focus of communal activities is situated to the east and south east of the proposed development site and this will have direct implications for the movement structure for the new development.

## Chaulden

The cluster of local facilities located to the south east is potentially more vulnerable to impact of new development as its proximity may lead to increased use and its capacity may prove insufficient. However, through the introduction of new access points it may become an advantage for both the new and existing villagers as it will encourage greater integration between the two. Retail uses will also benefit from increased footfall.

## Sense of Community

It is evident that there is quite a strong sense of community in the local area and identifying community-based facilities on the plan was seen as very important. One of the main issues that was discussed during this task was access and movement patterns around the adjacent urban area. There was only one key bus route noted by participants as running through the local area.

## Pouchen End

Pouchen End is a small farmstead development that sits in isolation to the west of the urban area. Participants described it as comprising a church, a community centre and a nursery but its size means it lacks the critical mass to support other facilities. The distance travelled to shops or health facilities from Pouchen End is some distance at present and development of a new local centre as part of the new development can help reduce this distance.

## Consensus Areas

The majority of participants stated that the facilities in the local area are insufficient for everyday needs leading to longer travel distances to reach more suitable facilities. New development could address this should new services and facilities be built on the site. Education was another key issue discussed and some participants felt that the new development should trigger the need for another school as the existing schools do not have the capacity.

## Areas for Further Examination

Participants said there are a number of GP surgeries in the local area although more detailed work was required to understand the issues surrounding waiting lists and capacity.

The was some debate at the workshop about health facilities and relative levels of use and capacity. This is an issue that the workshop could not address in sufficient detail and more research is required on this topic. Likewise, the education issue requires more detailed assessment even though there was a widespread feeling amongst participants that school rolls were full or nearly full in the local area.


Shrub Hill Common (top and above) was considered a vital green open space and needs to be integrated into the development proposals.


## Task 02

Visioning + Priorities

The second task asked participants to develop a vision statement and a set of priorities for the new development. The results from each group are set out here, supported by the additional notes generated throughout the workshop process.

## Consensus + Common Ground

All groups were clear in their wish for good green spaces as a key characteristics of the development. This an be attributed in part to the "edge location" of the LA3 local allocation and its proximity to open countryside. While there is clearly a need to deliver sufficient housing and other necessary uses, blending this successfully with both existing retained landscape features and newly introduced landscape will be critical to achieve this aspect of the vision.

A further common theme was the need for good educational opportunities. There was a widespread feeling that the western side of Hemel Hempstead was nearing capacity as regards school places and the addition of new homes without an associated uplift in education provision would result in a severe problem for both new and existing residents.

## Areas for Further Examination

There was an interesting and useful debate about housing typologies and designs, with reference to other nearby places. Concern about high density was a common theme in the workshop but higher densities may be necessary if the desire to retain a substantial area of greenery is to be met. Therefore, the master plan process is encouraged to explore new residential typologies that aim to reconcile these two issues.


Potten End was seen by participants as an aspirational place in design terms. The mature landscape integrated with the streets and buildings creates a visually pleasing scene. It is hoped that a similar outcome could be achieved with the new development.


The more recent Castlemead development at Pitstone was cited as an example of a place where the landscape and the built environment was imbalanced with too much hard surface and too little landscape. However, as a more recent development the landscape may still need time to mature fully.

## VISION STATEMIENT 01

This new place will offer
good educational opportunities in addition to existing ones
new + better shops with adequate parking small + affordable houses
good green spaces
safe + secure environment

## similar to

true to the original Hemel new town plan with open spaces but with wider roads to allow for adequate parking
the garden cities
but unlike
Poundbury (because of poor security issues)

## Group 01 - Extra Comments

Shrubhill Common, Chiltern Hills and views across the site are positives; floods already occurs near the site so need careful design; Lindlings and Furze Road have a high proportion of parked cars so will make access difficult, there is a need for traffic improvement; also there is limited parking at Warner's End + Chaulden shops.

## VISION STATEIVENT 02

This new place will offer
good green spaces
views of open countryside
(but only the houses being built) good countryside access
large attractive houses with parking for two cars per household
similar to

Chaulden Vale (but more space)
Longdean Park
Fields End
but unlike
Milton Keynes

## Group 02 - Extra Comments

A feeling that local roads are already overcrowded and unsuitable rat runs could develop through local areas and villages

## VISION STATEIMENT 03

This new place will offer
well-thought-out neighbourhood with efficient transport (car, bus, cycle etc)
safer neighbourhood with community responsibility
houses rather than flats and apartments integrated with surrounding neighbourhood educational opportunity

## similar to

Tring
Berkhamsted
but unlike
Milton Keynes (apart from their good roads)

Group 03 - Extra Comments
The hamlet of Pouchen End lacks mains gas, water, drainage and decent access to internet - should the development proceed, will these issues be addressed?

## VISION STATEIMENT 04

This new place will offer
smaller houses for first time buyers + downsizing
mixed with the broad range of provisions distinctive architecture design that responds to local style and landscape
excellent education opportunities
excellent open spaces - formal + wild

## similar to

Field End + Potten End with their balance of open spaces and with a countryside feel
but unlike
new development at
Pitstone + Leighton Buzzard
high density of development + small roads town houses crammed into small spaces

## Group 04 - Extra Comments

New development must have local shops, doctor's surgery, chemist, dental surgery, schools (primary and secondary as the currently nearest is selective based on religion) footpaths into countryside, public transport, safe roads for all forms of use, pockets of affordable housing integrated with large properties as in fields end, some cul-de-sac totally detached, semi- detached.


Boxmoor (above) was seen by participants as high quality place to which the new development at local allocation LA3 should aspire. The green and leafy qualities of Boxmoor were noted.


Apsley Lock in Hemel Hempstead (above) was seen as the sort of place to avoid in design terms as it was considered to be dominated by hard landscape features without the softer edges considered important for a rural edge location such as the LA3 local allocation.

## VISION STATEIVIENT 05

This new place will offer

> car parking
good educational opportunities good mix of housing with both large attractive + smaller houses views of open countryside

## similar to

Berkhamsted Watford (facilities)
St Albans (leisure, shops restaurants) Welwyn (a new town but good facilities)

## but unlike

Grovehill
Highfield
Apsley Lock

Group 05 - No Extra Comments

## VISION STATEIMENT 06

This new place will offer
good green spaces
strong sense of community better sports facilities good educational opportunities

## similar to

Boxmoor (good railway connection to London, bus, canal; open spaces nature conservation; local shops, businesses, local surgery + dentist; good mix of housing + good mix of community) Jellicoe's vision of a good New Town should be used as a model

## but unlike

## Lakes Estate, Milton Keynes

(small terrace houses, few community facilities, "on the edge", soulless, endless rows of concrete building, no character, lack of car parking areas, no sense of community, lack of community space, too many cars parked on street; off-street parking is required)

## Group 06 - Extra Comments

Are sufficient school places going to be provided for primary, secondary and further education?; parking and drop-off needed to avoid parking on streets; existing shops have inadequate parking; additional shops would be essential to serve the new homes with adequate parking provided; is the water system sustainable?; concerns about sewage treatment works (continued on page 25)

## Healthcare Provision

Local GP is not keen on another surgery; preference would be to increase size of existing surgery.

## Hospital Provision

Concerns about whether there would be sufficient capacity and local provision; GP indicates Watford is not coping well currently and further development would exacerbate this problem

## Open Spaces

Sustainable urban drainage returning surface water to existing aquifer is vital; existing surface water drainage from this direction to Chaulden Meadows and river Bulbourne is important; the drainage system needs upgrading; important to provide nature corridors through development making use of existing established features - follow example of "Friends of Shrub Hill Common" for how open space could be managed.

## Access + Movement

Existing settlement pattern was not designed to accommodate through traffic; therefore should only be used as pedestrian and cycle access; new wider access could be provided via a widened Chaulden Lane creating a road that passes through development to link up with The Avenue via the new development; potential access conflict as the site integrates with existing development.

## Form + Detail

Family homes are needed with an annexe for older relatives and extended families.


Grovehill in Hemel Hempstead has some design flaws, such as pedestrian unfriendly alleyways (top) and areas dominated by tarmac, car parking and garages (above). These sorts of features need to be avoided in the design of the new neighbourhoods.

## VISION STATEIMENT 07

This new place will offer
views of open countryside good educational + health opportunities good mixed development (affordable housing should mean affordable) good transport links + parking facilities

## similar to

athletes village at the London Olympic park "just lovely"
but unlike

Bennetts End
Woodhall Farm
Grovehill in Hemel Hempstead

## Group 07 - Extra Comments

Shrubhill Common, Chiltern Hills and views across the site are positives; floods already occurs near the site so need careful design; Lindlings and Furze Road have a high proportion of parked cars so will make access difficult, there is a need for traffic improvement; also there is limited parking at Warner's End + Chaulden shops.

## Task 03

Access + Movement

The third task was focussed around access and movement issues. This was a critical stepping stone in the process as it allowed participants to makes connections between what exists in the surrounding area now and the proposed development site.

## Good Connections

All participants were keen to deliver good connections for those walking and cycling, often drawing up a series of connected lanes across the development. Participants were more wary about showing preferred vehicular routes but acknowledged the need to connect the exiting urban area with the new development site effectively. Whether or not these new links were "through routes" for vehicles was a point of debate and for further examination.

Some of the vehicular, cycling and walking routes overlap and this suggests an approach that incorporates shared pedestrian and vehicle surfaces which would be beneficial for the quality of the new neighbourhood. This will also encourage children's outdoor play and also promote walking and cycling as the primary modes for local travel.

Many participants stated that one of the problems they currently face is traffic build-up along Chaulden Lane. Therefore, providing multiple access points to the new site was seen as important to avoid overreliance on a single access point.

- • Pedestrian Links
= Cycle Links
$\infty \infty \infty \infty \infty \times \infty$ Vehicular Access
■■■■ Bus Routes

This is likely to be a through route for vehicles. How can any negative impacts on The Avenue be mitigated?

This is likely to be key connection point for multiple transport modes and therefore needs careful design to ensure an integrated approach is successfully achieved.

Should this be a through route for vehicles? If so, how can any negative impacts on Chaulden Lane be mitigated?


## Open Space Connections

The majority of participants said they would like a variety of open spaces in the new development connected to countryside beyond the site. Shrub Hill Common is a significant area of open space adjacent to the site and was suggested that a non-car links should connect this to the new development and then on to the countryside beyond.

## Countryside Access

Most participants made clear their wish to access open countryside to the west of the allocations site which is why the summary plan shows both vehicular and pedestrian access looping around the site. How this access is managed needs further examination.

## Public Transport

There is only one bus route through the local area and this might need an additional loop to extend the service into the new neighbourhood

## Task 04

## Urban Structure, Form + Detail

Urban Connections
During the workshop the participants highlighted the need for a spread of connections to help integrate the site with its surroundings and to structure the internal layout.

A connection to the south onto Chaulden Lane will help ease traffic impact on Pouchen End Lane further to the west. It may also reduce the need for vehicular links onto minor residential streets in Chaulden.
COMIMUNITY HEART
Health Centre, Shops,
Schools + Pub

SECONDARY

## FOCAL AREA

Inc. Sports Provision

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { Lower density; tucked } \\
& \text { into the landscape; } \\
& \text { elements of affordable } \\
& \text { housing; a strong sense }
\end{aligned}
$$

of a rural community

Summary Plan Task 04 - Urban Structure, Form + Detail

The other principal access points referred to were from Long Chaulden, an established route through the local area which currently accommodates bus routes buses, and The Avenue, an existing road with the potential for extension into the new development.

## Open Space Distribution

In this fourth and final workshop task, the preferred open space included extensions into the site of the meadow, woodland and informal play space characteristics found in Shrub Hill Common. A particular focus on the north east of the site was for community open spaces, such as allotments, a community orchard and other recreational or productive spaces. In the southern end of the local allocation (adjacent to Pouchen End) workshop groups suggested a smaller community focus with adjacent spaces suitable for formal sports provision.

The justification for open spaces being located immediately adjacent to existing housing was to provide pockets of green space available to both new and existing residents. This would provide a "smoother" transition between new development and the local residents, breaking up what would otherwise be a singular urban areas.

However, care is needed in the detailed design to ensure that such open spaces genuinely connect new and existing areas and does not become a barrier creating and "us and them" scenario.

## Shrub Hill Common

A recurring theme from all workshop groups was the extension of Shrub Hill Common into the allocation site - continuing the pathways and open spaces to create a nature corridor. If these passages of green space extend through the new development and beyond the site to the west it has the potential to create area of wildlife and biodiversity interest.

Landscape + New Housing
Participants wanted new and existing residents to access open countryside through walking and cycling routes reaching out from the new development to the west. The addition of new links and resolving issues of access, rights of way and ownership will be vital to deliver.

Current residents have direct access to the open countryside and although this will be lost as the urban edge moves westwards, the principle of direct access needs to be preserved through high quality links in an west-east direction across the new development site.

Participants also expressed a desire for the integration of new development with the softly undulating landscape. However, there was no indication from those at the workshop that the new development should be hidden, even if this was technically possible.

## Community Heart

A new community heart, comprising education, health and retail facilities, suitable in scale and size to meet the needs of the new neighbourhood and those nearby was proposed. Only one workshop group addressed the need to accommodate sites for the traveller community and this was located immediately adjacent to the main community heart.

## RuralValues

A principle wish of workshop participants was to keep as many of the "values" of the surrounding rural characteristics as possible (in terms of views and access to open space) notwithstanding the fact that this allocation is large. To achieve this, open space needs to be effectively integrated and new development parcels to respond to site topography Therefore, many workshop groups developed different character areas:

- Northern Area - Larger houses, up to threestorey, in a compact, higher density form clustered around a new community heart
- Southern Area - Lower density, nestled into the landscape with elements of affordable housing and a secondary community focus

Between these two character areas would be a transition that incorporates the extension of the Shrub Hill Common green corridor.

## Outward Looking Development

Several of the workshop groups highlighted the need for the new development to have views looking out over open countryside, with the majority concluding that new houses needed to help create a positive enclosure of internal open green spaces through the overlooking of village greens, "pocket parks" and similar open spaces.

## Urban Design <br> Concept Plan

Bringing It Together

Based on the workshop outputs, an urban design concept plan has been prepared. This diagram begins to wrap the various strands of work from the participatory workshop into an overall guiding vision. This urban design concept should not be considered definitive as it is driven almost entirely by the limited consultation and engagement process undertaken thus far.

It now requires further analysis and testing from a technical perspective, including landscape assessments, transport, ecology, archeology and underground services through the master planning process. Refinements will also be sought from local stakeholders through further community engagement work as the master planning process moves forward.
Mixed-Use Community Heart
Secondary Focal Spaces

Urban Gateway
Rural Gateway

## 2) Landscape Belt

- Countryside Access
$\Leftrightarrow$
Rural Connection
Urban Connection
$\longrightarrow$ Local Connection
- Walkable Neighbourhoods
'...

Significant Green Space
Development Area
- with smaller green mace incorported within



Richard Eastham (right) facilitates a shared

## Workshop Report

The results of the workshop were written up and interpreted by the facilitation team. This process included the creation of a series of summary plans for each task, new graphics to capture the emerging concepts and supporting text. It is this work that comprises this report. This report has been made available online by Dacorum Borough Council.

## Future Consultation

The workshop process allowed the Council to gather all interested parties together and collate contact details. This will allow the Council to get in touch either by email or letter (depending upon which contact information has been recorded) with details of future consultation events.

## Further Comments Received

A further comment was received by email in the days after the workshop. This referred to existing water stress on underlying chalk aquifer and how further housing growth in this part of the country will be a challenge to sustainability.

A further point referred to the most westerly surface water discharge to the river Bulbourne at Chaulden Meadows. It was noted that there are two discharges, the easterly one works but the westerly one has not done so for many years. This problem needs to be investigated and resolved. The failing westerly discharge was originally for modest sized reed bed lagoons to be constructed for all surface water to pass through before discharging into the river Bulbourne.

There was also a comment received from an invitee unable to take part in the event. The first point was regarding the need to link any local nature reserve to the open countryside via a green corridor along the footpath that follows the north west site boundary. The second point was regarding flood risk and the need for sustainable drainage systems to mitigate this. The third point was that the site lies within an area of serious water stress and designs that meet higher grades within the Code for Sustainable Homes could help deliver water efficient houses

## Master Plan

The Council will be meeting again with the landowners and their urban design teams to begin drafting a concept master plan for the LA3 Local Allocation. This master plan will be directly informed by the workshop discussions and outputs, including the urban design concept plan, and also by other technical work, such as detailed landscape, ecological and transport assessments.

## FurtherTechnicalWork

There is still further technical work that needs to be finalised. For example, an archaeological study is currently underway and depending upon what this finds it could have an impact upon what goes where on the site.

## Public Exhibition

There will be a public exhibition in July 2013 where Dacorum Borough Council and the landowners, developers and their urban design and master planning teams will ask for initial public feedback on the emerging master plan work


Feria Urbanism for Dacorum Borough Council

## Appendix A

## Key Contacts

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—Richard Eastham
Feria Urbanism
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## Attendees List

| Participants |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Nigel | Agg | Derek | Proctor |
| Simon | Barnard | Roger | Prue |
| Jill | Bayley | $\mathrm{Mr}+\mathrm{Mrs}$ | Purdy |
| Paul | Berry | Jiten | Raval |
| Sarah | Bourn | Kathryn | Reilly |
| Derek | Bromley | Ian | Richardson |
| Alan | Calver | Lee | Royal |
| Brenda | Dennett | Caroline | Sabberton |
| Terence | Douris | Victoria | Schofield-Wicks |
| Mr | Farahmand | Michael | Sibley |
| Sue | Fogden | Sarah | Smith |
| Jean | Foy | Stephen | Titford |
| David | Gardener | Mike | Wallis |
| Andrew | Guile | Sandra | Walpole |
| Roger | Hands | Vicky | Wetherell |
| Paul | Harris |  |  |
| John | Heginbotham | Many thanks to all who gave up their time to take part in the workshop. |  |
| Martin | Hicks |  |  |
| Jackie | Hood |  |  |
| Julie | James |  |  |
| $\mathrm{Mr}+\mathrm{Mrs}$ | Kirton |  |  |
| Trevor | Liddle |  |  |
| Jennifer-Anne | Lyne |  |  |
| Andrew | Lysandrou |  |  |
| Peter | Mannell |  |  |
| $\mathrm{Mr}+\mathrm{Mrs}$ | Nicoll |  |  |
| Siva | Niranjan |  |  |
| Samantha | Packer |  |  |
| $\mathrm{Mr}+\mathrm{Mrs}$ | Passi |  |  |
| Charlie | Pearce |  |  |
| Mark | Peck |  |  |
| Phil | Pennington |  |  |

## Observers

| Loretta | Asare |
| :--- | :--- |
| Laura | Badham |
| Richard | Blackburn |
| Yvonne | Edwards |
| John | Higinbotham |
| James | Holmes |
| Martin | Leyland |
| Cyra | Parkes |
| Sarah | Smith |
| Mark | Wilson |
| Laura | Wood |
| Matthew | Wood |

## The Facilitation Team

Feria Urbanism is a design and planning studio that specialises in urban strategies and public participation.

We have organised and led many interesting and meaningful public engagement and participation events. Design workshops, exhibitions and consultation events have been an integral part of many of our projects. We have developed a range of successful techniques that allow people in both rural and urban areas to influence and improve the places in which they live. We have worked closely with parish councils, local community groups and we also support borough and district councils in their work with local residents. Our work with rural communities in Kent is featured as a best practice case study in the recent RIBA guidance on Neighbourhood Planning.


Clockwise, from top left:
Richard Eastham, Antonia Morgan, Eleana Orr and Esra Abdelrahman.


Participants begin to structure the site by making connections with existing areas.

Feria Urbanism for Dacorum Borough Council

## Appendix B

Copies of Workshop Task Sheets

In this first task you are asked to mark on the plan the existing features that give the adjacent built up area its identity and quality. Write alongside the stickers the names of the features and any comments you feel are relevant. List alongside the plan the facilities or features you think the area is currently lacking.
$\square$

KEY QUESTIONS
TO CONSIDER
Ol Existing
SERVICES + FACILITIES
What are the important local facilities that exist nearby dready? Use the stickers provided to mark on the plan.

Are any of these facilities in need of improvement?
HINT > Think about primary shools, doctors'surgeries, shops and community centres.

## 2 NEW

ERVICES +
ased on what you have marked up, what are the important local facilities that you think the new development needs to
include or support?

Will these be best placed on he site, or "off-site" within existing areas?

IINT > Think about the missing services and facilities han can help create a more balanced community. Avoid uplication of existing realistic about what this new development can support.


Use the stickers provided to mark on the plan the following important features:
$\bigcirc$ Healt
Community / sport
$\bigcirc$ EducationOther 01
Other 02

## West Hemel Hempstead (LA3)

TASK 02 | VISIONING + PRIORITIES

## > VISIONING

Based on the previous task when you plotted all the existing service and facilities an Based on the previous task when you plotted all the existing service
A. Choose a maximum of four phrases from the list below. Feel free to add your own phrases.

| - Good Green Spaces | - Spacious Houses | - Compact Neighbourhoods |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - Good Countryside Access | - Good Cycling Opportunities | - Good Access to Schoo |
| - Affordable Houses | - Good Walking Opportunities | Better Bus Servic |
| - New + Better Shops | - Exciting Outdoor Children's Play Areas | -Views of Open Countryside |
| - Strong Sense of Community | - Good C | - Good Educational Opportunities |
| - Large, Attractive Houses | Existing Neighbourhoods |  |
| - Better Sports Facilities <br> - Distinctive Architecture | - New Sense of Identity | Time Buyers' or older people who are down-sizing. |

HINT > Think about the development principles for this particular site allocation as set out by Dacorum Borough Council in the Core Strategk,
B. Write the name of a place you think this place could learn positive lessons from. This could be a local place, somere else in Hertfordshire or somewhere else altogether Note down what it is about that place that makes it special.
HINT > Think about places that are beautiful or well-loved. Why is this? What lessons can we learn from these places?
C. Write the name of a place you think this place should not be like. This could be a local place, somewhere else in Hertfordshire or somewhere else altogether. Note down the

HINT > Think about places that are considered ugly or unloved. Why is this? What lessons can we learn from these places?

## > PRIORITIES

Look again at Section A. Mark clearly which of the four offers you think is the most important priority.

in this task you will start to connect the site with the existing built-up area. By drawing routes and connections across the site you will begin to structure the development. Please refer to the technical info
in the constraints that you have identified as being critical. constraints that you have identified as being critical.

## O4 BUSES

Think about a bus route. Where would this go and how would it link with existing routes?
Where should bus stops b located along this route?

05 CARS
Are there any existing traffic issues nearby to this site? or example, problems with on-street parking. How could

Are they routes through the djacent built-up area that should be avoided by new residents if driving cars?

Which parts of the site should be kept "car free" if any? If so, why?

HINT > Restricting cars to only a few select routes can lead to congestion; spreading raffic across many routes can be more effective. What is the
balance needed?

## West Hemel Hempstead (LA3)

TASK 04 | URBAN STRUCTURE, FORIM + DETAIL

Based on the structure you have developed in the previous task, start to add the details about landscape, countryside access, open space and new housing clusters. As this work develops, you can go back to revisit your previous sheet, if you want to.

KEY QUESTION
TO CONSIDER
OI LANDSCAPE
How can new buildings be fitted into the landscape? Try o hide it? Or celebrate it?

What within the site should be retained or replaced?
What additional landscape features should be provided?
re there any particula views to protect?

How should the new edge be planned and designed?
IINT > If it is a soft landscape dge, how can this be
designed?
O2 COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS
How new and existing
residents can access th countryside?

INT > Think about walking and cycling routes reaching out from the new development to the surrounding countryside. How can operational farmand or sensitive areas be protected?


03 OPEN SPACE
What open spaces should be included?
HINT > Think of the different types e.g. meadow, leisure space, formal or informal play, allotments.

Where should these ope space be located? Why?

How should open spaces should be arranged and managed? How will they areas?

O4 NEW HOUSING
What size and type of housing do you feel

How should new housing be arranged?

HINT > Should new housing "look outwa
inwards"?

Where is the most appropriate place within the development to accommodate mobile homes
for travellers, if needed?

05 PHASING
Which facilities that should be delivered by a particula time? Which parts of the sit
should be built first? should be built first?

## West Hemel Ifta <br> COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

FINAL REPORT July 2013


[^0]:    Feria Urbanism for Dacorum Borough Council

