

Hertsmere Local Development Framework

Issues and Options

February 2006



Hertsmere
Borough Council



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King George Recreation Ground, Bushey

Foreword

This document marks a key point in planning for the future of the Borough. It also marks a real change in the way we consult you on future plans.

In 2004 a new planning system was introduced, changing the way Hertsmere and other local councils plan their areas. The old system of Structure Plans prepared by county councils and Local Plans prepared by district councils has been replaced by one focusing on a Local Development Framework (LDF) - a folder of documents setting out how the local area can change over the next fifteen years.

This report sets out a range of options for how the Borough could develop up to 2021. These options propose different scenarios for development, recognising their different impacts on meeting social and economic needs and the extent to which the Borough's character and appearance will change.

We would welcome your views on the key strategic choices for the Borough. These include:

- Deciding the most sustainable locations for new housebuilding
- Ensuring there is sufficient land for community facilities and infrastructure
- Whether to protect existing and attract new employment opportunities
- How to ensure that younger households remain in the Borough
- How to respond to the needs of an increasing proportion of elderly people
- Where large new commercial development should be focused
- Maintaining and improving the appearance of the urban and rural environment
- Dealing with levels of car use and the need to travel further for services
- How best to maintain vibrant and viable town centres
- The re-use of disused farm buildings in the Green Belt
- How to promote the provision of renewable energy sources

Hertsmere Borough Council has not decided which options it prefers and will begin the process later this year. The views of stakeholders and the public on these options will be a very important consideration in making this decision. We will consult again on our preferred approach later in the year before we finalise the Core Strategy and other key LDF documents.

I hope you will take the opportunity to examine the options and respond with your comments and preferences. I look forward to seeing what local people, and others with an interest in Hertsmere's future, have to say.



Councillor Rebecca Foy
Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Improvement





Centennial Park, Elstree

1.0 The Hertsmere Local Development Framework

- 1.1 Hertsmere Borough Council (the Council) is responsible for regulating the development and use of land or buildings across the Borough. The Council is required to have in place a set of planning policies which form the basis of decisions taken to grant or refuse planning permission. The Hertsmere Local Plan, adopted in 2003, contains a wide range of planning policies which presently guide the use of land in the Borough.
- 1.2 Much of the preparatory work for the current Local Plan was undertaken in the 1990s and the Council is working on a new Plan to reflect local, regional and national changes which have occurred in the intervening period. It will also need to reflect the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which introduced major changes in the way development Plans must be prepared in England.
- 1.3 The new Plan will comprise a series of related documents which together will be known as the Hertsmere **Local Development Framework** (LDF).
- **Development Plan Documents** (DPDs) including a **Core Strategy** which will set out the Council's overall approach to new development in the Borough. Two further DPDs are proposed: a **Site Allocations** document to identify specific land for development or regeneration in Hertsmere and a **Development Control Policies** document with standards and criteria against which development proposals will be assessed.
 - **Supplementary Planning Documents** (SPDs) will provide detailed guidance and clarification to support policies in the DPDs. These will include SPDs on **affordable housing** and **planning and design**.
 - A **Statement of Community Involvement** which sets out the Council's procedures for involving the public in the planning process.
- 1.4 The Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Development Control Policies will be subject to an Independent Examination. This will be chaired by a Planning Inspector whose report will be binding on the Council, meaning that any required changes will have to be included in the DPDs. Prior to the recent reforms to the planning system, Inspectors' reports were not binding on local authorities.
- 1.5 Once adopted, these three documents will be the most important consideration in determining planning applications. The Core Strategy will be the first DPD prepared for the LDF and will help guide the subsequent content of the Site Allocations and Development Control Policies DPDs.
- 1.6 The Council has produced a 'Local Development Scheme' which sets out the timetable for preparing the Hertsmere LDF. The Scheme can be viewed on the Council website (www.hertsmere.gov.uk) and includes the following targets dates:

Document Title (and status)	Brief Description	Date for public participation on DPD 'Preferred Policy Options'/Draft SPD	Proposed date for adoption
Core Strategy (DPD)	Sets out strategic objectives for the area up to 2021. Strategic policies including confirmation of green belt boundaries and housing allocation numbers derived from East of England Plan. Key diagram and Proposals Map will also be prepared.	July 2006	April 2008
Site Allocations (DPD)	Provides site-specific allocations for a range of land uses such as housing, employment, retail, leisure, community uses and urban open spaces.	January 2007	March 2009
Development Control Policies (DPD)	A suite of generic development control policies, not otherwise covered by other DPDs, which set out the criteria against which planning applications will be considered, e.g. residential amenity, visual impact, nature conservation, highways issues.	September 2007	September 2009
Planning and Design Guide (SPD)	Guidance to ensure that design policies are implemented in a consistent manner in accordance with principles of good design, in line with Government guidance & advice from other organisations.	March/April 2006	July 2006
Planning Obligations	Guidance on the Council's approach to negotiating and securing planning obligations.	To be determined pending outcome of government's reforms of planing obligations	
Affordable Housing (SPD)	Guidance on the application of affordable housing policies in response to the conclusions and recommendations from a new Housing Needs Survey, recent changes to Government guidance and practical issues regarding the delivery of affordable housing.	June 2006	October 2006
Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision in South and West Herts (SPD)	Flows from the possible development of a SW Herts Gypsy & Traveller Strategy. The SPD will elaborate on policies or proposals within the Core Strategy and/or the Site Allocations DPD.	To be determined with Herts partners	
Site Specific Development Briefs (SPD)	May be required at short notice to respond to unforeseen sites coming forward for development.	As required	-

- 1.7 Until the Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Development Control DPDs are adopted, the Council's existing Local Plan will continue to apply when assessing planning applications.

2.0 Conformity with other Plans and Policies

- 2.1 When reading through this report, it should be borne in mind that the Council's ability to create local policy can be limited by the need to follow guidance set by others. This includes national Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and more recently Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), across a range of land use issues. The Council will have to take these into account.
- 2.2 The Core Strategy will also need to be in general conformity with the East of England Plan (the Regional Spatial Strategy or RSS), prepared by the East of England Regional Assembly to guide development until 2021. The RSS is intended to guide the preparation of LDF policies on housing, environmental, transport, waste and

various other land use issues. An Examination in Public is currently in progress and the final RSS should be adopted by the end of 2006, setting targets for new housing and employment across the region.

- 2.3 The East of England is a newly created region and the RSS will ultimately replace the Structure Plans, which are presently in use, including the Structure Plan for Hertfordshire. Until the RSS is adopted, the Council will need to consider the outstanding requirements of the Structure Plan when developing the LDF and deciding whether to permit or refuse planning applications. Counties in the East of England will continue to retain planning powers over waste and minerals planning.
- 2.4 The Core Strategy must be consistent with national Planning Policy Statements and Guidance issued by the government, whilst the Site Allocations and Development Control Policies will themselves need to conform with the Core Strategy.

3.0 Preparing the Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Development Control Policies

- 3.1 The Council will seek the views of the community and other stakeholders in the preparation of all LDF documents. Although the three DPDs are scheduled for adoption at different times, this initial report considers the Issues and Options for all three documents.
- 3.2 The process for preparing the documents is as follows:
1. Consultation on Issues and Options (this report and associated public meetings)
 2. Consultation on DPD Preferred Options
 3. Formal Submission of DPDs to the Secretary of State (with opportunity for public comment)
 4. Independent Public Examination on each DPD
 5. Receipt of report from the Planning Inspector containing binding requirements for any changes to the Council's DPDs
 6. Adoption of DPDs
- 3.3 This report represents the first stage of the process and set outs a range of options and strategic choices. This report does not promote any particular option or proposal but is intended to provide you with an opportunity to consider the ideas before a preferred option is put forward.
- 3.4 The Core Strategy, Site Allocation and Development Control Policies - together with all Supplementary Planning Documents - will be subject to Sustainability Appraisal. This new aspect of the development plan system involves the assessment of policy options against a number of sustainability objectives promoting environmental, social and economic well-being in Hertsmere. The Sustainability Appraisal identifies any need for mitigation or alternative approaches, where LDF policies are predicted to have some adverse effects. A Scoping Report has already been prepared which sets out the parameters for the Sustainability Appraisal and is available to view on the Council's website.



4.0 What the Council has done to date

- 4.1 At the start of September 2005, a questionnaire was sent to every household in Hertsmere to gauge opinion on a number of key issues. Almost 1,000 responses were received from across the Borough and several issues were identified as priorities by residents:
- the protection of the Green Belt
 - the protection of open space in towns
 - the protection of local shopping facilities
 - the provision of wildlife and habitats
 - the reduction of traffic congestion
 - the protection of listed buildings/conservation areas
- 4.2 The findings revealed that protected employment land was considered the most expendable for residential use, with almost half of all respondents stating that it should be considered for development in the event of a shortfall of residential land.
- 4.3 There was an overall consensus that the level of provision of shops and other town centre uses across the Borough was sufficient although there were considered to be too many takeaway restaurants.
- 4.4 Respondents were also asked to identify, from a list of options, any additional community or recreational facilities required in the Borough. Activities for young people received the highest level of response, selected by almost two-thirds of people completing the survey.
- 4.5 A full summary of the survey can be viewed on the Council's website.

5.0 The Community Strategy and the Local Strategic Partnership

- 5.1 *Hertsmere Together*, the Hertsmere Community Strategy was published in 2003 and sets out the community's vision for the whole Borough. It was prepared by the Local Strategic Partnership, which brings together representatives of the public, business, education, healthcare and community sectors. The Community Strategy was developed to provide an impetus for improving and co-ordinating service provision in the Borough, both now and in the longer term.
- 5.2 The overarching aim of the Community Strategy is to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Borough through a series of aims and objectives. A principal role of the LDF is to help deliver the land use or spatial requirements of the Community Strategy, to enable local service providers to operate effectively in Hertsmere.
- 5.3 The LDF and the Community Strategy are, therefore, at the centre of local service delivery and need to be regularly updated to make them relevant for the users and recipients of local services. It will be necessary to relate proposed changes to the Community Strategy in 2006 with the emerging policies in the LDF. Clearly, it is important that the Council properly involves the various representative groups and forums who inform the work of the Local Strategic Partnership.

6.0 Policy objectives for the LDF

- 6.1 The qualities which make Hertsmere an attractive area in which to work and live need to be protected but positive, pro-active planning is also required to facilitate development which reflects the needs of the wider community. The Council would welcome your views on the proposed guiding vision for the Hertsmere LDF:

'The delivery of a high quality, inclusive and viable environment to be achieved through a commitment to the principles of sustainable development.'

- 6.2 The objectives for LDF policy documents, particularly the Core Strategy, need to be entirely consistent with the Community Strategy. Although the actual policies in the LDF will not be finalised this year, the Council would like to agree broader objectives for the LDF from the outset. We would welcome your views on the proposed objectives:

1. **To protect the Green Belt whilst promoting rural diversification and sustainable access to the wider countryside wherever possible.**
2. **To maintain an adequate supply of suitable land, concentrated on brownfield sites within towns, to accommodate expected development needs and supporting community infrastructure.**
3. **To provide the spatial policies necessary to deliver the Community Strategy.**
4. **To secure efficient land use through well-designed development reflecting the size, pattern and character of settlements in Hertsmere.**
5. **To protect and enhance the built heritage of Hertsmere.**
6. **To raise levels of access by seeking development in locations not dependent on access by car and by requiring the provision of accessible buildings.**
7. **To assist where possible the community's need for affordable housing.**
8. **To promote safe, healthy and inclusive communities, respecting the diverse needs of the whole Borough.**
9. **To provide a planning framework which promotes sustainable and competitive economic performance, supporting businesses of all sizes and reflecting local skills.**
10. **To safeguard and enhance the role of town and district centres in Hertsmere, steering commercial developments which attract a large number of people towards the most widely accessible centres.**
11. **To protect and enhance local biodiversity within both developed and undeveloped areas.**

12. To protect and promote the environment in Hertsmere by addressing local causes and impacts of pollution.

13. To address issues arising from climate change and flooding and to take advantage of water and other natural resources responsibly.

6.3 The objectives of the Core Strategy extend to the Site Allocations and Development Control Policies DPDs although four additional objectives have been identified for the Site Allocations:

- 1. The promotion and identification of land and buildings to help ensure the timely delivery of development to meet the Borough's needs.**
- 2. To work with key partners to identify pressure areas and subsequent requirements for healthcare, education and other community facilities and identify single use and mixed use sites to accommodate these requirements.**
- 3. To work with key partners to identify specific s106 funding opportunities on identified sites for development.**
- 4. To set the parameters for future development proposals within identified Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt.**

7.0 National and regional planning policy

Government policy: the national context

Housing

7.1 The Government has argued that increasing overall land supply remains the only way of delivering more affordable homes in the long term. A key government study, the Barker Review of Housing Supply, recently identified a need for up to 140,000 extra new homes a year across Britain if housing supply is to match demand. The report identified a lack of developable land as a major cause of high house prices and concluded that between 70,000 and 120,000 additional private sector homes are required each year, together with up to 23,000 social housing units. By 2026, it is estimated that only a third of couples in their thirties will be able to afford to buy a home in England.

7.2 The Government has published a range of proposals to address housing and affordable housing shortfalls:

- A proposed reduction in the size of privately developed sites on which a proportion of affordable housing must be provided, from 25 units to 15 units.
- Assessing local household need and land requirements based on housing market areas.

- Allocating a 'rolling' 5 year supply of housing sites and identifying land for a further 10 years.
- Topping up the 5 year site-specific allocations, with land from the 10 year supply as appropriate.

- 7.3 In recent years, the Government has encouraged local authorities to approve new housing at higher densities, particularly in more central locations. Most new housebuilding should achieve densities of 30 to 50 homes per hectare (12 - 20 homes per acre) with greater levels in places with good public transport accessibility.
- 7.4 The East of England Regional Plan (RSS14) is seeking 4,200 dwellings in Hertsmere between 2001 and 2021 out of a regional total of 478,000 new homes. The current Examination may even lead to an increase in the 4,200 figure - either through the findings of the examination findings or through subsequent government intervention. If this occurs, there may be pressure to develop some Green Belt sites if there is insufficient brownfield land to meet increased housebuilding requirements.
- 7.5 The Plan also seeks that 30% of overall housing supply in a local authority should be in the form of affordable housing - with an overall aspiration to secure at least 40% in areas of particular housing pressure. The majority of the new affordable housing supply should be provided in the form of social rented housing, rather than key worker or intermediate housing.

Building Sustainable Communities

- 7.6 The Government has sought to place the building of sustainability communities at the heart of its planning policies. Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) Delivering Sustainable Development emphasises that:
- "sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning".*
(PPS1, paragraph 3)
- 7.7 This is to be achieved through good, inclusive design and the creation of 'safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities' with good access to jobs and key services. There is greater recognition by government of the need to achieve high quality design and design which fails to improve the character and quality of an area should no longer be accepted.
- 7.8 The emerging East of England Plan recommends a 'sequential approach' to locating new developments - with the intensification and use of land near to public transport routes and other facilities preferred ahead of more remote locations. The Plan proposes a hierarchy of settlements based on accessibility:
- Urban Regional Interchange
 - Other Urban Centres
 - 'Peri-urban' areas
 - Market Towns
 - Rural Areas



- 7.9 Parts of central Borehamwood and Potters Bar could be described as an urban centre, in terms of accessibility to public transport although most of the Borehamwood, Potters Bar, Bushey and Radlett could be best described as ‘peri-urban’. The remainder of the Borough has very limited accessibility to both public transport and other services and would need to be defined as rural in terms of its accessibility.

Open Land and the Environment

- 7.10 It is twenty years since the Bruntland Commission first defined sustainable development as:

“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The planning system has long been concerned with the protection of the environment but overarching national policy has only recently incorporated the principle of sustainable development as one of its key tenets.

- 7.11 PPS1 requires LDF policies to take account of environmental issues such as greater use of renewable energy, air quality and pollution and flood risk. It is recognised that there are clearly local issues arising from the siting and location of the infrastructure to achieve these objectives.
- 7.12 Policy guidance also emphasises the role of the planning system in improving air quality. Many development proposals must now include an Air Quality Impact Assessment and all local authorities in England and Wales have reviewed and assessed air quality since 1995 in line with national air quality objectives. Where pollution levels exceed national targets, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) must be created with an individual Action Plan for each site. There are presently six AQMAs in the Borough.
- 7.13 Green Belt policy, set out in PPG2, continues to identify five principal reasons for the inclusion of land within the Green Belt:
1. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
 2. to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another
 3. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
 4. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
 5. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 7.14 No areas of Green Belt review are proposed in and around the Borough in the East of England Plan. However, regional policies seek the protection of local landscape character and specifically identify Watling Chase for the provision of new woodland.
- 7.15 LDFs are required to include policies which address energy consumption on larger developments – with a requirement that at least 10% of their energy requirements are met on site. LDFs should ‘specify the locational and other criteria by which applications for renewable energy developments will be assessed’. There is no



presumption against their location in the Green Belt although larger groups of wind turbines should only be located in non-designated landscape areas, where there is minimal effect on nearby homes.

Employment

- 7.16 Government policy on the provision of land for employment has evolved in recent years, in response to the increased pressure for land for new housing. Whilst supportive of new jobs in the right location, recent government policy in PPG3 emphasises that unless brownfield land is absolutely needed for other uses, it should re-used for housing.
- 7.17 PPG3 places an emphasis on Councils to have an up-to-date assessment of employment land needs so that genuinely surplus land can be released to meet the housing targets for new homes. Clearly, a balance will need to be struck to ensure that there are sufficient employment opportunities for the local community. The loss of viable employment land would result in an increased proportion of the local population having to commute further afield to secure employment.
- 7.18 The East of England Plan envisages additional employment growth in Hertfordshire, as well as in the Cambridge sub-region and parts of Essex over the period until 2021. The Plan sets a job growth target for Hertfordshire of 55,800 new jobs and emphasises the importance of promoting a range of sites to meet employment and investment opportunities - particularly in areas of high economic pressure. It is unlikely to be acceptable to release large amounts of employment land for housing, if the Borough is to contribute to the County-wide jobs target.

Transport and parking

- 7.19 The Government has emphasised the importance of planning in shaping transport trends by influencing where new development is located and by managing parking demand. Reducing the need to travel is a key tenet of government policy.
- 7.20 Major trip-generating developments must now be located in more central locations so they can be accessed by public transport and other non-car modes. The availability of car parking is also a key influence on the preferred method of travel and government policy in PPG13 advises that local authorities should set a cap on the level of parking provision at new development.
- 7.21 Reducing the need to travel and increasing travel choice and accessibility are a central theme in the East of England Plan. The principle of road user charging is supported whilst it is proposed that off-street parking for new developments is restricted to no more than 70% of national maximum standards for a number of key land uses.
- 7.22 At the same time, Hertfordshire County Council is currently consulting on a new Local Transport Plan (LTP) which will cover the five years from March 2006. The LTP contains a number of objectives which the planning system can help to deliver for

managing traffic growth, improving safety and encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport.

Shopping and Town Centres

- 7.23 The Government issued new national retail planning policy in June 2005 emphasising the need for a 'hierarchy' of town centres so that growth can be targeted in the right location. It also aims to ensure that shopping floorspace is concentrated in existing town centres unless no suitable sites exist. The need for large amounts of additional floorspace must also be demonstrated by retailers.
- 7.24 Town centres are promoted as the focus for a range of other uses, including the promotion of a balanced evening economy. They are therefore considered to be the most appropriate location for a range of leisure, cultural and tourism activities including cinemas, theatres, restaurants, public houses, bars, nightclubs and cafes.
- 7.25 The East of England Plan (RSS14) largely reflects the national guidance in PPS6. The Plan sets out a 'regional hierarchy' of town centres and new retail development must be consistent in scale with the size and character of the town centre and its role in hierarchy. This is to ensure that the larger centres can continue to offer a wide range of shopping without having trade diverted towards smaller or more remote town centres, which should instead focus on local and convenience goods.
- 7.26 None of the town centres in the Borough are defined as a major regional centre or regional centre. This may have the effect of preventing any substantial levels of new retail development in Borehamwood or any of the Borough's other larger centres, should proposals come - unless a need for the development is clearly justified.



Centennial Park, Elstree





New housing in Shenley

8.0 The Key Issues for Hertsmere

- 8.1 Despite its immediate proximity to London, open land and Green Belt countryside account for much of the Borough. Protection of the environment is likely to remain a key priority for many people living in Hertsmere and across the South East.
- 8.2 The Borough's links to nationally important roads and railway lines provide opportunities for many local residents to find work outside Hertsmere. These transport links also make much of the Borough accessible as an employment destination for local and national businesses - the international reputation for film and television production at Elstree is a defining characteristic of the Borough. Attracting and retaining businesses in the Borough is key to ensuring our towns remain sustainable communities in their own right.
- 8.3 The local population is predicted to grow steadily together with an increasing number of new households. However, the average age of residents is increasing and there is a risk that younger people, unable to afford to rent or buy housing, will choose to leave. The high cost of housing remains one of the key issues affecting the whole Borough and whilst the local population appears to enjoy relatively high levels of disposable income, this is offset by the lack of genuinely affordable housing. There are also significant pockets of social deprivation and planning policies for the Borough will need to consider the needs of the entire community.
- 8.4 This report sets out the key issues likely to affect the Borough over the next fifteen years and proposes a series of options to address them. The Council would like to hear from you and would welcome your views on the options proposed. The Council would also like to know whether there are any sites or areas which you would wish to see promoted or protected from development. After reading the following sections, please take the time to complete the response pages. The Council will also be holding a series of workshops across the Borough where there will be an opportunity to discuss the issues raised in this report and influence the development of preferred policy options for the Borough.

Key Hertsmere facts

- 80% of the Borough's 38 square miles is Green Belt

- The overall population of 94,000 is expected to grow by 10% over the next twenty years

- The retired population is projected to increase by a quarter by 2021

- The number of people aged between 25 and 44 is expected to decline by 2021

- Life expectancy for males is currently 78 and females 81

- More than 45,000 individuals are employed within Hertsmere

- Major employers include BBC TV Elstree, Canada Life Assurance Co, Cancer UK, Pinnacle Insurance and Grunwick Processing Laboratories

- More people commute out of Hertsmere for work (27,000) than commute into the Borough (25,000)

- Hertsmere is amongst the 25% least deprived local authority areas in England.

- Teenage Pregnancy at 34 per 1000 of the population is above the Hertfordshire average of 30 per 1000. The national average is 42 per 1000.

- The increase in the crime rate for Household Burglary and Vehicle Crime in 2003 was above the average rate for the East of England.

- The number of households with two or more cars (41%) is considerably higher than the national average (29%)

9.0 Housing

- 9.1 One of the overriding planning objectives for national policy remains the protection of the Green Belt. The Council has been successful in recent years in directing housing development onto previously developed land - commonly known as brownfield sites. This has prevented urban sprawl and the erosion of the Green Belt.
- 9.2 Since 1991, housebuilding rates in Hertsmere have averaged approximately 260 homes per year. The Council remains optimistic that new housing demand can be largely directed to brownfield sites, with the majority of available land in Hertsmere likely to be found in Borehamwood and to a lesser extent, in Potters Bar, Bushey and Radlett. Some previously developed sites are likely to be found elsewhere although there is a need to distinguish between any vacant brownfield sites in the Green Belt and greenfield land which has never previously been developed.
- 9.3 Whilst the protection of the Green Belt remains a successful and popular planning policy, its restriction on the availability of housing land does have important repercussions. Almost 80% of the land in the Borough is Green Belt meaning there is a limited amount of easily developable land despite the pressure for new housing. The Green Belt has the effect of:
- Restricting urban sprawl
 - Preventing neighbouring towns from merging into each other
 - Protecting the character and identity of existing towns and villages
- as well as:
- reducing the area where new housing can be provided;
 - affecting the supply of housing land and so the price of existing and new housing; and
 - leading to a reliance on small, private sites for development, which are too small to be required to provide a proportion of affordable housing.
- 9.4 For these reasons, the Council faces major problems in meeting any of its growing local housing needs shortfall; a consultant's report for the Council (Housing Needs Survey 2005) has suggested a shortfall of 351 homes per year. Only 50 new affordable homes are built each year in the Borough.
- 9.5 The promotion and identification of land and buildings suitable for residential development is a key LDF requirement. The Council is presently undertaking an Urban Capacity Study to identify the availability of developable brownfield land across Hertsmere. Identified sites will need to provide homes across a number of tenures, ensuring that both private and affordable housing - including intermediate and key worker homes - are provided.

Key Housing Statistics in Hertsmere

General

Total Population	94,000
Number of homes in the Borough	34,000
Projected population changes 2003 - 2021	9,200 More People
	1,200 More People Aged 0 - 19 (+ 5%) (national - 4%)
	1,500 More People Aged 20 - 29 (+ 14%) (national + 8%)
	1,000 Less People Aged 30 - 44 (- 5%) (national - 7%)
	3,800 More People Aged 45 - 64 (+ 17%) (national + 18%)
	3,700 More People Aged 65+ (+ 24%) (national + 34%)

Affordability

Average price of a flat (2005)	£179,000 (national average £151,000)
Average price of a terraced house (2005)	£229,000 (national average £175,000)
Percentage of stock in the Social sector	18.4% (national average 19.3%)
Estimated annual requirement for affordable units	766 units
Estimated annual number of social rented relets	415 units
Estimated number of required units exceeding new affordable supply	351 units

Unfit homes

Number of unfit homes per 1,000 dwellings	40 (national 42)
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Suitability

% of households living in accommodation suitable for their needs	89%
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Densities

Average new housebuilding densities on large sites in Borehamwood, Bushey and Potters Bar in 2004/5	61.4 homes per hectare (Government target of at least 30-50 homes per hectare)
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Green Belt Safeguarded Sites

Number of safeguarded housing sites in the Green Belt	6
Total estimated capacity for these sites	364

Use of Brownfield Land

% of new housebuilding on previously developed land (2004/5) (Government target 60%)	100% (National %: 70%)
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Gypsy and traveller accommodation

Number of existing sites	4
Total number of current pitches	42 (27 permanent, 15 short stay)
Shortage of pitches	80 - 110 pitches across five local authority areas in SW Hertfordshire including Hertsmere

Key data sources: Consultants Housing Needs Survey 2005, Hertsmere Land Availability Statement 2003/4, Hertsmere Local Plan 2003, South and West Hertfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Survey 2004, Land Registry, Government Actuaries Department

Issues affecting Hertsmere to 2021

- 9.6 The Council's recent LDF householder survey provided a number of important insights into concerns and attitudes across the Borough:
- The provision of affordable housing was only a medium priority;
 - The provision of housing on brownfield land in existing towns ranked as a below medium priority;
 - There was stronger support for the provision of more one and two bedroom properties; and
 - Providing sites for gypsies and travellers was the lowest priority for the public of all planning issues raised
- 9.7 Although the survey generally revealed housing to be a relatively low priority issue, housing need does exist in the Borough and the Council's Housing Needs Survey revealed that 93% of concealed households - those within a household wanting to move out and form a separate household - cannot afford to buy their own property and 75% cannot afford to rent the cheapest available private housing.
- 9.8 Whilst affordability can be a relative concept - what is affordable to some is not to others - the LDF will have to include appropriate policies for the provision of affordable housing. Current planning policies for Hertsmere define affordable housing as housing for sale, rent or equity sharing with an element of subsidy.

Affordable housing on sites developed for private housing

- 9.9 The LDF will need to ensure the community's need for affordable housing is met by providing such units through the planning system where possible. Current policies seek 25% of units in the form of affordable housing on privately developed schemes of more than 25 units or one hectare. A lack of large housing sites in the Borough means there is a need to consider the size of scheme where a proportion of affordable housing will be sought as few schemes of more than 25 homes are presently built in the Borough.
- 9.10 The actual proportion of new housing delivered with subsidy will also need to be reviewed in the LDF. On the basis of a projected annual shortfall of 351 units, the consultant's Housing Needs Survey recommended that 40% of new units be developed as affordable housing. Two-thirds of the units of these should be social rented housing with one-third as intermediate housing, including key worker and shared ownership homes. Despite the evidence of demand for key worker and shared ownership, there have been some difficulties in attracting individuals and families to these properties. In addition, the Council recognises that the planning system alone cannot deliver the annual shortfall of 351 units and it is unrealistic to expect that this entire deficit will be overcome, given the limited supply of developable land in the Borough.



Rural exception policies

- 9.11 It may be appropriate to retain or extend the existing 'rural exceptions' policy where affordable housing can be provided on sites which would not normally be appropriate for market housing - as an 'exception' to normal planning policies. This policy presently applies to land in Aldenham, Shenley, South Mimms and Elstree for small scale, affordable housing schemes. The current approach is consistent with Government policy in PPG3 which acknowledges the role of rural exceptions sites in delivering affordable homes for identified local need.
- 9.12 The inclusion of private homes to subsidise an exceptions scheme would not be appropriate. Safeguards are required to ensure that any new houses meet local needs, are built in the most appropriate locations and are genuinely affordable in perpetuity.
- 9.13 Rural exceptions schemes are often community led and best delivered through an effective partnership between the local community, landowners and the Council. The use of a rural exceptions policy in Hertsmere - with the possible identification of sites in the LDF - has the potential to form a small but important component of affordable housing need in the Borough.

Other Housing Needs

- 9.14 In addition to a need for more affordable housing and increased overall housing supply, the Housing Needs Survey identified a number of particular housing needs in the Borough:
- A mix of house types in market and social sectors with more flats and terraced houses to meet the needs for smaller units;
 - More 'extra care' or sheltered accommodation for the growing elderly population; and
 - Housing for the mobility impaired
- 9.15 Where the principle of new housing is permitted by the Council, it may be appropriate to require housing developments to reflect these needs. Current policies already seek to achieve a proportion of homes for smaller households, including those suitable for occupation for the elderly and a proportion of housing built to 'lifetime homes' standards which can subsequently be adapted for use by wheelchair users and others with mobility impairments. The Borough needs a range of properties of different sizes and tenure to provide homes for people at all stages of life.
- 9.16 Many new homes in England are required to be built to lifetime homes standards and extending the scope of the current policy may be appropriate in Hertsmere. This may enable frail or elderly people to remain at home or with other family members, without the need to move into residential care homes. Nevertheless, it is recognised that sheltered accommodation and care homes are both likely to play an important role in meeting the housing needs of older people in the borough with the retired

population expected to increase by 24% by 2021. Many of these people may presently live outside of the Borough and there is a risk that Hertsmere could attract some elderly people with no local connections.

Gypsies and Travellers

- 9.17 Although there is presently no legal obligation on local authorities to provide caravan sites for Gypsies and Travellers, the Government has published proposals which would require their needs to be assessed and if necessary, sites or additional capacity provided.
- 9.18 The Borough presently has four authorised sites for the Gypsy and Traveller communities with up to 42 pitches. However, across Hertfordshire and neighbouring counties, there are concerns that an insufficient number of sites has led to an increase in unauthorised encampments, particularly in the Green Belt.
- 9.19 A group of five Local Authorities across south and west Hertfordshire, including Hertsmere, have undertaken an assessment of Gypsy and Traveller needs across the area. The study sought to establish the extent of need for additional sites and concluded there is a need for 90 additional plots on local authority and private residential sites across the study area. Household growth from existing families would require a further 35 plots.
- 9.20 It will now be necessary to establish whether there is scope to provide additional sites or extend existing sites across the five Local Authority areas, having regard to the level of site provision already achieved in each location. A balance has to be found between the legitimate needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community and the need for any new sites to be fairly distributed in suitable locations. Consultants have been jointly appointed by the local authorities involved to come forward with a suggested list of suitable sites.

10.0 Building Sustainable Communities

- 10.1 Successful communities are about more than the provision of new housing. Additional housing growth can only be achieved by considering education and healthcare needs together with access to shops, public transport and other local services. Existing shortfalls in services have to be identified before large amounts of new housing can be successfully accommodated. It also needs to be recognised that some patterns of development in the Borough are not particularly sustainable and there may be locations where this cannot change in the short term.
- 10.2 The LDF has a key role to play in the provision and safeguarding of community facilities, including schools, libraries, places of worship and healthcare facilities. The need for new facilities can have major land requirements and many providers of community facilities such as the Hertsmere Primary Care Trust, Oaklands College and the University of Hertfordshire are undergoing changes in the way they deliver their services. In some instances, this will include the redevelopment of existing buildings or the consolidation of facilities together onto a single site. At the same time, links

between schools and other community facilities may need to be improved, given Government requirements for schools to provide a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to meet needs of pupils and the wider community. These all raise land-use planning issues.

- 10.3 The ability of existing areas to physically absorb any increase in development also needs to be assessed. The Borough's built environment is mainly suburban in character and is predominantly contained within the urban areas of Borehamwood, Potters Bar and Bushey and the smaller settlement of Radlett. Parts of Shenley and the smaller villages of Elstree, Aldenham, Ridge and Roundbush are more rural in nature and add their own distinctive character to the Borough. Building sustainable communities requires a proper understanding of the capacity of the Borough to accommodate change. Hertsmere does not have a uniform character and the identification of an appropriate hierarchy of settlements can provide the potential for differences in the scale and density of new development to be identified.

Issues Affecting Hertsmere to 2021

The scale and density of new development

- 10.4 Making efficient use of land for commercial and residential developments has a major role to play in reducing the pressure on developing the Green Belt and other undeveloped land. Higher density developments can provide a more sustainable pattern of land use but there need to be adequate safeguards to ensure that new proposals reflect the character of the area in which they are located.
- 10.5 Numerical measurements of density and plot ratio (the relationship between site area and the number of floors/floor area) can offer a useful initial means of assessing the suitability of residential and commercial proposals respectively. Although the Council will need to have proper regard to the government's density guidelines, a range of other factors will also need to be considered to ensure that local character and circumstance are properly considered. It follows that there are some locations within the Borough where higher density residential and commercial developments may be more appropriate, such as those in or near to the principal town centres of Borehamwood and Potters Bar. Outside of Borehamwood and Potters Bar town centres, there are unlikely to be too many locations where significant increases in density and plot ratio could occur without adversely affecting local character and amenity.
- 10.6 Whilst the design merits of new development might be regarded as a subjective interpretation, key urban design principles can be introduced for all new development - regardless of density. The Council is hoping to introduce new design guidelines for developers in 2006 although more specific policies on density will need to be addressed through the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control policies DPDs.

Community facilities and mixed use development

- 10.7 Sustainable communities are those in which people have access to a range of community facilities such as schools, libraries, doctors and crèches without needing to travel long distances or rely on the car. New developments can increase the population of an area and therefore put additional pressure on existing facilities - although it should be emphasised that some new housing will accommodate those already living within an area.
- 10.8 Locating developments that contain a mix of uses which complement each other, such as housing, healthcare or leisure facilities, in close proximity can contribute to achieving sustainable communities. Many areas in Hertsmere are largely 'single use' locations with large areas characterised by housing and relatively few local facilities - leading to greater dependency on the car and a reduced level of choice for those without access to private transport. The introduction of planning policies which require a mix of uses to be provided, particularly on larger housing developments, can have a major bearing on the creation of more sustainable and attractive local communities. Elsewhere there may be some justification for a relaxation of existing controls which limit the ability of residential properties to be converted into local community facilities, such as crèches or surgeries.
- 10.9 On sites where it is not realistic to achieve a mix of uses, the provision of financial contributions from developers can be sought to fund facilities elsewhere. This is already done in some instances but it may now be appropriate to introduce a tariff on all new development sites to avoid the uncertainty and delays caused by negotiations on new sites. The tariff would need to relate to the size of site or scale of development proposed and would reflect the impact on local infrastructure and services generated by a scheme. Safeguards would need to be introduced to ensure that the revenue raised by any tariff is spent on the provision of local services or infrastructure upgrading, relating to the development.

Safe and vibrant communities

- 10.10 Planning and designing out crime from the outset can ensure that the scope for inhospitable and unsafe environments is avoided before it becomes a problem to be tackled. Mixed use developments that encourage activity throughout the day and into the night can also encourage natural security by preventing areas becoming unused and unwelcome.
- 10.11 A reduction in crime and the fear of crime in Hertsmere remains a key objective for the Council and the LDF has an important role to play by requiring that changes in the built environment improve safety and security.



11.0 Open space and the environment

- 11.1 The protection of the Green Belt has prevented the outwards expansion of Greater London, protecting the separate character of the Borough's towns and villages by ensuring that they have not merged into each other. Outside of Borehamwood and Elstree, Potters Bar, Bushey and Radlett, the potential for any new development has been severely restricted. Where it is permitted, the size and scale of new buildings or uses is restricted to:
- Buildings and uses required for open land activities such as agriculture, recreation, cemeteries and minerals extraction
 - Limited infilling of existing villages
 - Limited infilling of designated 'major developed sites'
- 11.2 Many major developed sites in Hertsmere were developed before the Green Belt came into existence and are predominantly education, research and healthcare facilities. Some limited infilling and extensions of buildings on these sites has been allowed over the years to enable essential upgrading of facilities in these locations. In addition, some re-use of redundant farm buildings for non-agricultural purposes has been permitted.
- 11.3 The current Local Plan safeguards a small number of sites for future housing development after 2011 if insufficient land from within the urban area is available to meet longer term housing needs. In the interim period, these areas remain subject to usual Green Belt planning controls. A key part of the LDF will be to review the need for this safeguarded land, by identifying the extent and capacity of available urban and brownfield land for future development. The safeguarding of land was recommended following two Public Local Inquiries into the Hertsmere Local Plan.
- 11.4 Open land within the Green Belt does not have a single character or use. Agricultural and recreational uses account for a large proportion of Green Belt land but within these locations, the diversity of landscape and wildlife is considerable. There are various Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest together with historic parks such as Wrotham Park and Wall Hall and the battlefield site at Kitts End. The Borough is also located entirely within the Watling Chase Community Forest, one of twelve community forests across the country. It contains wildlife habitats, providing an attractive location for the public to enjoy. It also contributes to rural employment and reduces atmospheric pollution by absorbing pollutant gases.
- 11.5 Within the main towns, there are also a number of important areas of open land. A hierarchy of parks, playing fields, playgrounds and allotments, much of which is currently protected through existing planning policies, contribute to the quality of life of everyone. Although there are considered to be few areas with insufficient access to open space and outdoor recreational facilities, pockets of deficiency are likely to exist. The poor quality of some open space and supporting facilities may also mean the level of actual use may be limited in some locations.

Environmental facts about the Borough

TOPIC AND INDICATOR	HERTSMERE AMOUNT
<i>Green Belt</i>	
Total area of land in the Borough that is Green Belt	Just over 30 square miles
Percentage of land on the Borough that is Green Belt	79.6
No. of 'major development sites' in the Green Belt	15
No. of safeguarded sites in the Green Belt	6 (Haydon Dell Farm, Bushey; land east of Farm Way, Bushey; Land bounded by Heathbourne Road, Windmill Lane and Clay Lane, Bushey; 16 Watford Road Radlett; Byron/Vale Avenue, Borehamwood; West Herts College Annexe, William Street, Bushey)
Change in Green Belt area 1997 - 2003	-20 hectares
<i>Allotments</i>	
No. of allotment gardens in the district	5
Area of the district covered by allotments	10.6 hectares
<i>Public Parks</i>	
No. of Public Parks in the Borough	43
Percentage of Hertsmere residents who use public parks	74%
% Hertsmere residents who used public parks about once a month	32%
% Hertsmere residents who used public parks at least once a week	45%
Total Size of the Public Parks	124 hectares
<i>Other Outdoor Spaces</i>	
Percentage of Hertsmere residents who use outdoor spaces which are not public parks (e.g. for walking)	67%
% Hertsmere residents who used outdoor spaces about once a month	30%
% Hertsmere residents who used outdoor spaces at least once a week	48%
<i>Air Quality</i>	
No. of air quality management areas	6
Days of the year when air pollution is moderate or higher (in accordance with National Air Quality Standards)	36 (Herts average 27)
<i>Wildlife and other Nature Conservation Sites</i>	
Total Number and Area of Sites	124 sites (940 hectares)
No. of Sites of Special Scientific Interest	2 (Radwell Wood (an ancient woodland) and the former quarry site near South Mimms Castle (geological formation))
No. of Local Nature Reserves	3 (Furzeffield Wood (Potters Bar), Fisher's Field (Bushey) and Hilfield Park Reservoir)
No. of regionally important geological and geomorphological sites	3
<i>Conservation and Historic Areas</i>	
No. of Conservation Areas	15
No. of battlefields	1 (land near Kitts End was part of the Battle of Barnet)
No. of buildings of special historic or architectural interest in Hertsmere	336
Number of historic parks	3 (Wrotham Hall, Wall Hall and Aldenham Park)
<i>Rights of Way</i>	
Length of Rights of Way	95 miles
<i>Community Forest</i>	
Area of the Borough covered by Watling Chase Community Forest	99.2% (10,000 Hectares out of a total Borough area of 10,080 Hectares)



Issues affecting Hertsmere to 2021

The Green Belt

- 11.6 Protection of the Green Belt was the highest ranking priority for the people in the recent LDF householder consultation which attracted around 1,000 responses. Nevertheless, Green Belt land in the Borough has long been subject to a process of managed change: for example, major sports facilities, research and educational establishments have all been carefully developed or modernised in the Green Belt. Mineral extraction also takes place in Green Belt countryside.
- 11.7 The Green Belt boundary in the Borough was reviewed and updated in the preparation of the 2003 Local Plan and currently the Council does not propose any major changes to Green Belt boundaries. The need for minor boundary changes will need to be addressed where there are anomalies or inaccuracies in the precise designation of a Green Belt boundary.
- 11.8 It is realistic to acknowledge that there are three major pressures for change in Green Belt land in the Borough:
1. Accommodating housing need. The Council's urban capacity study will help establish if there are sufficient development sites within urban areas. If there are not, it may be that currently safeguarded sites or new sites in the Green Belt will have to be considered for development.
 2. Leisure needs and public access. This creates a demand for sporting clubs and facilities, as well as informal leisure and recreation opportunities, for both Londoners and Hertfordshire residents. A number of the most popular recreational and open land facilities are located in the Green Belt.
 3. Redundant farm buildings. The changing nature of agriculture has increased the number of these buildings. New uses can represent a sustainable and practical use of land and enable farms to successfully diversify, in line with government objectives. However, highly commercial and trip-generating activities can lead to major changes in the way rural land is used, which may not always be in keeping with the surrounding area. Presently, there is a preference to secure non-residential use of redundant agricultural buildings. There is, however, relatively little specific guidance over the type and intensity of non-residential uses considered acceptable.

Open Space and Parks

- 11.9 The role of the planning system to "fill the gaps" in provision will need to continue as part of the Local Development Framework process through an open space and recreation study. Two parks in the Borough have received 'Green Flag' status - King George Recreation Ground, Bushey and Oakmere Park, Potters Bar - but new deficiencies in both the quantity and quality of public open space and parks will need to be identified.

- 11.10 Some choices will have to be made about the extent to which recreational and leisure access to the Green Belt should be accommodated. Four 'Gateway' sites to Watling Chase Community Forest already exist in the Borough: Aldenham Country Park, Bowmansgreen Open Farm (now known as The Willows), Shenley Park and South Mimms Service Area. The provision of facilities at these sites has the potential of drawing more people to other facilities nearby, many of which are popular with the wider community.

Cemeteries

- 11.11 Current policies in the Local Plan suggest that burial sites are best located in the Green Belt, albeit where the overall openness of the Green Belt is preserved. This can depend on the layout of graves and buildings and their relationship with the local landscape. The need to provide additional burial space may arise over the next fifteen years and the LDF will need to ensure that the needs of all faith communities in the Borough are properly addressed should the policy need to be reviewed.

Allotments

- 11.12 Recent surveys by the Council of allotment provision revealed that Borehamwood is the only town with a significant deficiency. However, it should not be inferred that the Borough is over provided with allotments. The redevelopment of allotments in urban areas is currently prevented unless it can be shown there is adequate provision elsewhere and the replacement proposals makes an essential contribution to leisure or recreational needs.
- 11.13 Allotments have a valuable role particularly as more flatted developments are built and the number of elderly or retired people continues to grow. Nevertheless, there are others who perceive allotments as expendable if further development land is required in the Borough. 23% of respondents in the recent household survey considered that allotments should be redeveloped, in the event of a shortfall of available land for housing.

Wildlife Areas

- 11.14 There are presently a large number of designated wildlife and other nature conservation sites which includes:
- Sites of high importance that have been identified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Sites of Special Scientific Interest)
 - Sites with a more localised importance (Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation)
 - A large number of trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders
- 11.15 Policies presently exist which recognise the importance of maintaining hedgerows, watercourses, river corridors, flood plains and watermeadows. The protection and promotion of biodiversity remains a key objective of the Council and consideration needs to be given to whether existing policies afford adequate protection to flora and fauna within the Borough.



Renewable Energy

- 11.16 Given the possibility of proposals coming forward for a variety of energy source developments - including wind turbines or windfarms - there may a need to provide greater clarity in terms of those locations where proposals may not be considered acceptable. The outright prevention of any wind turbine or other renewable energy development is likely to be resisted by central Government. Within Hertsmere, small and domestic scale renewable energy production is likely to increase and the LDF will need to contain appropriate policies to reflect this. At the same time, there need to be steps taken to reducing energy consumption through energy efficient building design; further guidance is expected to be issued through Hertfordshire County Council's sustainability guidelines.

Development and floodrisk

- 11.17 One of the challenges facing planning authorities as a result of climate change is the increased threat of flooding caused by seasonal rain or through sudden and increasingly violent storms. A range of measures would help in preventing such incidents taking place locally:
- Avoiding any significant development in the floodplain
 - Avoiding developments which creates significant areas of impervious hardstanding in river catchment areas which can in turn can lead to flash flooding
 - Investigating new reservoir provision
 - Encouraging the introduction of 'sustainable drainage systems' (SUDS) to reduce the amount of water needed and soakaways for new development

Water use

- 11.18 The Borough is located within the driest region in the country and the effects of climate change are likely to further reduce supply and increase demand. Buildings are major water consumers and design needs to incorporate measures to avoid water wastage. The right choice of specifications within new buildings can greatly reduce water consumption throughout the life of a development together with use of underlying groundwater resources and greater use of SUDS and rainwater harvesting. Hertfordshire County Council has prepared sustainability guidelines on efficient water use which the Council intends to incorporate into the LDF. It will also be necessary to explore ways in which sustainable design and construction principles can be achieved from the outset within new proposals.

12.0 The Economy

The Hertsmere Context

- 12.1 In 2005, unemployment in the Borough stood at 2% although there are pockets of deprivation in Borehamwood with higher unemployment levels in excess of 4%. The working population is very mobile with approximately 60% of the working population commuting outside of the Borough and a high proportion of the population classified as being within the professional and management category sector.
- 12.2 The Borough has a strong local economy which serves both the local workforce and those commuting into Hertsmere. Within the Borough, there are over 130 hectares of land (312 acres) in use for employment generating activities including six protected employment areas which provide 99 hectares of employment land. These are the Cranborne Industrial Estate and Station Close in Potters Bar, Stirling Way and the Elstree Way Corridor in Borehamwood, Otterspool Way in Bushey and Centennial Park in Elstree which is also classified as a Hertfordshire Strategic Employment site. Land use within these areas is controlled to ensure that employment generating activities, many of which are unsuitable for residential or town centre locations, remain the principal form of activity.
- 12.3 There are many smaller areas which although not protected, generate employment on smaller sites and tend to be located within the town centres or wider urban area. There are also some large employers located in the Green Belt, such as the Bio-Products laboratories in Aldenham and the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control site in South Mimms. These two areas alone provide a further 27 hectares of employment land.
- 12.4 The economic profile of the Borough is a changing one. There has been a long term decline in the number of people employed in manufacturing, resulting in larger warehouse buildings being redeveloped for smaller industrial units or as car showrooms. A number of important employers such as T-Mobile have also vacated offices in the Borough and relocated to the Hatfield Aerodrome Business Park development, leaving some large office buildings vacant.
- 12.5 The Council is producing a study with St Albans City and District Council and Welwyn Hatfield District Council to identify employment land supply, demand and market trends in the area. The study is expected to be completed by April 2006 and will assist in identifying those areas of the local economy which require further protection or promotion. This is considered to be particularly important because of increasing pressure to develop available brownfield land for new housing. 47.6% of respondents in the recent household survey considered that the most appropriate location for new housing should be on employment land, compared to land which has not been previously been developed. It must also be remembered that a large proportion of the workforce are not employed in designated employment areas.





Issues Affecting Hertsmere to 2021

- 12.6 The draft East of England Plan requires over 4,200 homes to be provided in Hertsmere from 2001 to 2021 and it is important that sufficient employment land remains to provide job opportunities and for the local population. If it is decided to concentrate new homes within the existing urban area, sites currently used for offices, warehouses and industrial units, will come under pressure to be re-developed for housing.
- 12.7 There is also a perception of an over-supply of office accommodation in the Borough given that a number of buildings have remained vacant, as a result of some employers relocating. If these and other sites are solely developed for housing, the key towns in the Borough may turn into a series of 'dormitory' settlements for those working in nearby London, Watford and Hatfield, rather than as an attractive business destination serving the local and wider communities.
- 12.8 The television and film studios in the Borough remain one of its key assets and are an important source of local employment. However, many of the other business premises located in the area date from the 1950s and 1960s and whilst there is still demand for offices and industrial floorspace in the Borough, the condition of many buildings does not meet modern day requirements.
- 12.9 Adequate flexibility may need to be provided to enable existing businesses to redevelop and upgrade their accommodation, given the age and condition of many buildings. This may include the need for sufficient off-street parking, notwithstanding Government policy seeking caps on parking levels as a means of reducing congestion and pollution. There may also be some pressure to allow existing major operations in the Green Belt to modernise or expand, if they are to be able to carry out their business effectively.
- 12.10 The Council will need to consider developing a strategy to protect those job opportunities and businesses which intend on remaining in or relocating to the Borough. Rather than traditional industrial uses, activities such as waste collection and recycling, call centres and distribution depots are increasingly requiring modern premises close to major centres of population. Given the Borough's location close to London and Watford, there is still likely to be pressure to maintain a supply of land for these activities, to avoid new sites in the Green Belt or on other open land having to be developed.
- 12.11 Finally, establishing whether the right skills exist within the local population for local employers must also be done. Although a number of high quality jobs exist within the science, office and I.T. sectors, it is not clear whether there are sufficient opportunities available for the local population. The development of hotels and retail warehouses in some employment locations, such along Elstree Way or at Stirling Corner in Borehamwood, has provided jobs which are either part time or in some instances, lower paid. Local planning policies must provide sufficient flexibility to enable developments to come forward which can deliver a mix of jobs for the local community.

13.0 Transport and Parking

- 13.1 In many respects Hertsmere is a well-connected borough. The principal towns in the Borough are located close to the M1, M25 and A1 / A1(M) and there is good access to the national rail network. The East coast mainline from Kings Cross passes through Potters Bar, Thameslink services run from Elstree & Borehamwood and Radlett through central London to Brighton and Bedford and there are links to the west coast mainline from Bushey via Euston or Watford Junction.
- 13.2 Whilst north-south road and rail links across the Borough are well developed, east-west links are poor - with the exception of the M25 - resulting in relatively low levels of public transport movement between towns within the Borough. The majority of local trips are most easily undertaken by car.
- 13.3 The 2001 Census revealed that 60% of Hertsmere's working residents commute outside of the Borough to work while more than 25,000 people working in the Borough live elsewhere.
- 13.4 Travel movements in the Borough can be broken down into:
- Through traffic using the national motorway and rail networks;
 - Commuter movements into and out of London along the main rail corridors;
 - Localised traffic movements within the main towns; and
 - Movements along local roads between the main towns and adjacent urban centres such as Watford and Hatfield
- 13.5 Accessibility to public transport and services has also been affected by the different investment priorities of rail franchises. Although the majority of the Borough's population lives within the larger settlements of Borehamwood, Bushey, Radlett, Potters Bar and Shenley, significant numbers of residents live in smaller villages and more isolated areas where the car is presently the only realistic choice for most journeys.
- 13.6 At an average of 1.36 cars per household, levels of car ownership are almost 25% above the national average and on the increase. These high levels of ownership and the predominance of the car as the preferred mode of travel can lead to congestion at key junctions and has resulted in the designation of Air Quality Management Areas in Elstree and Potters Bar. The motorways running through the borough also have noise and visual impacts on the Borough.
- 13.7 Responsibility for highways issues is largely shared between Hertfordshire County Council and central Government. The Government is responsible for motorways and trunk roads whilst the County Council has responsibility for the remainder of the road network, rights of way and for developing overall strategy for the County through the Local Transport Plan. Major future schemes affecting Hertsmere include the widening of the M25 to four lanes through the Borough.
- 13.8 From January 2006, the Council will have responsibility for all aspects of parking enforcement, as well as administering concessionary bus passes and providing support for the community transport 'Roundabout' scheme. Hertsmere LDF policies cannot provide new roads, major public transport schemes or controlled parking zones but it can have a major influence on travel habits. The LDF will need to develop standards for off-street parking provision, control the location of new

development and set out guidelines for securing financial contributions from developers for transport improvements - known as Section 106 agreements.

Issues Affecting Hertsmere to 2021

Car ownership and car parking provision

- 13.9 Car ownership is likely to continue rising over the period of the LDF. In much of the Borough, the Council's parking standards for new residential development are out of step with government policy guidance and a sensible balance will need to be found. Large amounts of off-street car parking can result in less efficient use of land and may be less appropriate where alternative transport modes are available. The LDF will also need to consider the legitimate parking needs of businesses and homes which are located in more remote locations.
- 13.10 The planning system has a role to play in influencing travel choice but cannot alone influence individuals' economic or lifestyle choices - such as the levels of car ownership. Strict adherence to government targets can also have a negative impact in places, by increasing on-street parking and related congestion and road safety. However, the recent survey of householders in the Borough revealed that almost 60% of residents consider that government caps on off-street parking for new development set are "about right" - although the figure varied in some parts of the Borough.

Reducing the need to travel

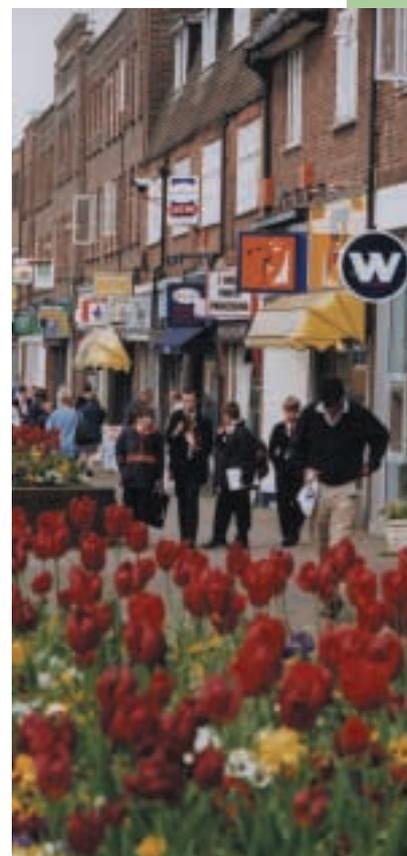
- 13.11 Current policies look to direct trip-generating development towards Borehamwood, Bushey, Potters Bar and Radlett, on the basis that alternative modes of transport are more readily available there. This approach is broadly consistent with national planning policy and there continues to be pressure to build at greater intensities near to town centres and train and bus stations. Government policy also seeks to locate different types of activities together in mixed use schemes, to reduce the need for travel between places of residence, work and leisure.

Greater access for non-car users

- 13.12 Given the cost of improving public transport, Green Travel Plans are a potentially useful planning tool, requiring new commercial developments to consider the needs of employees and visitors and make provision for cycling, walking and car share initiatives. Through the LDF, it will be possible for the Council to broaden the range of developments which are required to include a Green Travel Plan. At the same time, the Council can secure improvements via the Watling Chase Greenways Project to facilities, routes and crossings for cyclists and pedestrians, by pursuing financial contributions from developers to fund them.
- 13.13 It is also important to retain and develop better links for leisure users and these issues are discussed in the Environment and Open Space section. The Local Plan identifies key gateway sites for access to the Watling Chase Community Forest and continues to develop non-car routes and facilities through the Watling Chase Greenways project. Providing access to the countryside is a key objective of Hertsmere's Community Strategy.

14.0 Town Centres and Shopping

- 14.1 The four largest settlements in Hertsmere - Borehamwood, Potters Bar, Bushey and Radlett - provide an important range of shopping facilities and other services. The main shopping areas tend to be dominated by small and independent retailers, although a number of national multiples have located in and around the largest town centres.
- 14.2 The largest town centre is located in Borehamwood and comprises a series of the shops along Shenley Road along with the large Tesco superstore, the Borehamwood Shopping Park and the Curzon Cinema. In recent years, more mainstream retailers including M&S, Argos, Next and WHS have moved into the shopping park which has given a boost to the shopping attractiveness of Borehamwood town centre. Although concerns remain over the quality of shopping available elsewhere in the town centre, there are also plans for Top Shop, Top Man and Dorothy Perkins to move into the shopping park.
- 14.3 There are a number of large shopping centres close to the Borough serving local residents. These include the Harlequin Centre at Watford, Brent Cross shopping centre in North London, the Galleria at Hatfield and the Sainsbury's / M&S Savacentre shops at junction 22 of the M25. Local towns are less likely to compete directly with these centres and it needs to be established if there is enough shopping demand (and land) for more retail floorspace. The role of local street markets must also be taken into consideration.
- 14.4 In recent years, there has been increased pressure within the principal shopping areas for more non-retail uses, particularly for eating and drinking establishments. There has also been a clear trend for the large supermarkets to change their trading formats. They now sell a wider range of non-food goods from their larger stores and have also moved into smaller high street units, such as the Tesco Express stores in Radlett and Bushey.
- 14.5 The shopping areas in the Borough are classified into a 'retail hierarchy', defining 28 shopping areas falling into six main categories:
1. Town Centre (Shenley Road, Borehamwood)
 2. Local Town Centre (Darkes Lane, Potters Bar)
 3. District Centres (High St Potters Bar, High St Bushey, Bushey Heath shops and Radlett)
 4. Neighbourhood Centres (such as Leeming Road shops, Borehamwood or Elstree village centre)
 5. Local Parades (such as Andrew Close, Shenley)
 6. Individual shops (such as Organ Hall Road, Studio Way)
- 14.6 At the same time, the Government sets out in the Use Classes Order how town centre and other uses should be broken down into different classification groups. For many years, eating and drinking establishments were grouped together in one use class (A3) making it difficult to control the types of activity taking place in a



particular premises. The Government recently amended the Use Classes Order and created a number of new use classes, recognising that dining-in restaurants have a very different impact on a locality compared to hot food take-aways, pubs and bars. Clearly, eating establishments can attract people into a struggling shopping area, but a limit may need to be set on the type and quantity of premises.

- 14.7 A Council survey undertaken in July 2005 revealed that across the Borough, 57% of units are in use for retail (A1) purposes, 10% as a restaurant/café (A3), 1% as a pub or wine bar (A4) and 5% for hot food take-away (A5). Approximately 1 in 5 surveyed units were used for non-retail purposes and there was an overall vacancy rate of 5%. Within individual centres across the Borough, the following uses were identified:

Town Centre	Retail (A1) %	Banks, Employment Agencies and other non-retail (A2) %	Restaurant/Café (A3) %	Pub/Bar (A4) %	Hot Food Take-Away (A5) %	Mixed %	Vacant %
Borehamwood	56	19	8	3	6	1	7
Potters Bar, Darkes Lane	67	15	9	0	3	0	6
Potters Bar, High Street	60	14	16	3	5	0	2
Bushey High Street	51	26	14	2	2	0	4
Bushey Heath	56	27	9	0	0	4	4
Radlett	54	25	11	2	4	1	3

Note: Figures may not tally due to rounding

Issues Affecting Hertsmere to 2021

- 14.8 The Borough's towns fall within the catchments area of number of larger centres resulting in shopping expenditure being taken out of the Borough, particularly for mainstream clothes and shoe retailing. However, there continues to be a need for the Borough's town centres to remain attractive and vibrant places with shops and facilities to meet the needs of the local population.
- 14.9 There is clearly competition for retail expenditure within the Borough. Whilst it is not the role of the planning system to preserve existing commercial interests, changes in trading formats can have a substantial effect on the level of competition to existing shops. The expansion of non-food retailing outside of town centres, when such goods can still be sold from town centres, is capable of undermining the viability of the Borough's centres. The retailing of clothing, sports equipment, books, music and other 'comparison' goods outside of town centres - whether from supermarkets or covered shopping centres - will need to be restricted if our town centres are to remain a viable and attractive destination with a good proportion of local, independent retailers.

- 14.10 In Borehamwood, Radlett and Potters Bar, the main shopping areas, extend over a considerable distance. In Potters Bar, there are two separate 'town centres': the High Street and Darkes Lane. A reduction in the length of some of these shopping areas may ultimately be necessary to sustain the vitality and quality of the main retailing areas and allow other suitable uses to move into the shopping areas. The identification of main or 'primary' shopping frontages could be considered along with 'secondary' shopping areas where there could be greater flexibility over the range of acceptable uses.
- 14.11 The provision of a better mix of town centre uses could both provide a range of facilities for the community and boost the daytime and evening economies. However, a choice will need to be made over the amount and location of new eating and drinking establishments to be permitted in our town centres. It may be most appropriate to focus retail uses on new primary frontages in our town centres and to prescribe a degree of flexibility in secondary areas, where other uses - including offices, gyms, community facilities, restaurants and a limited number of take-aways, pubs and bars - can be accommodated.
- 14.12 A further issue relates to the protection of local shopping parades and corner shops to serve the needs for top-up shopping and those with limited mobility. Despite the popularity of large supermarkets, local facilities perform a valuable role and it is unlikely that all sections of the community will be able to access services from further afield or via the internet. The loss of local food stores and pharmacies, in particular, can leave some sections of the community vulnerable and a sensible balance needs to be found to ensure that the predominantly residential parts of the Borough retain an appropriate level of shops and services.



Our Lady and St Vincent RC Church, Potters Bar

15.0 Site Allocations: Identifying sites for protection or development

15.1 The preparation of the LDF Site Allocations DPD will provide an opportunity for sites to be identified for additional protection and for land to be allocated for new development. The issues and options identified in this report are inherently linked to the location and type of proposals which will eventually be considered in the Site Allocations DPD. Site specific proposals will follow the publication of preferred options for the Core Strategy but at this stage, the Council would like to hear from the community, stakeholders and other parties who have an interest in land which could be specifically identified in the LDF.

15.2 The Site Allocations DPD will need to:

- Identify sites which meet the broad strategy for locating development set out in the Core Strategy DPD;
- Identify the preferred type and level of development on each site;
- Identify when development is planned to take place;
- Identify how development will be implemented.

This is not an exhaustive list of what will be covered in the DPD, but provides an indication of what will need to be covered. The Council is looking to allocate sites which are greater than 0.5 hectares in size but as the related Core Strategy is looking ahead to 2021, you should let us know about a site, even if it is unlikely to become available for another ten years.

15.3 Once a portfolio of possible sites has been gathered, the Council will look to assess these against both the emerging policy options in the Core Strategy and the objectives of the Sustainability Appraisal. A series of preferred options for the allocation of land will then be published by the Council in early 2007.

15.4 A number of housing sites are currently identified for development in the Local Plan and many of these have since been developed, have detailed proposals approved or are under construction:

Site	Status
Croxdale Road Shops, Borehamwood	Remaining as an allocation
Brook House, Brook Road, Borehamwood	Built
Land rear of Arundel Drive, Borehamwood	Remaining as an allocation
Blackwell House, Aldenham Road, Bushey	Full planning permission granted for part of site. Now under construction
Former International University site, Bushey	Full Planning permission granted
Brent Timber site, London Road, Bushey	Outline planning permission granted
Hartspring Centre, Bushey	Full planning permission granted. Now under construction
Part of the Sparrows Herne site, Elstree	Full planning permission granted. Now under construction

- 15.5 Should you have views on the future of those sites which have not been developed, the Council would like to hear from you in your response to this report. The Council will also need to review the status of those sites which have not come forward for development, as well as identify additional land for new housing. Should you have an interest in or be aware of a site which has the potential for new housebuilding or other development, you should bring it to the attention of the Council in your response to this report, preferably including a plan of the proposed site. The Council's Urban Housing Capacity Study, which is presently being undertaken, may reveal appropriate brownfield sites which could be identified for development. Suitable sites which are brought to the attention of the Council, will be included as part of this assessment of Hertsmere's housing capacity.
- 15.6 The existing Hertsmere Local Plan also includes a number of "safeguarded" housing sites. These are significant development sites within the Green Belt, reserved to meet long-term development needs if insufficient land within the defined urban areas do not come forward for development. These will need to be considered in the preparation of the LDF, although these sites would only be released for housing in the event that insufficient housing land can be found elsewhere. Site which are presently safeguarded in this way are;
- Haydon Dell Farm, Bushey
 - Land East of Farm Way, Bushey
 - Land bounded by Heathbourne Road, Windmill Lane and Clay Lane, Bushey
 - 16 Watford Road, Radlett
 - Byron/Vale Avenue, Borehamwood
 - West Herts College Annexe, William Street, Bushey
- 15.7 This Issues and Options report has identified that there a number of important designated sites which are protected for employment or are identified for appropriate infilling in the Green Belt. The preparation of the LDF provides an opportunity to review these existing designations. It may be appropriate to allocate some of these sites for specific types of development or to remove their special status altogether. There is also an opportunity to designate land which is not presently allocated for employment or which does not have the status of a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt. Should you have an interest in any particular sites, you should include this in your response to this report.
- 15.8 The Council must also ensure that proper protection is afforded to land which should be safeguarded from inappropriate development. Much of the Borough is already protected by its inclusion in the Green Belt and/or its designation as a wildlife site; playing fields and other open space within the developed area are formally designated as Urban Open Land. Should you wish to see land considered for additional protection where it is not already safeguarded from inappropriate development, please set this out in your response.



Community Hospital, Potters Bar





The Venue, Borehamwood

16.0 Development Control Policies

- 16.1 The Development Control Policies DPD will comprise a limited suite of generic policies, not otherwise covered by the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs, setting out some of the detailed criteria against which planning applications will be considered. These will include policies, for example, on residential amenity, visual impacts, nature conservation and highways issues.
- 16.2 The preparation of this DPD will provide an opportunity to review existing generic policies in the Local Plan and where necessary, to prepare new policies. There may be a number of policies which are capable of being brought into the new DPD without further change but the Council is aware that the current Local Plan contains a large number of policies, some of which are infrequently used. There will be scope to rationalise or refine some policies and the Council would like to hear from the community and other stakeholders on what they would wish to see addressed in the preparation of new policies - and where it is considered that existing policies provide insufficient clarity or flexibility or where they could be removed altogether. Current development control policies in the Local Plan are grouped into the following broad categories:
- Countryside
 - Housing
 - Business and Employment
 - Town Centres and Shopping
 - Leisure, Sport and Recreation
 - Social and Community Facilities
 - Movement
 - Environment
 - Development
- 16.3 Preferred options for Development Control policies will be published after the preferred options for the Core Strategy and Site Allocations because detailed, generic policies cannot be realistically considered until the Council has a clearer view on the content of its proposed core and site-specific policies. Existing Local Plan policies can be seen at the Civic Offices, the Bushey Centre, the Council's libraries and are available to view on the Council's website. Should you wish to put forward views on the future of development control policies in the Borough, please set them out in the relevant part of the response form.



Fountain Court, Borehamwood

17.0 Responding to this report

- 17.1 This report has set out the key planning issues which Hertsmere Borough Council will need to address in the LDF. A range of alternative policy options have been put forward and the Council would like to know which approaches you would support - or whether you would advocate an alternative approach. A response form is enclosed and the opportunity also exists for you to put forward sites for new development or for safeguarding from inappropriate development, together with any comments on existing development control policies.

The Council cannot promise to take on board the views of everyone, particularly where there is direct conflict with Government policy. **However, it is important that you participate at this early stage in the LDF process given that changes to the planning system have resulted in Inspectors being able to make binding changes on the Council, following Public Examinations.** These final changes cannot be subject to public consultation and neither the Council nor the public will be able to change the policy content of the Plan, once the public examination has closed.

Please take the time to consider the options set out in this report and reply using the attached form. You may wish to support more than one option under each category. Your responses should be returned to:

Policy and Transport team
Planning and Building Control Unit
Hertsmere Borough Council
Elstree Way
Borehamwood
Herts WD6 1WA



The Radlett Centre, Radlett

18.0 Future Options for Hertsmere

This report has outlined a series of key issues that will affect Hertsmere over the next fifteen years. The following section sets out a series of policy options for the Borough. You may consider that more than one of the options is appropriate within each topic area and should indicate this on the attached response form. You may also wish to support other options on the form.

1. The location of new housing	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>(a) Provide required number of new homes within current policy framework</p>	<p>Current policies protect the Green Belt and direct housing to brownfield sites. A small number of locations have been safeguarded for consideration after 2011 but would only be released for housing if land could not be identified for long term housing needs in the urban area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong preference for maintaining as much of the Green Belt as possible. • Greenfield land is protected. • Strong public support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can restrict land supply. This widens the affordability gap, increasing the number of concealed households. • Possibility of some uncertainty or blight in or adjacent to areas safeguarded for housing.
<p>(b) If required new homes cannot be delivered through option (a), allocate both brownfield and Green Belt sites</p>	<p>Brownfield land and specific sites in the Green Belt for housing would be designated. Any new development in the Green Belt would need to be carefully justified in terms of wider social, economic and environmental benefits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May help protect the rest of the Green Belt. • Could provide a substantial number of housing units in areas where land values are high and the supply of new housing is limited, particularly for younger households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Releasing Green Belt for development is controversial and unpopular. • Confidence in the planning system would be eroded. • Could set a precedent in the Green Belt elsewhere.
<p>(c) If required new homes cannot be delivered through option (a), development of allotment sites</p>	<p>Current policies seek to protect allotments unless overall provision exceeds the level of demand and suitable sites are provided elsewhere. The LDF could pro-actively designate allotments for redevelopment where they are known to be genuinely surplus and vacant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redeveloping unused or underused allotment sites would help meet local housing needs. • Would not necessarily set a precedent for the loss of Green Belt owing to the location of many allotments within the urban area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be a shortage of allotment sites in some places. • Often regarded as providing an invaluable open space facility, promoting exercise, biodiversity and healthy eating. • Such assets would be lost forever once developed.
<p>(d) If required new homes cannot be delivered through option (a), development of surplus employment land</p>	<p>Genuinely surplus, vacant and unviable employment land would be released, principally for housing. The Borough has six designated employment areas together with a significant number of offices, warehouses and industrial premises elsewhere.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would reduce the pressure on Green Belt sites for housebuilding. • Would help to ensure the efficient use of brownfield land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks some sites being left deliberately vacant ahead of redevelopment for housing - forcing existing businesses out. • An increase in housing supply and reduction in employment land would increase likelihood of dormitory towns evolving.

2. Affordable housing	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
(a) Maintain the current policy position	Current policy seeks a proportion of affordable housing on all privately developed sites exceeding 25 units or 1 hectare. Approximately 25% of homes on sites qualifying for affordable housing are sought in the form of subsidised sale, rent or shared ownership, normally through a Housing Association.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that a good proportion of new housing is delivered in the form of subsidised affordable housing. Approximately 20% of all new homes built in the Borough are affordable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of large sites results in few sites actually delivering a proportion of affordable housing. Some developers avoid policy requirements by splitting sites or reducing densities so that sites provide less housing than could otherwise be provided. Could be contrary to regional and national planning policy objectives. Key worker housing is not specifically sought.
(b) Lower the affordable housing trigger threshold	A reduction in the size of sites required to deliver a proportion of affordable housing. Emerging national policy seeks affordable housing on sites of at least 15 units/half a hectare, instead of current Council policy of 25 units/one hectare. To reduce any risk of avoiding policy requirements, a 'tiered' approach could relate the proportion of affordable units to the size of site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should increase number of housing schemes delivering a proportion of affordable housing. The overall supply of (subsidised) affordable housing would increase, potentially reducing the level of housing need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical difficulties on smaller schemes and particularly within flatted developments where variable service charges operate in the same building. May still be difficult to prevent developers deliberately underdeveloping a site. Could limit housing supply for rest of the market.
(c) Raise the minimum proportion of affordable housing units to be delivered	A higher minimum proportion of affordable housing, including a proportion of social rented homes on land developed for private housing. Presently around 25% of units on sites developed for private housing must be built as social rented housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More affordable housing. Reduced overall level of housing need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision of more affordable housing on high value (and sometimes low density) sites could be jeopardised, resulting in land developed for other uses or remaining vacant. Could limit housing supply for those having to pay full market prices.
(d) An increased proportion of key worker or 'shared ownership' housing	The majority of new affordable housing in the Borough is presently social rented housing. This option would require a proportion of shared ownership and other low cost housing, including housing for key workers. This would be in addition to social rented housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More affordable housing Greater provision for key workers and those unable to access 'full market' private housing but whose incomes exceed qualifying levels for social rented housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could limit housing supply for those having to pay full market prices. In the absence of flexibility between tenures, there might be difficulties in selling key worker/shared ownership (as has been the case previously).
(e) Require developers to provide financial contributions for affordable housing on smaller schemes	Presently no affordable housing is sought on schemes below the qualifying threshold of 25 units. Even if the threshold were lowered, it could be desirable to require a financial contribution for affordable housing on smaller developments below the threshold. The revenue raised would be ringfenced and used to develop affordable homes in the Borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable housing obligations from smaller schemes would be properly met by developers and not limited to larger schemes. More funds available to develop affordable housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resultant costs could increase land values, which may ultimately be passed on to the private housebuyer.
(f) Continue and promote the rural exceptions policy in Hertsmere	The existing 'rural exceptions' policy enables a small amount of affordable housing to be provided on sites not normally appropriate for market housing, including the Green Belt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of affordable housing in and around villages would meet a pressing local need. Housing limited to those within local community. Retention of local, young households will help retain a sustainable range of age groups. Development would not set a precedent in the Green Belt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would lead to small-scale development in the Green Belt. Strict criteria required to ensure new houses meet local needs, are built in the most appropriate locations and remain affordable in perpetuity.

3. The mix of new housing			
	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
(a) Requiring the mix of new housing to reflect locally identified need and demand	Broad parameters would be set for the mix and type of housing to be provided, particularly in areas where a higher level of demand/need for smaller households has been identified. The policy would be more specific than current requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would help address local shortfalls in housing for young households and the growing elderly population. • The provision of more, smaller units would represent a more efficient use of the limited land available for development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing mixes may be best left to the market and housebuilders' knowledge of local markets.
4. The Density and Scale of new housebuilding			
	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
(a) New housing to be considered at a density of between 30 and 50 homes per hectare	Would extend scope of government policy by seeking at least 30 homes per hectare in all locations, rather than just on larger sites. Lower densities would only be considered in exceptional circumstances where entire character of an area would be affected (e.g. in a Conservation Area).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More efficient use of land. • Reduced pressure to develop previously undeveloped land and the Green Belt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any increase in density could harm the appearance of an area. • Upper limit may reduce potential for greater densities in some locations. • Limiting density in some locations could affect overall housing supply and increase the cost of new homes.
(b) New housing in locations accessible by a variety of transport modes to be considered at a density greater than 50 homes per hectare	Greater housebuilding densities would be encouraged in town centres and around public transport interchanges. The density of new, housing (mainly flats) in the Borough's town centres presently exceeds 100 per hectare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would make efficient use of prime land and meet demand for one and two bedroom units. • Improve viability and safety of town centres by increasing population and presence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could increase pressure on local infrastructure and services, including on-street parking. • Unlikely many new houses (as against flats) could be built at this density with good living environment.
(c) Consider the design and scale of new housebuilding on a site-by-site basis	New housebuilding proposals would be considered on their individual merits. Proposals would need to be assessed against some standards - such as garden space area and overlooking distances - but density ranges would not form part of the consideration of new proposals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developments judged primarily on merits of design, layout and relationship with other buildings. • Design of developments could be more individual or respectful of the character of a location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could be uncertainty over an acceptable form of development. • Delivery of new homes may be restricted if lower densities arise. • Planning decisions could take longer. • May be harder to defend decisions at appeal.
(d) Set out circumstances where housing can be considered at a density of less than 30 homes per hectare	It may be appropriate to define those areas where new housing development could only be accommodated at densities of less than 30 homes per hectare. In addition to Conservation Areas, this may include parts of the Borough whose character and appearance is defined by spacious plots and considerable separation between properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some safeguards to ensure that developments are more respectful of the character of a location. • Provide greater certainty and clarity for all parties when housing proposals are submitted to the Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevents possibility of using sensitive or innovative design solutions to provide higher densities. • Delivery of new homes may be restricted if lower densities arise. • Larger development sites can still have scope to deliver densities over 30 homes hectare.
5. Intensification of existing residential areas			
	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
(a) Encourage the conversion of houses into flats	Represents a continuation of current policy, which permits the subdivision of suitable houses into flats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can raise housing densities in a more sustainable form. • Many larger properties could be more efficiently used if converted into flats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May change the character of the street and increase pressure on existing car parking space. • Properties which are too small for conversion would provide sub-standard accommodation.
(b) A limit on the amount of large residential plots redeveloped to provide smaller houses or flats	Whilst some redevelopment of plots would be accommodated, a limit on the proportion of homes in any single street could be the best way of preventing whole neighbourhoods from changing in character.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing some schemes, if well designed, would make efficient use of previously developed land and under-occupied properties. • Allowing some schemes will reduce pressure on Green Belt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher density developments can alter the appearance of areas traditionally characterised by spacious, detached homes. • Parking issues can arise from increased number of residential units.

5. Intensification of existing residential areas (cont.)**c) No specific limits on the number of residential plots redeveloped to provide smaller houses or flats****Summary**

Current planning policy places no specific cap on the number of residential properties that can be redeveloped. This option would see a continuation of that policy approach.

Advantages

- Allows the most efficient allocation of land, reducing the pressure on Green Belt.
- Enables increased housing supply in most areas.

Disadvantages

- Too much intensification may permanently and significantly alter character of an area.
- May increase car dependency and congestion in areas with poor public transport and cycle accessibility.

6. Gypsies and Travellers**(a) Maintain the current policy position****Summary**

Current policy contains a commitment to review the need for additional sites and to assess any proposals for new sites on the basis of an assessment of need, access to services and there being no impact on the surrounding area. However, there is no commitment to provide any sites.

Advantages

- Although not specifically providing sites, the Council will still exceed its legal requirements and would be in a more advanced position than most other local authorities.

Disadvantages

- A shortage of Gypsy and Traveller plots has been identified in South and West Hertfordshire.
- Doing nothing could lead to an increase in unauthorised sites.
- Significant enforcement costs now.
- Inadequate provision could lead to appeal challenges based on perceived Human Rights breaches.

(b) Additional provision in Hertsmere for Gypsy and Traveller pitches focusing on the extension of existing sites and/or the development of new sites

Some additional pitches could be provided by extending the four presently authorised sites in the Borough rather than accommodating brand new sites. It may also be possible to identify appropriate new locations for Gypsy and Traveller sites across SW Herts. It may then be appropriate to allocate this land in the LDF.

- Extending existing sites could result in less land take and being more cost effective.
- Existing sites can be more accepted within the wider community and an extension could satisfy both travelling and settled communities.
- Would reduce the likelihood of unauthorised sites and facilitate enforcement and eviction, where required.
- Developing some new sites could reduce longer term tensions arising from current, less suitable sites.

- Selection of new sites may lead to Green Belt development.
- Could be seen as positively discriminating in favour of Gypsies, which may encourage more to live in the Borough, with resultant problems.
- Extending new sites alone would be counter to recommendation of the SW Herts Study which sought an even distribution and no more than 10-15 pitches per site.

7. The scale of new commercial development**(b) Maintain the current policy position****Summary**

Borehamwood is the principal town centre for shopping but the scale of other commercial and mixed-use development is largely market-led, enabling market forces to determine where developments occur - subject to meeting parking, design and other requirements.

Advantages

- Market forces would ensure most efficient use of brownfield land.

Disadvantages

- More development in areas where infrastructure does not always support the scale of new building.
- Significant traffic and congestion problems.
- May affect the character of smaller towns and villages.

(c) The scale of new commercial development should be proportionate to the size and scale of the town in which it is located

Borehamwood and parts of Potters Bar town centres already have substantial office blocks and a commercial character which may be suited to higher density commercial development. Other locations in the Borough have some capacity to accommodate commercial and mixed use development at a scale proportionate to the size and scale of the town.

- Borehamwood and Potters Bar have the greatest public transport accessibility and infrastructure to support new commercial and mixed use development.
- Accommodating higher density development could compliment existing buildings and provide trade for other businesses.

- May result in town cramming within these two main towns to the detriment of the Borough's other settlements.
- May be traffic implications, particularly for Potters Bar.

7. The scale of new commercial development (cont.)	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>d) Commercial development should be primarily steered towards previously developed land in Borehamwood, Potters Bar, Bushey and Radlett (in that order)</p>	<p>Commercial and mixed use development would be allowed in principle in the four main towns. In Shenley, and that part of Elstree within the Green Belt, only limited infilling would be acceptable, subject to other policy and Green Belt constraints.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More balanced growth, improved infrastructure and community facilities. • Encourages people to remain rather than move to larger towns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be increased need to travel to other centres offering community facilities and services.

8. Community facilities and mixed use development	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>(a) Maintain the current policy on financial contributions</p>	<p>Financial contributions are presently identified on a site by site basis - sometimes through a unilateral undertaking offered by a developer. Legal agreements are rarely sought on smaller developments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By not requiring contributions on every scheme, direct development costs can be reduced on smaller sites and therefore not passed onto home buyers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumulative burden on local service providers from smaller schemes. • Time and cost associated with identifying contributions on a site-by-site basis leads to delays and uncertainty in the planning process. • May be negative perceptions amongst third parties about financial contributions.
<p>(b) Requiring larger residential development sites to provide a variety of other facilities</p>	<p>This option would require large development sites to provide a mix of uses including land to be required for key community and other facilities and/or small business units, preventing large sites being developed solely for housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the impact of new residential development on existing community facilities. • Reduce dependency on cars and greater choice for those less able or willing to travel further afield for key services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces amount of housing which can be provided on large sites.
<p>(c) Require developers to provide financial contributions for community facilities and infrastructure including a tariff or standard charge on smaller housing schemes</p>	<p>Financial contributions negotiated on schemes of more than ten units but smaller new housing schemes would now be subject to a local tariff. This would fund some community and infrastructure costs generated from development, regardless of the number of homes built.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs arising from smaller housing schemes are properly met by developers. • Would avoid the need for site-by-site negotiations with developers on smaller sites. • Provide greater certainty in the development process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could increase land values, which may ultimately be passed on to the housebuyer. • Would need to be adequate safeguards to ensure charges are spent directly on facilities and infrastructure relating to the development.
<p>(d) Allowing conversion of some residential properties for key local community facilities</p>	<p>The ability of key community facilities, such as doctors and dentists, to locate in residential areas is presently limited by policies preventing the loss of residential accommodation. An amendment to this policy would allow the conversion of a limited number of properties to meet locally identified needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced pressure on existing community facilities. • More facilities would be locally available reducing the need to travel long distances for healthcare and childcare needs. • Most houses can be adapted with minimal need to alter the outside of the property. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be some impact on the character or appearance of an area in the absence of sufficient controls on parking, amenity and hours of use.

9. Status of the Green Belt			
	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
(a) Maintain the current policy position	No review of the Green Belt and no material changes to Green Belt boundaries. A small number of Green Belt sites have been safeguarded for future housing development after 2011 but only if insufficient brownfield sites are available to meet longer term housing needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public support for the protection of the Green Belt. • Keeping the current approach maintains consistency • Safeguarded sites only developed if there are proven longer-term (post 2011) development needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricts land supply and affect the cost of developable land and housing. • Safeguarding future development sites may tempt landowners to cease productive use of the land. • Possibility of some uncertainty or blight in or adjacent to safeguarded areas.
(b) Extend the Green Belt, including incorporation of areas of safeguarded land	Current policies safeguard a small number of sites, only to be developed if insufficient brownfield sites come forward. The Council is preparing an Urban Housing Capacity Study would establish whether the capacity to incorporate safeguarded areas exists within the developed area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term reinstatement of land into the Green Belt. • Likely to be strong support, particularly from those living close to safeguarded areas. • Unlikely to be subject to any planning blight. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borough may be unable to provide sufficient developable land to house its population. • Increased land values/house prices elsewhere. • Increased densities within existing urban areas elsewhere.
10. Land use and diversification in the Countryside			
	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
(a) Maintain the current policy position	Current policies limit type and extent of recreational development permitted in countryside areas. The re-use of any redundant agricultural buildings for non-residential uses is preferred and only for buildings in agricultural use for at least 10 years. Access to the countryside/ rights of way promoted through four gateway sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to re-use redundant or surplus buildings can enable farms to diversify, including the provision of rural recreation facilities for urban communities. • Facilitates use of the countryside for walkers, cyclists, runners and horse riders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited ability to upgrade or expand visitor attractions. • May lead to over-commercialisation or intensification of countryside activities if not controlled properly. • Limited access for many groups and for younger people to participate in off-road activities in the countryside.
(b) Pro-active provision of appropriate rural and countryside facilities	Greater accessibility to the countryside for a wider section of the community. Opportunity also exists to pro-actively plan for the future of some locations with policies setting out the scope for expanding user-facilities, access and parking at gateway sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides opportunity for education and for 'jumping off' into the countryside. • Provides sporting opportunities, such as orienteering and "trek" (orienteering on horseback). • Attract more families and socially excluded groups. • Primary functions of Green Belt land are retained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May increase pressure to intensify and commercialise rural land and buildings. • More disturbance of farm animals and the flora and fauna of the countryside. • More motorised users would damage paths.
(c) Require developers to provide financial contributions to expand and improve countryside rights of way	When appropriate development is approved in or adjacent to the countryside, funding would be secured towards the expansion and improvement of Countryside rights of way and Greenways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and varied routes and paths for existing and new users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without adequate safeguards, could be less privacy and security in rural areas. • Without adequate information, could be confusion as to who can go where.
(d) Increase controls over land use and provision of facilities within the countryside	This option would see greater controls on the ability to re-use farm buildings and expand non-agricultural uses for commercial purposes. Although rural diversification would not be prevented, the scale and intensity of land use would be more tightly constrained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to maintain the character and tranquility of the countryside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability for farmers to diversify could be constrained to the extent that farmland and buildings are not properly maintained. • May be fewer opportunities to create or improve rural attractions and access to the countryside.

11. Renewable Energy	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
(a) Maintain the current policy position	Current policies do not specifically consider facilities or the generation of renewable energy as an appropriate Green Belt land use, such as such as farm waste processing, biomass combined heat and power and wood fuel. Proposals for renewable energy sources are supported in principle but subject to a number of factors including Green Belt impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping wind farms and large waste away from the Borough could prevent any loss of surrounding landscape quality in the Green Belt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would not help the Council to meet renewable energy obligations. • Could limit opportunities for those seeking to provide their own cheaper electricity. • Ignores fact that on-site generation of renewable energy can have minimal impact on an area, where built into the design from the outset.
(b) A greater emphasis on the energy requirements of new development	Would specifically require energy consumption to be formally considered as part of the planning process. The energy requirements of larger developments would need to be stated from the outset, including the 'energy footprint' and steps taken to reduce energy consumption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help ensure development is genuinely sustainable. • Raise awareness and profile of energy consumption as an important planning issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be perceived as adding costs to the development process. • Could be seen as unfair to solely focus on the energy requirements larger developments.
(c) Provide for more renewable energy	Larger developments could be required to generate a proportion of their energy requirements on site, as well as a commitment to improve energy efficiency and consumption. Greater clarity on the development of renewable energy sources in the Green Belt would be provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biomass, solar or wind energy would help meet carbon reduction targets, plus new commercial opportunities for farmers. • Could lead to cheaper fuel bills with surplus being sold to the national grid. • Primary functions of the Green Belt respected. • Noisier sources of renewable energy can be sited away from centres of population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial feasibility for biomass production is largely unproven. • Wind farms can be unsightly and lead to new overhead lines spoiling views and landscapes.

12. Employment	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
(a) Maintain the current policy position	Employment land falling within six designated employment areas in the borough is protected by policy against redevelopment for residential and other uses but there is limited protection for business premises outside of these areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides certainty to businesses and developers wishing to invest in more modern premises. • Help to secure local job opportunities. • Prevents small businesses being forced into residential and other unsuitable locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take little account of wider market forces, increasingly likelihood that surplus accommodation remains vacant and unused. • Increased pressure on land supply elsewhere, placing the Green Belt at greater risk from development.
(b) A market-led approach	Market forces would be solely responsible for shaping the future of employment land. It may result in much of the land currently protected for employment uses, being lost to higher value uses, such as residential or retail development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land will be used efficiently and for its optimum purpose as the market is unlikely to let underused, surplus or derelict land remain vacant for long. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much employment land may be lost to other uses offering a higher land value price, such as for residential redevelopment or retailing. • Small-scale uses, such as vehicle repairs and small business units, may be forced into residential areas because of the lack of suitable. • Increased unauthorised business use within residential properties.
(c) Phased release of protected employment land over time for housing	The supply and demand for allocated employment land would be regularly reviewed, allowing surplus, vacant and unviable employment land to be released for housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment land protected against market forces. • Some surplus sites would be released, reducing the pressure to release other employment areas and provide land for housing. • Greater certainty to businesses and developers wishing to invest in more modern premises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks some sites being left deliberately vacant for a period of time ahead of redevelopment for housing and other more valuable uses.

12. Employment (cont.)	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
(d) Phased release of protected employment land over time for mixed use development	As with Option 3, but this approach would require any significant sites to be released for mixed use development rather than solely for new housing development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As with Option 3. • Requirement for mixed use development would ensure some provision of employment premises. • Some land able to be set aside for supporting community infrastructure, including healthcare or childcare facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As with Option 3 although safeguards would need to be introduced to ensure that new employment uses are not incompatible with surrounding residential development.
(e) Going for growth	Job opportunities maximised through designation of new areas of employment land and policies supporting small business creation. This would include the promotion of live-work units whereby small start-up businesses contain attached residential accommodation. Greater protection could be afforded to business premises outside of employment areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More viable and self-sufficient locations to live and work. • Reduced need to commute long distances to work. • Increased contribution to the Hertfordshire jobs growth target of 55,800 in the East of England Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible large scale new employment development on green-field Green Belt locations. • Employers in older premises may relocate, with older less attractive accommodation remaining vacant and unused. • Subsequent pressure to develop more housing may affect overall employment land supply or place greater pressure on Green Belt land.
(f) Promoting the film and television industry in Hertsmere by relaxing some planning requirements	Specifically recognise the unique importance of Borehamwood and Elstree within British film and television by relaxing some planning controls within the areas occupied by the principal studios, through the creation of a Simplified Planning Zone or Local Development Order.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simpler and quicker for the studios to modernise and develop new sets or soundstages. • More attractive studios for both existing and future occupiers. • Help to secure long term employment within the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could adversely affect traffic and congestion. • May affect the environment enjoyed by nearby residents.

13. Transport and Parking	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
(a) Maintain current off-street car parking standards for new development	Current car parking standards for new development place are capped at 1.75 -3.25 spaces per new home (depending on the size of unit). There is no cap on non-residential uses and minimum levels of parking are required where new developments are proposed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generous parking allowances can help reduce overspill parking in the immediate vicinity of a development. • Popular with those preferring to use car as principal mode of transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presently contrary to government policy which seeks to manage levels of off-street parking, including caps on parking for all land uses. • Provision of more parking may encourage more trips to be taken by car; associated congestion, air quality and health problems. • May be difficult to secure high levels of parking from developers wishing to develop sites more intensively.
(b) Reflect the high levels of car ownership in the Borough by maximising and accommodating car use	Generous off-street parking standards, reflecting car ownership levels would be maintained and expanded where possible. Major trip generating developments would be allowed in areas mainly accessible by car, rather than restricted to town centres or locations accessible by public transport. Commuter car parks at stations would be safeguarded against development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards and policies would reflect local need and circumstances. • Increased off-street parking provision would reduce parking overspill onto surrounding streets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased trip-generation and dependency on the car. • Increased congestion, safety issues and impact on air quality and human health. • Inconsistent with national and regional sustainability objectives. • May be difficult to secure high levels of parking from developers wishing to develop sites more intensively. • Large areas of car parking can harm appearance of a site.

13. Transport and Parking (cont.)	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>(c) Encourage the use of alternative modes where appropriate, acknowledging the need for car use elsewhere</p>	<p>By capping parking provision in the most accessible locations, more flexible parking standards could be applied elsewhere. Major trip-generating developments would be directed towards the most central and accessible locations with the potential for public transport/cycle use. Green Travel Plans would be required for all major developments to encourage use of alternative modes of transport, together with financial contributions from developers for non-car infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More flexible car parking provision and reflective of local circumstances. • Meet Government guidelines on car parking provision. • Improved air quality and public health by stabilising/decreasing car use. • Limited loss of greenfield land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher parking provision in some locations may run contrary to national policy. • May prove difficult to secure high levels of parking from developers wishing to use sites more efficiently. • May be a lack of certainty.

14. Town Centres and Shopping	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>(a) Maintain the current policy position</p>	<p>Existing planning policies would be retained including a shopping centre hierarchy which directs major retail growth to Borehamwood and restricts non-retail uses to 66% of the overall total number of units. The number of takeaways and bars is not specifically limited and there is also no separation of eating and drinking establishments into different categories.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific advantages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without policies strengthening shopping provision in some areas and allowing other areas to diversify, there is likely to be a rise in the number of vacant units or charity shops over time. • Shopping expenditure likely to move to centres further afield.
<p>(b) Review town centre boundaries and shopping area definitions</p>	<p>There are six town centre area categories in the Borough, two in Potters Bar, two in Bushey and one each in Radlett and Borehamwood. Under this option the town centre areas will be reviewed on their merits and primary and secondary frontage areas identified.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May enable additional land to be identified for residential development. • Primary frontages will enable shopping facilities to be concentrated in the busiest and most central locations. • Secondary frontages can provide a wider range of retail and non-retail uses for the local population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over concentration of food and drink establishments could occur in secondary frontages.
<p>(c) Consolidation of retail growth in Borehamwood and Potters Bar (Darkes Lane)</p>	<p>Whilst there are unlikely to be substantial proposals to compete with regional shopping malls, it may be appropriate to encourage any significant amount of new shopping floorspace towards the largest centre of Borehamwood and to a lesser extent Potters Bar (Darkes Lane).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the role of Borehamwood and Potters Bar in providing the largest range of goods for the surrounding community. • Reduced need to travel to Watford or London for shopping trips. • May prevent valuable employment land from being developed for retail parks. • Other centres in the Borough are less commercial in character and appearance and less able to physically absorb growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant retail growth in the Borough's centres is likely to raise parking and traffic issues.

14. Town Centres and Shopping (cont.)	Summary	Advantages	Disadvantages
(d) Greater protection of town and neighbourhood centre shopping facilities	Increased protection to safeguard local shopping facilities would include greater controls on the types of non-food goods traded from supermarkets and out of town sites and prevent vacant units from being redeveloped or converted into non-retail uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May help to ensure a sufficient choice of local shopping facilities, including for those with limited mobility. • Increased opportunities for shopping within reasonable distance of residential areas. • Reduced need to travel by car for local goods and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May limit the ability of some national retailers to locate to the Borough. • Long term vacant units can detract from the appearance of an area and may attract anti-social behaviour.
(e) Encouragement of a balanced evening economy	In providing a range of activities in the evening, town centres should appeal to all age groups, rather than only younger people. This would see a limit in the number of take-aways, pubs and bars together with a modest increase in the number of restaurants (Class A3 only) and where possible, an expansion of the Borough's cultural and arts facilities, focused in our principal town centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A balanced evening economy can provide jobs, investment and expenditure in an area, serving both the local population and commuters. • Encouraging cafes and restaurants and limiting the number of pubs, bars and take aways could lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without appropriate controls, premises operating as restaurants could generate a proportion of their custom from take-away trade. • Broadening the evening economy may be more appropriate for large town centres outside of the Borough.
(f) Maximise re-development opportunities	Existing run-down empty parades or vacant units in secondary frontage areas will be encouraged to be redeveloped for a mix of other uses. Any redevelopment and re-use will need to provide sufficient off-street parking, given the modest public transport accessibility of many local shopping parades and units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New buildings and uses in declining shopping parades can boost the local area. • Reduced pressure for residential and other development on land in more sensitive locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A risk that key local facilities will be lost to higher value redevelopment.

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