



PROPOSAL LA3:

New Neighbourhood at Pouchen End, West of Hemel Hempstead "Shaping the Master Plan"

July 2013



Introduction

Background

As part of a set of proposals to provide for the housing needs of the town and the borough, land to the west of Hemel Hempstead has been identified for a new neighbourhood.

The decision to develop the new neighbourhood at Pouchen End has been taken by the Council in the Core Strategy, an important planning document setting out the distribution and level of growth in the borough for the next 20 years. The proposal is referred to as Local Allocation LA3 in the Core Strategy.

The Proposal

Around 900 new homes will be provided together with open space and other facilities.

The *details* of the development have not been agreed. Therefore the important consideration now is how this development should be planned – its form and its layout.

Have Your Say

There is a lot to think about and we value your views.

The exhibition invites comment on the principles which should underpin the future development of this area.

There is a questionnaire available which asks for your opinion.

- It is really important to us that you answer the questions that have been asked.
- There is space to qualify your answers or add comments if you so wish.



The story so far...

The Core Strategy

We have been preparing Dacorum's Core Strategy, which includes the local allocations, over the last eight years, informing and consulting at every stage.

The Council must allow and encourage development which meets the economic, housing and social needs of Dacorum. It must try and balance development and growth for our area against the need to protect the quality of our environment. National Green Belt policy acts as a constraint and helps guide the location of development: it is not a complete restriction.

We have a target to provide more than 11,000 new homes between 2006 and 2031: this will meet about 80% of the identified need.

- While a large part of the housing provision is being directed to built-up areas, we have estimated that land for around 1,550 homes needs to be found on new Green Belt sites (known as local allocations)
- These are located around the main settlements, principally Hemel Hempstead.
- They include Local Allocation LA3, land to the west of Hemel Hempstead.

Local Allocation LA3

<i>Location Reference</i>	LA3
<i>Site Location</i>	West Hemel Hempstead
<i>Proposals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 900 new homes. • Shop, doctors surgery and additional social and community provision, including a new primary school.
<i>Principles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mix of two storey and three storey housing including around 40% affordable homes. • Contributions must be made towards improving local services and facilities, including provision of a new 2 form entry primary school. • The layout, design, density and landscaping must create a soft edge to the Green Belt and the extended open space. • Impact on the local road network mitigated through the promotion of sustainable travel options, including improved pedestrian links with adjoining areas. • No vehicular access from Pouchen End Lane. • Provision of new open space / playing fields. • New strategic landscaping to mitigate the impact on the Bulbourne Valley. • Local road junction improvements. • Extend Shrubhill Common Nature Reserve and create wider green infrastructure links. • Consider potential for inclusion of a new cemetery to serve the town.
<i>Delivery</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal will be delivered as an allocation in the Site Allocations DPD where detailed planning requirements will be established.

The Vision Diagram for Hemel Hempstead shows Local Allocation LA3 and the Pouchen End area diagrammatically.

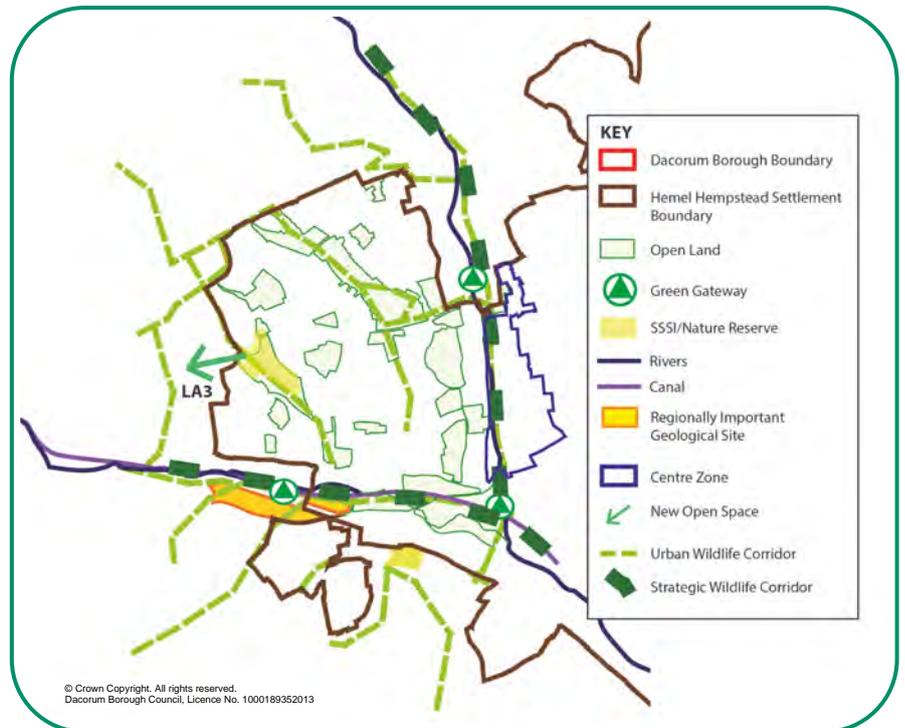


Extract of Hemel Hempstead Vision Diagram:

BUILT

Extract of Hemel Hempstead Vision Diagram:

NATURAL



Deciding on LA3

Preparing the Core Strategy was the time to debate the level and distribution of development in Dacorum, including significant changes to the Green Belt to the west of Hemel Hempstead.

The decision to identify Local Allocation LA3 in the Core Strategy was taken by the Council in September 2011 after lengthy consideration which took into account:

- housing needs;
- technical studies;
- comparison of alternatives and their effects;
- sustainability appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment; and
- engagement with a wide range of people and organisations between 2005 and 2011.



The Core Strategy has been examined and modified in conjunction with the Planning Inspector: it is in its final stage awaiting confirmation from the Planning Inspectorate.

Information on the process of developing and examining the Core Strategy may be found on the Council's website:

www.dacorum.gov.uk/corestrategyexamination

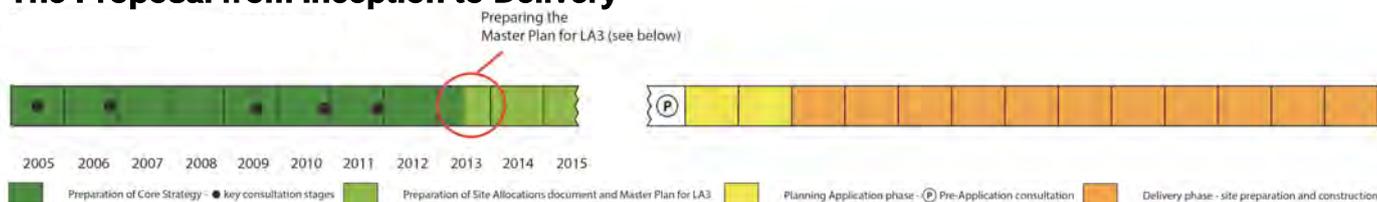
Timescales

Planning a new neighbourhood takes time. The diagram below shows:

- how far we have come,
- where we are now, and
- what lies ahead, both in the short term and in the long term.

Consultation is part of the process and naturally will occur in phases.

The Proposal from Inception to Delivery





What is happening now?

We are thinking *how* the development should be designed and come forward.

- We started this new phase on 15 May 2013 by holding a community workshop at the South Hill Centre (Hemel Hempstead) to which selected residents and other parties were invited. This workshop raised issues and invited ideas to start the process.
- The four-week consultation (from 15 July to 12 August 2013) is looking at the principles that should guide future development. This is a critical step in drafting a master plan.

What is a master plan?

A master plan sets out the principles which will guide a future development. The principles are normally definitive, but in some cases there could be acceptable alternatives. An indicative layout will illustrate the principles. It would normally show access points, the general movement network within the site, areas for different types of development, open space and key landscape (and other) features. A master plan is normally used to assist in the design of more complex, or larger, sites.

A master plan will help developers prepare a planning application. The level of detail required of a master plan is very much less than would be required for a planning application: for example, it will not show individual houses or their detailed design.

What we are required to do

- ❖ **The area of Local Allocation LA3 must be delineated on a map: a new Green Belt boundary line must also be drawn. The timing and phasing of LA3 should be clarified and some additional planning requirements listed (for example, on road access).**

The Council will do this in a planning document called the Site Allocations (Development Plan Document). This document must follow the Core Strategy and accord with Government planning policy.

The new Green Belt boundary should follow physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent according to Government policy.

- ❖ **A master plan will inform and support the Site Allocations document and explain how the land at Pouchen End should be developed and laid out.**

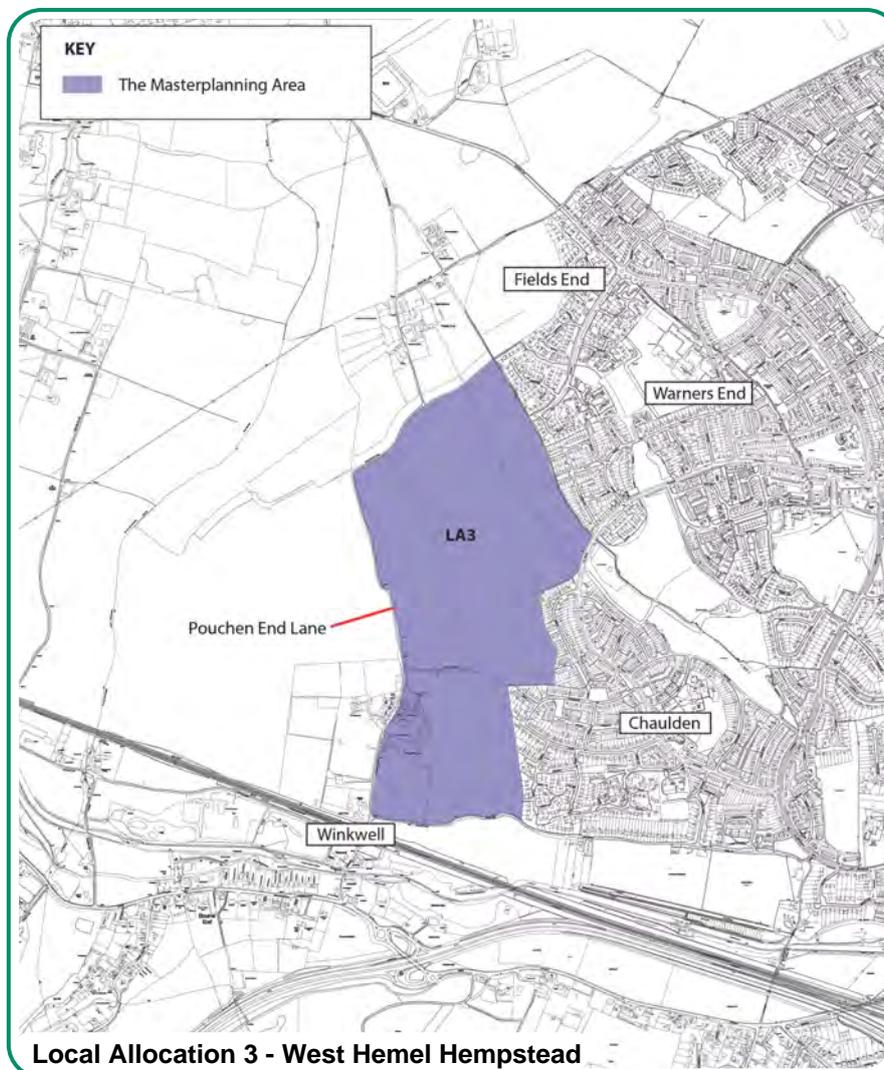
It will include a context and consider:

- 1) the Opportunity that is offered;
- 2) the Constraints that need to be taken into account; and
- 3) the Principles to guide development.

Afterwards, when we are more certain about individual development principles, we will bring them together and illustrate them more fully.

The Masterplanning Area and its Context

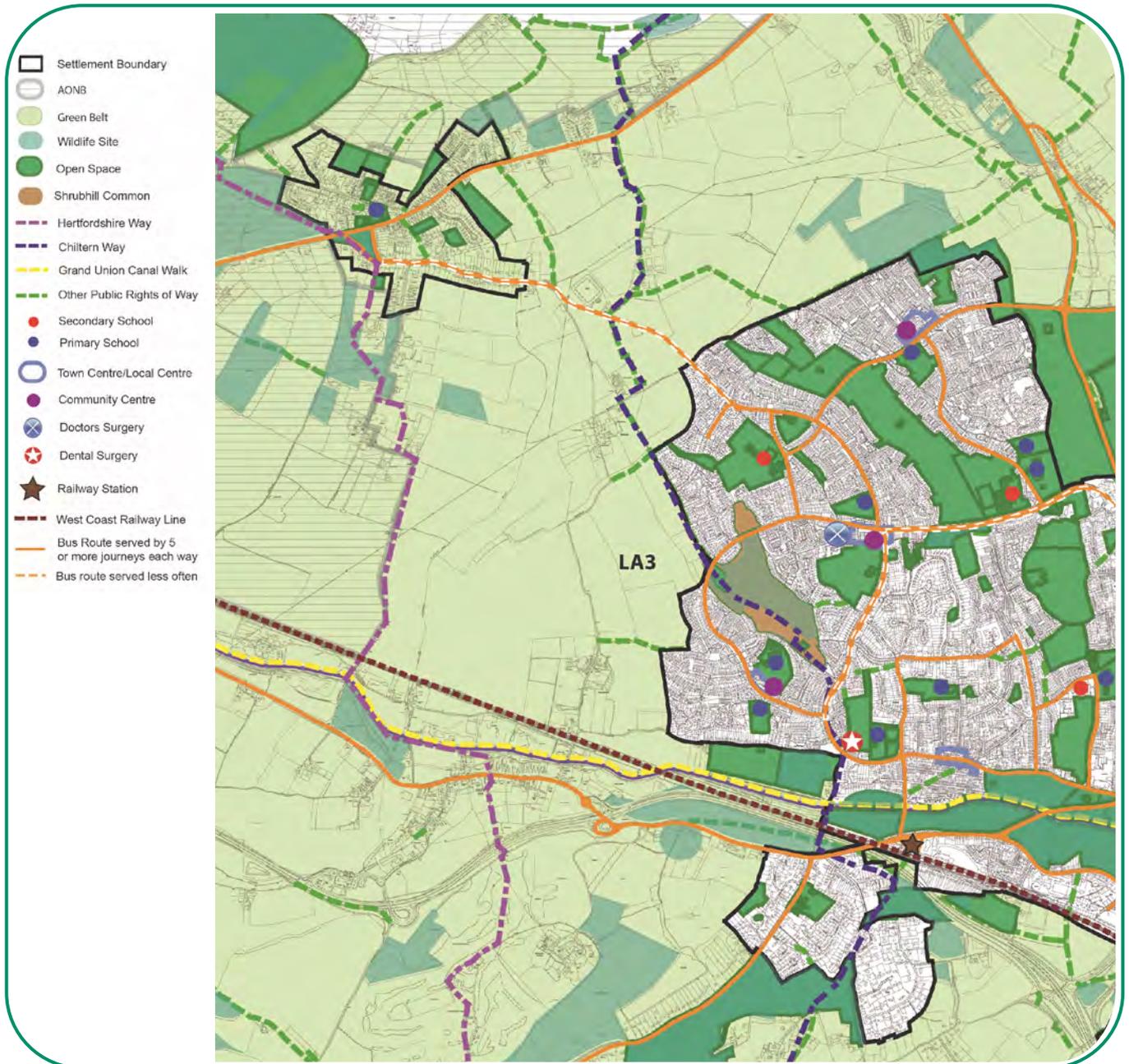
- The area we are looking at is bounded by existing neighbourhoods at Chaulden and Warners End/Fields End, Chaulden Lane and Pouchen End Lane.
 - The area will contain new building and development.
 - There will also be various open spaces. Important open spaces will have a special status and be protected as “Open Land” (just as Warners End valley and Shrubhill Common are under the Council’s existing planning policies). There are some existing homes at Pouchen End, the amenities and environment of which merit protection.



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- The masterplanning area extends from the town into the countryside on the northern side of the Bulbourne valley.

The Area in Context



The Information we will use

- We have the information that was available to the Core Strategy Examination. This includes:
 - a statement of common ground between the Council and the developers of Local Allocation LA3;
 - technical studies on highways, ecology, landscape, archaeology, drainage, utilities and ground conditions prepared by consultants for the developers;
 - Council studies on the general need for homes and open space; and
 - the Hemel Hempstead Transport model which has been used to assess the impacts of various developments on the road network

There is also a Question and Answer Sheet that responds to frequently asked questions about LA3.

All this information is available on the Council's website:

www.dacorum.gov.uk/local_allocations

What is a statement of common ground?

This was an agreement over technical information and factual matters between the Council and the developers. It was intended to help the Planning Inspector running the Examination into the Core Strategy and to demonstrate that Local Allocation LA3 could be delivered. It does not mean that the Council has agreed (or even considered) any particular layout for the development. The Council has not.

- We also have the feedback from the community workshop.

Participants at the workshop were asked to:

- outline significant local services, features and issues; and
- say what the new neighbourhood should offer and be like.

The workshop was run and reported independently by Richard Eastham (a specialist consultant). His report is available on the Council's website.





- Further survey work, discussions with technical stakeholders (e.g. Environment Agency and local highways authority) and community consultation will add to our knowledge and understanding.
- **Together with information from technical experts, your views on**
 - 1. the Opportunity**
 - 2. the Constraints and**
 - 3. the Development Principles****will help shape the master plan.**

THE OPPORTUNITY

We have the opportunity to think about the new neighbourhood and what it should be like.

The Community Workshop in May suggested it should capture:

- the character and feel of places like Berkhamsted and Tring;
- the best aspects of Hemel Hempstead, particularly its open space standards and range of local facilities; and
- more.

At the same time other places, such as Chaulden and Winkwell, have a character of their own, which should be respected and appreciated.



The Vision

The new neighbourhood of Pouchen End will be an attractive and distinct place. Its character will reflect the best design principles of the Chilterns area. While separate, the new neighbourhood will be integrated with other parts of the town through the use of shared services, facilities and open space. It will be an inclusive community*, designed to be safe and secure. Local needs will be served. A new primary school will be part of the community's heart and focus. There will be a mix of homes, accommodating both smaller and larger households and family homes. Development will be spacious and will allow views of the countryside across the valley. Open space will permeate the neighbourhood, providing links between Shrubhill Common, the town and the wider countryside.

*What does inclusive mean?

It means bringing all people together, allowing opportunities for meeting and social and community development. Therefore there can be no deliberate exclusion of any particular group, whether identifiable by age, gender, disability, race, nationality or social background.

THE CONSTRAINTS

We took advice from utilities, service providers and others (e.g. Natural England, Chilterns Conservation Board), and will continue to do so throughout the planning process.

Our information shows that there is no serious constraint which would prevent Local Allocation LA3 coming forward. For example, the masterplanning area is not within a flood plain: it is not in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation, although it is near both.

However there are matters which will constrain the layout of a development.

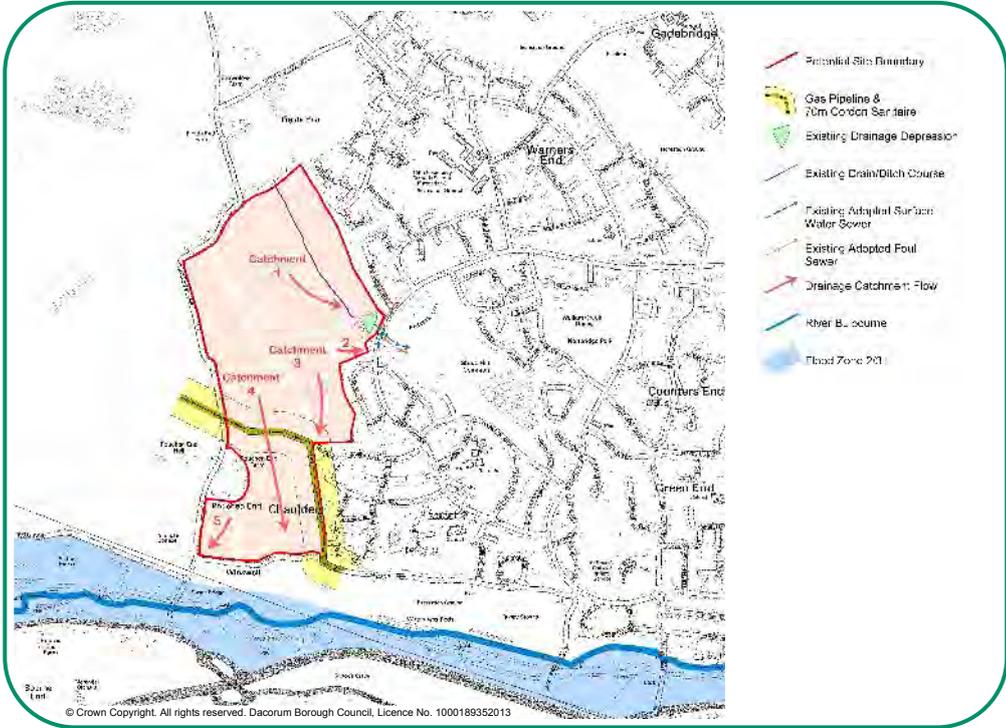
Existing Infrastructure and Topography

The presence of existing infrastructure and the topography (including landscape and habitat features) are significant influences. Maps show physical infrastructure issues – i.e. the gas pipeline and land drainage/surface water run-off - and assess impacts on the landscape. Natural England has asked that some natural greenspace is included within the development, as a local alternative to the Chilterns Beechwoods.

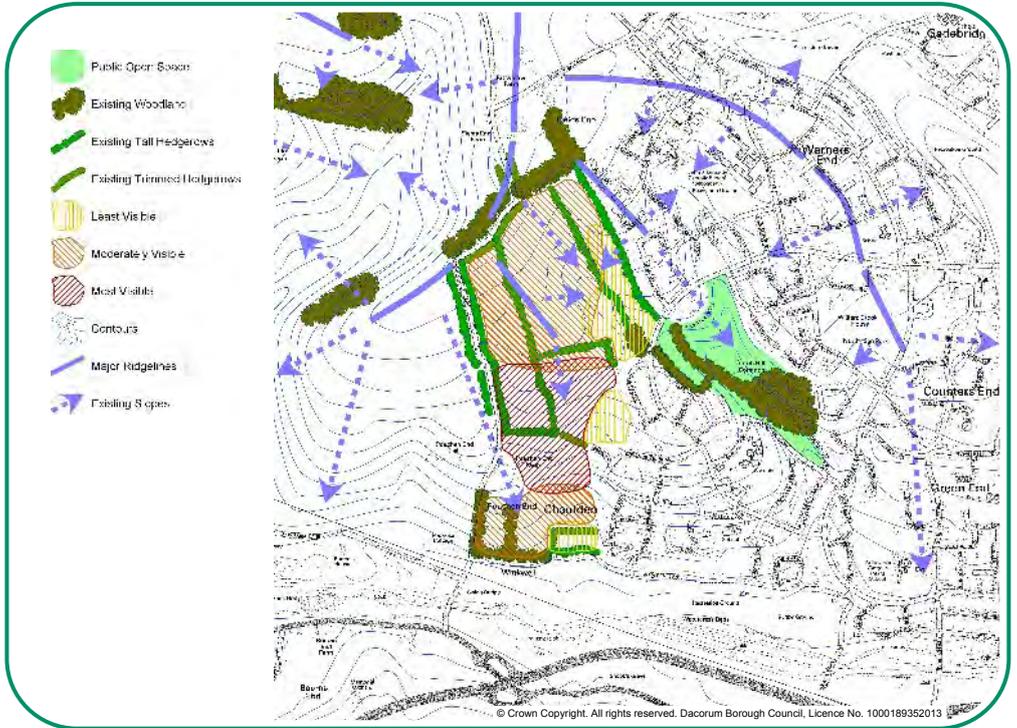


Sewerage

Sewerage infrastructure has been identified as an issue by Thames Water. They need to undertake further sewerage planning work, but advise that the delivery of the development between 2021 and 2031 should not be affected.



Physical Infrastructure Issues

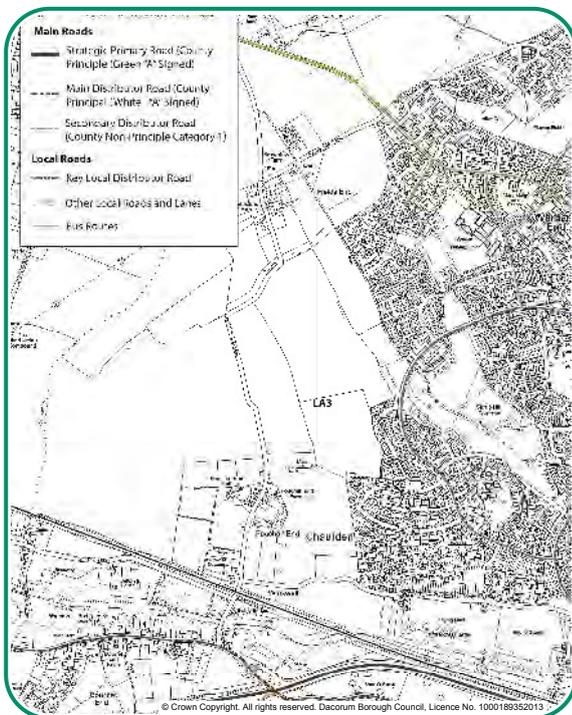


Landscape Context

Local Road Network

The existing highway network (see Map: the Area in Context) affects the position and type of access to the new neighbourhood. The capacity of the road network for vehicles varies. Overall, studies show that traffic from the new development can be accommodated satisfactorily on the main highway network, although some small junction improvements will be needed. However, some local roads appear to have little or no capacity to accommodate more traffic because of their particular character:

- narrow cul-de-sacs; and
- rural lanes



Archaeology

There are no known archaeological constraints, although there is a possibility of finding artefacts or other remains. An on-site survey will be undertaken and will inform the master plan.

Constraints on the layout

- the gas pipeline
- surface water run-off and drainage
- the existing road network
- retaining Chiltern Way
- retaining the main hedgerows and wildlife corridors, and need to include natural greenspace
- the impact of new development in the wider landscape – particularly views from the south and potentially from the north-west (from the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)

THE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The challenge for us is how to integrate the new neighbourhood with the landscape and existing communities and limit its impact on the countryside. To help meet the challenge, we have suggested a set of principles to guide the master plan and future development. The principles are listed in the pink boxes.

(a) Creating the Neighbourhood's Own Identity

Creating an identity means we will be able to distinguish the new Pouchen End neighbourhood from others. If it is an attractive place, it will instil a sense of pride and be a pleasure to live in and visit.

A New Residential Area

The place we are planning is essentially residential. The main use helps define character. Building design, landscaping and open space contribute. Having places where people can meet and access services will provide focus and help bring a sense of togetherness.

Homes will mostly be constructed of 'bricks and mortar', but a small proportion could be mobile homes. Mobile homes are favoured by Gypsies and travellers, though by no means exclusively.



May travellers be accommodated here?

There is a need to provide homes for travellers and LA3 is an acceptable location provided certain planning criteria are met. Among other things, the site must be:

- separated from *existing* residential areas;
- small-scale; and
- designed to a high standard with an open frontage similar to other forms of housing.

Any site should be managed in accordance with Government guidelines.



Open Space

The provision of open space should meet community needs (e.g. for children's play, informal recreation, growing food), provide wildlife habitats and enable sustainable drainage. The pattern of spaces can create networks for people and wildlife, adding to spaciousness and helping to create interesting views.

New Primary School

A new primary school is necessary to support the size of neighbourhood proposed.

Homes

- Accommodate about 900 homes
- Include a significant proportion of affordable homes (around 40%)
- Include family homes within a range of provision.



Community Focus

- Provide public spaces in different parts of the development
- Provide a central focus with a 'community square', hall, shop and other commercial spaces, linked to a bus service
- Locate the new (two form entry) primary school at the centre.



Design

- Optimise the potential for views across the Bulborne valley
- Take the character of buildings in the Chilterns area as a guide to high quality attractive design
- Limit buildings to two storeys normally
- Use traditional materials, such as red brick, clay tile and timber boarding, where feasible
- Ensure sufficient, well-located parking
- Arrange buildings and routes to achieve natural surveillance, good pedestrian access to facilities and an attractive relationship to open spaces.



Open Space

- Meet Council standards for all types of open space as a basic aim
- Design and manage the open space for clear, identifiable purposes
- Use open space to define different parts of the neighbourhood and help distinguish it from Chaulden

Arrange the open space to ensure a pleasant, coherent and wildlife-friendly network throughout the neighbourhood.



(b) Fitting in with the town

The provision of local facilities within the new neighbourhood will be important and their use encouraged. However, the new area cannot be self-sufficient. People will need to travel. Links with the rest of the town – roads and paths, the utility networks (e.g. sewerage, mains water) and availability of shared services – are crucial.

Although there will be change, new development should respect the normal amenities of adjoining occupiers.

Access

Access between neighbourhoods will allow for social interaction and parental choice in primary schooling: it can also support existing services (perhaps businesses or the church in Chaulden local centre). Access to the wider road network will enable trips to the town centre, places of work and elsewhere, though not necessarily by car.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure needs arising from the development must be accommodated. The development will be expected to support offsite infrastructure through financial contributions, e.g. for necessary facilities at a secondary school or the doctors.

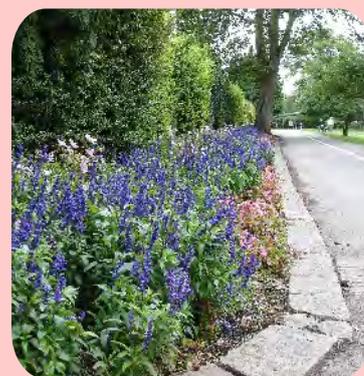
Parkwood Surgery

Parkwood Surgery requires substantial expansion. The practice's preference is to remain in Warners End, as the location would be central to their (enlarged) catchment area. For the time being, a number of options remain under consideration.

We have concluded there will be no cemetery within the masterplanning area (other alternatives in the town are being kept under review).

Access to Services

- Plan good pedestrian access between neighbourhoods and to key services, such as bus stops and community facilities
- Plan good cycle access between neighbourhoods and to key services
- Support the enlargement of the Parkwood doctors' surgery (either financially or within the new neighbourhood).



Roads

- Take the main vehicular access from Long Chaulden and The Avenue
- Support offsite road junction improvements where appropriate.



Utilities

- Link to existing networks
- Provide extra capacity where needed to serve the development
- Work with Thames Water to ensure sufficient sewerage and sewage treatment capacity
- Take the opportunity to extend existing networks towards Pouchen End hamlet.



(c) Fitting in with the countryside

The new neighbourhood will have an impact on the countryside and it will be seen. However we can help to fit it in by:

- limiting visual intrusion;
- limiting unnecessary disturbance in the countryside; and
- encouraging appropriate access.

Countryside

- Soften views of housing from the countryside by use of tree planting, by retaining appropriate tree belts and by siting open space carefully (particularly in views from Little Heath and Westbrook Hay)
- Similarly, provide a soft edge to the countryside and ensure visual and physical separation from Potten End and Winkwell
- Prevent further vehicular access onto rural lanes
- Provide pleasant footpath and cycle access through the site to link with Chiltern Way, Hertfordshire Way, the Grand Union Canal and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.





WHAT NEXT

❖ **Commenting**

Your comments are invited: they should be with us no later than Monday 12 August 2013. Please:

- Use the questionnaire. You may use a printed copy or download one from our website. Better still, please complete it online

<http://consult.dacorum.gov.uk/portal>

- Answer the questions, and use the comments boxes to add to or qualify your answer if you need to.
- Confine any comments to planning matters (if in doubt, see the leaflet '*What are Planning Matters?*' available on the Council's website).

❖ **What we will do**

We will:

- publish the comments we receive and use them to inform the masterplanning work;
- work with the developers and our advisers to prepare a draft master plan;
- use this to inform the Site Allocations (Development Plan Document).

❖ **Your next opportunity to comment is...**

- **when the master plan is published in the first part of 2014**
(The master plan and Site Allocations DPD will be published together to allow consultation).

❖ **...and after that...**

- **please check Dacorum Digest (or the website) for updates.**
We will provide feedback on consultations and let you know about it.

❖ **When might the development happen**

We expect new homes to be delivered from 2021, but depending on views arising from further consultation and the supply of housing nearer the time, these could be brought forward by 1-3 years.

The exhibition has been arranged by the Council with technical support from Barratt Homes, Taylor Wimpey and their advisers.