



**AGENDA ITEM: 13**  
**SUMMARY**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>20 October 2015</b>
<b>PART:</b>	<b>1</b>
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Dacorum Local Planning Framework: Draft Master Plans for the Local Allocation housing sites.</b>
Contact:	Graham Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration  James Doe, Assistant Director - Planning, Development and Regeneration  Heather Overhead, Assistant Team Leader – Strategic Planning and Regeneration
Purpose of report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider the issues raised through consultation on the draft master plans in late 2014;</li> <li>2. Agree changes proposed to draft master plans arising from the consultation; and</li> <li>3. Agree the process for submitting the draft master plans as supporting documents to the Site Allocations DPD when it is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.</li> </ol>
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That issues arising from comments received to the draft master plans and the impact of new advice are noted;</li> <li>2. That the responses set out in Table 3 of the Consultation Report for the draft master plans and the proposed changes arising, as shown in the track change master plans attached to this report, are agreed;</li> <li>3. That authority is delegated to the Assistant Director (Planning, Development and Regeneration), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, to approve any further wording changes to the draft master plans prior to submission.</li> </ol>
Corporate objectives:	<p>The master plans set out site requirements and information about the design and layout for the development of the Local Allocation housing sites. As such, they help support all 5 corporate objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Safe and clean environment:</i> e.g. contains policies</li> </ul>

	<p>relating to the design and layout of new development that promote security and safe access;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Community Capacity</i>: e.g. give consideration as to how the new developments can support existing communities and help address local deficiencies etc;</li> <li>• <i>Affordable housing</i>: e.g. require 40% of dwellings on the sites to be affordable; which is higher than the usual policy requirement;</li> <li>• <i>Dacorum delivers</i>: e.g. provides a clear framework to inform planning decisions regarding the Local Allocations; and</li> <li>• <i>Regeneration</i>: e.g. encourages high quality housing development, which will support Dacorum's vibrant economy.</li> </ul>
<p>Implications:</p>	<p><u>Financial</u> Having adopted master plans for the development of the Local Allocations will help reduce the incidence of planning appeals (and hence costs associated with these). It will be the most effective way of ensuring the planning application stage is smooth, and will speed up the decision making process. It will also ensure optimum level of developer contributions to infrastructure and in mitigation of development impacts can be achieved.</p> <p><u>Value for money</u> Where possible, technical work that supports the master plans has been undertaken by landowners to ensure value for money. The costs associated with the preparation of the master plans have also been shared where possible.</p> <p><u>Legal</u> Although the master plans do not form part of the Site Allocations DPD, they are Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs) that will support delivery of key policies within this DPD. Attwaters Jameson and Hill Solicitors have been retained to provide external legal support for the Site Allocations. The same advisers acted for the Council through the Core Strategy Examination process and subsequent (unsuccessful) legal challenge to this document. They will support the Council's own legal team by providing any advice required regarding the implication of new Government advice; assist with responding to key representations; advise on the production of any additional evidence and support Officers through the Site Allocations Examination process, where the master plans will be considered as supporting documents.</p> <p><u>Staff</u> Joint working with land owners to develop the master plans has reduced the burden on the Strategic Planning and Regeneration team. Going forward, at the planning</p>

	<p>application stage, having adopted master plans, agreed by land owners, will similarly assist the development management team.</p> <p><u>Land</u> The Local Allocations support delivery of the Council's adopted Core Strategy which will play an important role in decisions regarding future land uses within the Borough.</p>
Risk implications:	The master plans have been developed in conjunction with land owners and have been subject to public consultation, which reduces the risk of lengthy delays at the planning application stage.
Equalities implications:	An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out for the Core Strategy. Equalities issues are also picked up as part of the Sustainability Appraisal Report that accompanies the Site Allocations document. The master plans support the delivery of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs.
Health and safety implications:	Implications are included in the planning issues covered by the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs.
Sustainability implications:	The Site Allocations (and Core Strategy that precedes it) has been subject to detailed sustainability appraisal (incorporating strategic environmental assessment) throughout its development. Sustainability Appraisals covers social, economic and environmental considerations, including equalities and health and safety issues. A summary of this assessment process, and its conclusions, are set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Report (September 2014) and update report that accompanies it (July 2015).
Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer comments:	<p><u>Monitoring Officer</u></p> <p>No comments to add to the report. Please see the Legal implications above.</p> <p><u>Deputy Section 151 Officer</u></p> <p>There are no direct financial consequences of this report.</p>
Consultees:	<p>Formal consultation on the draft master plans took place alongside the pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD from September to November 2014.</p> <p>To help inform the master plans, workshops and/or meetings with local residents and other stakeholders were held in May 2013. For LA3, this was followed by public consultation (including a manned exhibition) in July 2013, to seek feedback on development principles for the site.</p> <p>Advice from key stakeholders, such as the Local Education Authority and Highway Authority, has been sought where appropriate. Feedback on the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan has also been significant in developing a clear</p>

	<p>understanding of local infrastructure needs. This advice is referred to within the relevant Background Issues Papers that form part of the Site Allocations DPD evidence base. The Consultation Reports relating to the Core Strategy (Volumes 1-7) are also relevant.</p> <p>In terms of internal processes, a Task and Finish Group gave informal advice on the preparation of the master plans. A report seeking agreement for the content of the draft master plans for consultation was agreed by Cabinet in July 2014. There have also been reports to Cabinet at key stages in the preparation of the Local Planning Framework and the Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Holder has been kept apprised of progress.</p> <p>SPEOSC also considered a progress report, which highlighted key emerging issues, on 27 January 2015 (see below).</p>
<p>Background papers:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core Strategy (adopted September 2013)</li> <li>• Report of Consultation – Site Allocations Issues and Options (2006)</li> <li>• Report of Consultation – Site Allocations Supplementary Issues and Options (2008)</li> <li>• Report of Consultation – Site Allocations (2014)</li> <li>• Consultation Reports relating to the Core Strategy (Volumes 1-7) (as dated)</li> <li>• Schedule of Site Appraisals (2006, 2008 and 2014)</li> <li>• Sustainability Working Notes for Schedules of Site Appraisals (2006, 2008 and 2014)</li> <li>• Sustainability Appraisal for Pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD (September 2014)</li> <li>• Addendum to Sustainability Appraisal (July 2015)</li> <li>• Habitats Regulations Assessment – Summary Report (September 2011)</li> <li>• Copies of all representations made (available on online consultation system via <a href="http://consult.dacorum.gov.uk/portal">http://consult.dacorum.gov.uk/portal</a>)</li> <li>• Duty to Co-operate Statement (September 2015)</li> <li>• Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2015 update)</li> <li>• SPEOSC Report (January 2015)</li> <li>• Workshop Reports for Local Allocations LA1, LA3 and LA5 (July 2013).</li> <li>• Notes from Stakeholder meetings for Local Allocations LA2, LA4 and LA6 (May 2013).</li> <li>• Report on the Consultation event held in July 2013: ‘Shaping the Masterplan’ for Proposal Local Allocation LA3: West Hemel Hempstead (January 2014)</li> <li>• Draft Background Issues Papers (updated to July 2015) on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Sustainable Development Strategy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthening Economic Prosperity</li> <li>- Providing Homes and Community Services</li> <li>- Looking After the Environment</li> </ul> <p>All technical studies relating to the Local Planning Framework are available from the online Core Strategy examination library at <a href="http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/corestrategyexamination">www.dacorum.gov.uk/corestrategyexamination</a>, or in the Site Allocations page: <a href="http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/siteallocations">www.dacorum.gov.uk/siteallocations</a></p>																						
<p>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>DPD</td> <td>Development Plan Document</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SCI</td> <td>Statement of Community Involvement</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LDS</td> <td>Local Development Scheme</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NPPF</td> <td>National Planning Policy Framework</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PPG</td> <td>Planning Practice Guidance</td> </tr> <tr> <td>InDP</td> <td>Infrastructure Delivery Plan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SPD</td> <td>Supplementary Planning Document</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SPG</td> <td>Supplementary Planning Guidance</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LPF</td> <td>Local Planning Framework (also referred to as Local Development Framework)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CIL</td> <td>Community Infrastructure Levy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GEA</td> <td>General Employment Area</td> </tr> </table>	DPD	Development Plan Document	SCI	Statement of Community Involvement	LDS	Local Development Scheme	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	PPG	Planning Practice Guidance	InDP	Infrastructure Delivery Plan	SPD	Supplementary Planning Document	SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance	LPF	Local Planning Framework (also referred to as Local Development Framework)	CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	GEA	General Employment Area
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## **BACKGROUND**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) was adopted in September 2013, and forms the first part of the Local Planning Framework (LPF) for the Borough. The Core Strategy identifies six sites known as Local Allocations to be released from the Green Belt that will contribute towards meeting the Borough's housing target over the course of the Plan.
- 1.2 The Site Allocations is the second LPF document. It is the 'delivery' document for the Core Strategy: focussing on the delineation of site boundaries and designations, and setting out planning requirements for new development. One role of the Site Allocations DPD is to make changes to the Green Belt that will enable the Local Allocations to be brought forward for development.
- 1.3 The master plans are to sit alongside the Site Allocations DPD, and will be a material consideration when determining planning applications on the sites. They will not be part of the statutory development plan, but will be endorsed by the Council when the Site Allocations DPD is adopted. Although they are not subject to the Sustainability Appraisal process, the sites and alternative options for Local Allocations have been assessed through both the Core Strategy DPD and Site Allocations DPD Sustainability Appraisal process.
- 1.4 There is a master plan for each of the six Local Allocations: LA1 Marchmont Farm, Hemel Hempstead; LA2 Old Town, Hemel Hempstead; LA3 West Hemel Hempstead; LA4 Hanburys, Berkhamsted; LA5 Land to the West of Tring; and LA6 Chesham Road and Molyneaux Avenue, Bovington. The master plans do not set out detailed specifications regarding the design and form of development in order to retain flexibility in light of the long timescales involved.
- 1.5 The role of the master plans is to:
  1. elaborate on the development principles that will guide development;
  2. show how these principles can be delivered through an indicative spatial layout;
  3. clarify arrangements for delivery and phasing;
  4. provide more explicit advice regarding infrastructure contributions; and
  5. provide a mechanism for obtaining public feedback on the future shape of the sites.

### **2 Consultation:**

- 2.1 Consultation on the Local Allocations began with that on the Core Strategy, which started in 2005 and continued to 2011 prior to its examination in 2012. Further consultation on the Local Allocations and associated master plans was undertaken as part of the preparation of the Pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD and that of the draft master plans.
- 2.2 The consultation referred to above is set out in the report to Cabinet (22 July 2014) on the master plans and in previous consultation reports published by the Council as follows:
  - Consultation regarding the choice of development options is set out in the Report of Consultation for the Core Strategy, particularly Volumes 3, 4 and 6.
  - Consultation regarding the development of the local allocations for the Pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD and the draft master plans is set out in the Site Allocations Consultation Report Volume 3, September 2014.

- 2.3 The public consultation on the draft master plans for the six Local Allocation sites was carried out in parallel to that on the Pre-Submission version of the Site Allocations document which ran from September to November 2014 for a period of six weeks.
- 2.4 The approach to these consultations was agreed by Cabinet at their meetings in June and July 2014. It involved notifying by email or letter all statutory consultees on the strategic planning database, together with residents, businesses, organisations, and community groups. Over 3,500 people were written to by letter, email or through 'Objective' (the consultation portal) as part of the consultation. Further consultees were added to the strategic planning database of contacts during the course of the consultation.
- 2.5 In addition to the required press notice in local newspapers, the Council also had a half page spread in local newspapers in the first week of the consultation to advertise the consultation and forthcoming exhibitions. A similar advert was displayed as a poster in libraries and various community halls to inform local people of the consultation. An article on the consultation period and exhibitions was prepared for the Dacorum Digest which was delivered to all residents in the Borough in early September. All information and background documents were available on the Council's website. Reference copies of the documents were available from libraries across the Borough as well as the Hemel Hempstead civic centre and satellite offices in Berkhamsted and Tring.
- 2.6 Five exhibitions were prepared initially for Hemel Hempstead Civic Centre, Bovington, Tring, Berkhamsted and Warners End, with an additional exhibition arranged for Grovehill Community Centre at later notice.
- 2.7 Each exhibition comprised a series of posters relating to the Site Allocations generally and on the Local Allocations, including a summary of each master plan. The exhibitions were tailored to the town or village and relevant Local Allocation(s), and copies of the posters in A4, including the master plan summaries, were available for people to take away together with copies of the questionnaires. There was a questionnaire for each master plan and one for the Site Allocations document. Officers were available at each exhibition to explain the proposals and answer questions.
- 2.8 Since the close of the consultation, Officers have been processing the comments received, summarising the issues raised and considering whether any changes are required to either the Site Allocations document or the master plans as a result. The initial focus was on implications for the Site Allocations document as any significant changes would require further public consultation.
- 2.9 As agreed by Cabinet in July 2015, public consultation was held on the 'Focussed Changes to the Pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD' between 12 August and 23 September 2015.

### **3 Changes in advice / information since the consultation stage**

- 3.1 In the report to Cabinet on the Consultation on Modifications to the Site Allocations DPD (July 2015) Officers outlined a number of Government statements and legal judgements on planning issues that had been issued since June/July 2014, when Cabinet agreed the consultation arrangements. These related to Green Belt Policy and the treatment of cemeteries in the Green Belt. Members were also informed about updates to technical work undertaken since the publication of the Pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD and associated master plans.
- 3.2 In August 2015 Government published a new Planning Policy for traveller sites, which superseded the previous policy published in 2012. The revised policy does not alter the Council's obligation to identify suitable sites to provide for the needs of the gypsy and traveller community. The criteria for selecting suitable sites has not changed from that in the

2012 policy statement. Thus it is still reflective of the approach set out in the Council's Core Strategy policy which informed the selection of the sites at the three Local Allocations LA1, LA3 and LA5.

- 3.3 The new policy statement includes a change to how the policy defines "gypsies and travellers" and Officers are seeking legal advice as to whether this is likely to impact the level of identified need for additional gypsy and traveller sites. Advice is also being sought on this issue from consultants Opinion Research Services (ORS) who produced the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment in 2013.
- 3.4 If the outcome of the advice referred to above requires any changes to the Council's current assessment of need for additional sites this will be explained in the report to Cabinet on the Council's response to the Site Allocations Focussed Changes consultation, which is due to be considered in November 2015. Recommendation 3 of this report seeks delegated authority for the Assistant Director for Planning, Development and Regeneration, in liaison with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, to make wording changes to the draft master plans prior to submission. Officers consider that, if any changes are required to the Site Allocations DPD as a result of the advice referred to under paragraph 3.3 which subsequently require a change to the master plans, that these can be made under this delegated authority.
- 3.5 Cabinet are not being asked to agree final versions of the master plans at this stage; only the draft that will accompany the submission of the Site Allocations DPD to the Planning Inspectorate. The final versions of the master plans will be brought to Cabinet for approval following the outcome of the examination of the Site Allocations DPD, as part of that document's adoption process.

#### **4 Comments received on the master plans:**

- 4.1 A report detailing the representations received to the Pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD was reported to Cabinet in July 2015, alongside the Site Allocations Report of Representations.
- 4.2 The comments received regarding this document and those received regarding the master plans are closely related, and therefore were considered in tandem by Officers. In particular, issues raised in response to the master plans were applicable to the Local Allocation policies within the Site Allocations document and vice versa. Changes subsequently made to the Local Allocation policies (Policies LA1 – LA6) have been incorporated into the changes now proposed to the draft master plans.
- 4.3 The Consultation Report for the master plans, attached to this report, outlines the issues raised and the Council's response to these, including where a changes are proposed to the master plans. Section 5 of Part 1 of the report provides a summary of this information, while Table 3 in Part 2 details each issue raised and the Council's response. The main issues raised are also summarised in section 5 of this report, and each of the draft master plans is attached to the report with 'track changes' showing the proposed changes made as a result of the consultation responses received.
- 4.4 The intention is to include the draft master plans (with any amendments Cabinet require) as part of Submission documents, and to request their adoption by full Council at the same time as the Site Allocations is reported for final approval (likely to be summer 2016). This will enable any changes required by the Site Allocations Inspector to the Local Allocation policies to be reflected in the wording of the final master plans, and to avoid any contradictions in requirements for the sites that may otherwise arise (see next steps below).



## 5 Main issues raised

### General Issues

- 5.1 The master plans were subject to a wide range of comments, the majority of which were objecting to the principle and details of each development. Many of these objections echoed concerns raised to Policies LA1 - 6 under separate (but related) representations to the Local Allocations. Thus many of the responses to comments are repeated from those already agreed by Cabinet to the Pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD.
- 5.2 A large number of objections were raised to the principle of the Local Allocations. The Council is satisfied that its approach to levels of housing development is robust and accords with Green Belt policy in terms of the plan-making process. The housing target has been set by the adopted Core Strategy. This has also established the principles for identifying the six Local Allocations. The role of the Site Allocations DPD is to take forward levels of development signalled by the Core Strategy. No “showstoppers” have been identified in terms of the adequacy of physical and social infrastructure to support future development in the Borough, including the Local Allocations subject to the master plans. Therefore, their principle is acceptable and has already been established.
- 5.3 Objections were made to the principle of removing the Local Allocation sites from the Green Belt, and to the principle of locating gypsy and traveller sites within LA1, LA3 and LA5, citing National Policy regarding the Green Belt. Further objections were made on the basis that non-Green Belt sites should be exhausted before any sites are released from the Green Belt for use for housing.
- 5.4 The Council is satisfied that its approach to removing the LA sites from the Green Belt is robust and accords with national Green Belt policy in terms of the plan-making process. The decision to remove the LA sites from the Green Belt was taken in the adopted Core Strategy. The role of the Site Allocations DPD is to take forward the levels of development at the broad locations set out in the Core Strategy.
- 5.5 The Council is currently satisfied that its approach to locating gypsy and traveller sites on three of the LA sites is sound and justified in accordance with National Policy. However, as referred to in paragraphs 3.2-3.5 of this report advice is being sought as to whether there need to be any amendments to this approach in light of the Government’s revised planning policy on Traveller Sites. There is an identified need for new pitches that the Council is obliged to meet, there is an absence of realistic alternatives, and all of the locations are now to be eventually released from the Green Belt. The decision to integrate new sites with new residential developments was taken by the Council in 2008 and subsequently incorporated into the Core Strategy, where it was considered sound by the inspector. Consideration has been given to the potential to extend the existing sites in the Borough but is not appropriate for reasons set out in the Background Issues Paper: Providing Homes and Community Services. No fundamental change is thus justified to the approach set out in the respective master plans.
- 5.6 Thames Water raised concerns in respect of a number of proposals in the Site Allocations DPD and the potential adequacy of the drainage infrastructure to accommodate each new development. This also affects the Local Allocations. The Council accepts that a change to refer to the need to assess and potentially bring forward new infrastructure is appropriate. Thus the master plans need to be similarly updated to reflect this approach. Thames Water have advised the Council there are no ‘showstoppers’ regarding waste water that would prevent the Local Allocations coming forward as planned, provided early liaison between

themselves and the developers takes place and any necessary upgrades to the local sewerage network are implemented. Thames Water are supportive of (and fully involved in) the wider technical work being carried out for Hertfordshire on waste and potable water issues. This work will inform the new single Local Plan.

- 5.7 Historic England objected to a number of proposals in respect of the form of development and its impact on local heritage. Some minor matters can be accommodated, where necessary, through changes to the development principles in the master plans. Other detailed concerns are already appropriately addressed in the master plans, and the Council is keen not to be too prescriptive with the nature of schemes, so as not to inhibit innovation in design.
- 5.8 Sports England made a number of general and detailed comments regarding sports provision. In particular, they raised concerns over the lack of contribution of the LAs towards both on-site (where relevant) and off-site indoor and outdoor facilities. The site specific issues, and the proposed responses, are summarised under the individual Local Allocations below. More generally, changes were made to some of the master plans to reflect that development may be required to make a contribution towards social and community facilities (which includes indoor and outdoor sports provision) if a need is identified.
- 5.9 Some changes to the master plans are justified to reflect the work of the Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP), in partnership with the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Hertfordshire County Council and the Herts Environmental Record Centre. They have produced a report on Hertfordshire's Ecological Networks following a county-wide mapping project. The intention is for the mapped ecological networks to be used by local planning authorities to inform forward planning and development management decisions. This assessment of ecological networks identifies strategic priorities and which habitats need to be maintained, restored and created based on a relative scale. This information should be used to inform detailed design each site and what measures can be incorporated to meet ecological objectives, areas of predicted high priority for restoring ecological networks.

#### LA1 Marchmont Farm, Hemel Hempstead

- 5.10 A total of 28 responses were received in response to the draft Master Plan for Local Allocation LA1. The majority of these were received from local residents raising objection to the principle of the development and detail of the proposed development set out within the draft Master Plan. Specifically, comments were made regarding the increase in number of homes to be provided, the provision of a gypsy and traveller site within the local allocation, capacity of local infrastructure to accommodate the additional homes (e.g. highways, doctors and schools), and drainage and flooding issues.
- 5.11 As considered above under the 'General' issues, the principle of Local Allocation LA1 (as with the other local allocations) is acceptable and has been established through adoption of the Core Strategy. The increase in the number of homes to be provided at this site (300 to 350) is a result of further technical work that has been carried out in preparation of the draft Master Plan. This work has further assessed the availability of land for development and potential configuration of uses within the site.
- 5.12 In terms of the capacity of local highway infrastructure, development proposed at LA1 has been included within Hemel Hempstead wide transport modelling work. This work has been developed over the course of the Core Strategy and through preparation of the Site Allocations DPD and associated local allocation master plans. The conclusions drawn from this are that there are no issues highlighted that cannot be satisfactorily ameliorated through

appropriate mitigation measures. For LA1 this will include the provision of the primary site access off the A4147 Link Road and installation of a roundabout. This approach has been agreed by Hertfordshire County Council as the Local Highway Authority. Details of such highway works will be developed through preparation of the planning application and financial contributions will be sought to fund such works if planning permission is granted. Therefore no changes are required to the draft Master Plan.

- 5.13 As stated under paragraph 5.5 of this report, the Council has identified a need and are obliged to provide additional gypsy and traveller pitches within the Borough. The accepted approach for meeting this need is to integrate such homes within three of the largest Local Allocations as the potential to extend existing sites is not considered appropriate to meet those needs.
- 5.14 Other comments were received about the lack of detail contained within the draft Master Plan with particular regard to car parking, provision of renewable energy technologies within new homes, incorporation of bin storage areas and impact of external lighting, for example. The Council has not proposed any changes to the draft Master Plan as a result of these comments as it considers that such detailed matters can be appropriately dealt with through the preparation and consideration of any planning application. Therefore such details are not considered appropriate to incorporate within the Master Plan at this stage of the planning process.
- 5.15 Historic England also raised objection to the contents of the draft Master Plan in respect of the proposed form of development and its impact on designated heritage assets. Specifically, they raised concerns about the height of buildings within the site taking into account the local topography and the impact this would have on the setting of Piccotts End Conservation Area. In response to this, the Council has recognised the need to provide clarification and establish development principles within the Master Plan to ensure the nearby heritage assets are not adversely affected by the development. To accord with proposed changes to the Site Allocations DPD, a modification to the Home and Design principles within the Master Plan should be made to clarify that buildings should be limited to two storeys in height except where a higher element would create interest and focal points provided such elements would be appropriate in terms of topography and visual impact (including impacts on the Conservation Area).
- 5.16 Historic England also objected to the provision of a 10-metre wide planted buffer along the western boundary of the site, which is intended to provide a visual separation between LA1 and Piccotts End and to safeguard the setting of the Conservation Area. Instead, Historic England suggests that such a buffer should be 15-metres wide at the settlement edge. Whilst the Council consider that a planted tree belt of 10 metres would be sufficient to serve the abovementioned purposes, it is recognised that any such buffer should not form an 'unnatural' straight delineation of trees and that a degree of flexibility should be added to the Master Plan requirements to ensure the provision of a 'natural' planting design with soft edges. As such the Council recognises that this could vary in depth along the western boundary of the site (albeit that this should ideally be no less than 10 metres in depth). The design and implementation of any such planted buffer should be considered alongside any contribution from the existing landscaping within the site, the role of new planting as part of the LA1 development, the need for development to follow the topography of the site, and through careful design and layout of the new housing. This design should therefore be informed by a Heritage Statement to assess the impact of the development and appropriate levels of mitigation, which should be submitted in support of a planning application. This Heritage Statement should make appropriate cross references to the existing Conservation Area Appraisal for the Old Town.

- 5.17 The Environment Agency also raised objections to the draft Master Plan with regard to a lack of recognition that part of the site and adjacent land is subject to surface water flooding and that Howe Grove Wood is not identified as a Local Nature Reserve. As a result of this comment the Council has proposed changes to the draft Master Plan to ensure these issues are addressed within any subsequent planning application and given appropriate consideration in the planning process. The Environment Agency also recognise flooding, water supply and waste water issues are prevalent within this area and advises that such matters should be appropriately dealt with as part of the planning application and its supporting information.
- 5.18 The Council have recognised flood risk and drainage within the draft Master Plan and consequently identified the need to consider this in preparation of any subsequent planning application. The planning application will also need to be supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment and include appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to mitigate any surface water run-off. Minor changes are proposed to the draft Master Plan to reflect recent updates to national policy regarding the approval of SuDS.
- 5.19 Sport England raised objection due to the absence of identifying that community sports facilities should either be provided on-site or benefit from any CIL or S106 contributions. It is considered that new residential development would generate additional pressure on existing community sports and recreational facilities within the Grovehill area as a result of the proposed development. The Council recognise this and have therefore proposed a change to the draft Master Plan to ensure that the Locally Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) is provided on-site, as per the indicative site layout, and that financial contributions are sought toward other social and community infrastructure where a need is identified.
- 5.20 Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Forum identified that the draft Master Plan had not incorporated an existing, well-used footpath that connects the Link Road to Margaret Lloyd Park (to the rear of residential properties off Severnmead). Although this is not a designated public right of way, the Council consider that this pedestrian route should be identified on the Site Constraints plan and therefore factored into the detailed design of the site at the planning application stage. A change has therefore been proposed within the draft Master Plan.

LA2 Old Town, Hemel Hempstead

- 5.21 Only seven objections were made to the draft Master Plan.
- 5.22 Historic England expressed concern that the LA2 development has the potential to adversely affect the character and appearance of the adjoining Old Town Conservation Area. They consider that reference to taller buildings should be removed from Figure 5.4 and instead reference should be made to varying the architectural treatment of elevations to provide interest. Also, the steepness of the slope warrants split-level housing development in some areas. In addition, they are seeking clarification on maximum height to ridge and eaves levels of new homes. However, they recognise that the key development principles for the draft Master Plan go some way to addressing their concerns.
- 5.23 In response, the Council is proposing to amend section 5.1 (design principles and guidance) to refer to taller buildings of up to two and a half storeys, instead of three storeys. It is also proposed to state that taller buildings should not harm the setting of heritage assets in the Old Town, and include guidance on eaves and ridge heights.

- 5.24 The Environment Agency has submitted objections regarding drainage, flooding, sewerage and water efficiency issues. The Council is proposing minor changes in response to some of these concerns.
- 5.25 Hertfordshire County Council's Ecology Officer supports the draft Master Plan, but notes that the role of the land in providing an ecological buffer/transition to the development area could be better recognised. Also, a Phase 1 Habitat Survey should be undertaken prior to development. In response, the Council is proposing to refer to the implications for the site of the Hertfordshire Ecological Networks report and refer to the need for a Phase 1 Habitat Survey.
- 5.26 The four objections from individuals were partly concerned with the principle of development and partly with detailed matters. Detailed points of concern raised included the impact on the Old Town (including the loss of views of the church spire), the steepness of the site, the proposed flats close to existing houses and the height of the new housing.
- 5.27 The principle of the proposal is now firmly established through the adopted Core Strategy. Some of the other points raised are too detailed to cover in the Master Plan, but should be addressed at the planning application stage. Changes are proposed in response to comments about the impact on the Old Town (see paragraph 3.2 above) and it is also proposed to amend the draft Master Plan to state that views of the church spire from the open space at the top of LA2 should be retained as far as possible.

#### LA3 West Hemel Hempstead

- 5.28 This master plan generated 88 responses. Numerous objections were raised by local residents and the local action group (WHAG) to the principle of the development, the appropriateness of the infrastructure to support the proposal, its justification under national Green Belt policy and against windfalls. The principle of the proposal and suitability of associated infrastructure have already been considered under paragraphs 5.1-5.9 above.
- 5.29 The principle, impact and location of and access to, the traveller site proved unpopular with local residents and two of the landowners. As explained above, need has been identified the principle of including a site at LA3 has been established and not within the scope for comment on the proposed masterplan. The principle of providing the site in this location has also been supported by the County Council's Gypsy and Traveller Unit. If carefully planned and managed, its impact can be limited and therefore LA3 is a suitable site to accommodate this. Access should not be a fundamental constraint given the likely low level of traffic movement generated by the proposed 7 pitches.
- 5.30 Local residents objected to the adequacy of the community facilities provided to serve the development. LA3 is large enough to provide for a modest mix of uses within the proposed community hub. However, it is not of a significant enough scale to justify a larger range of facilities as these will be subject to demand and viability. Residents were also seeking greater clarity over the position regarding the need for additional health care facilities. The NHS / Clinical Commissioning Group are still to finalise how this is to be provided. Discussions remain on-going with them and the master plan offers some flexibility as to how this can be accommodated.
- 5.31 Access and the suitability of the local road network to accommodate the development proved to be common issues of concern. Much of the detailed matters highlighted (e.g. the future management of the local rural roads bordering the site) can be dealt with through taking forward the development, including further detailed highway assessment, and in conjunction

with the local Highway Authority. The associated transport work and wider ongoing town modelling point to the ability of the local road network to support the allocation subject to on-site and off-site road improvements being in place. The proposed primary access points from Long Chaulden and The Avenue are logical and there are no other reasonable alternatives. The emergency access from Chaulden Lane, which could also serve the proposed traveller site, is needed and is suitable for this purpose. The Highway Authority supports the approach on all these matters.

- 5.32 Two of the landowners, both having interest in land in the southern half of LA3, were arguing for additional general access from Chaulden Lane. One owner also supported use of the existing cul-de-sacs from the Chaulden Vale estate. The current access arrangement has the support of the local Highway Authority. The Council is not satisfied over the suitability and practicality of using the suggested additional access points.
- 5.33 A number of residents objected to the uncertainty over the provision of a bus service through LA3. The Council acknowledges this concern as this will be a commercial decision for the bus provider, but it does not warrant any changes to the master plan. Residents also objected to the lack of links for pedestrians and cyclists between the site and other key destinations (e.g. the railway station). The Council accept that this is something that can be explored with the County Council in considering sustainable transport measures. This point can be highlighted in the master plan.
- 5.34 Given the scale of the development and the undulating topography of the land, design and landscaping gave rise to a high volume of objections from organisations and local residents. Many of these raised concerns over the lack of detail provided by the master plan. This is to be expected given the current early and high level nature of the proposal. The master plan makes clear the importance of delivering a high quality and sustainable scheme with a focus on careful design and landscaping (both retaining and supplementing existing landscape features).
- 5.35 Alongside, access/highway and design/landscaping matters, the issue of foul water and surface water drainage generated large volumes of objections. The master plan already recognises the importance of these issues. These issues can be addressed through on-going discussions with Thames Water and the Environment Agency, through the timely provision of infrastructure, by including water conservation measures in the design of the new homes, and through the incorporation of sustainable drainage mechanisms within the design and layout of the scheme.
- 5.36 The Environment Agency has made a number of useful detailed points regarding drainage matters that can be included as updates to the master plan. It is helpful to note that the site lies within a Source Protection Zone 3 (SPZ3), the need to safeguard against any further groundwater contamination, the potential requirement for the developers to seek an Environment Permit from the Environment Agency should a water treatment works be needed, and the necessity to consider with them the quantity and quality of effluent that would be discharged into the River Bulbourne.
- 5.37 Historic England raised a number of objections to the details of the proposals. Most of these were already addressed through the existing development principles in Policy LA3 and the master plan. However, greater reference to the implication of the development on the site's heritage and archaeology is considered to be a reasonable change to accommodate in the master plan.

- 5.38 Sport England stated its support for the new leisure space to be provided by the scheme. However, they raised a number of detailed concerns over how the dual-use of sports facilities would operate with the new primary school. While the Council acknowledges such difficulties, it considers these issues can be better dealt with through early liaison between parties once the scheme is more advanced. Sports England was also arguing for the need for LA3 to provide for both on-site and off-site indoor facilities. This could be looked at in terms of the negotiations of contributions under the associated section 106 agreement, but it is essential that the scheme delivers key infrastructure and other items as a priority before this can be considered.
- 5.39 The County's Ecology Advisor, the Dacorum Environmental Forum and a number of local residents expressed their concerns over the suitability of the proposed route and role of the green corridors through the allocation. Following discussions with the County Council, they have acknowledged that there are advantages and disadvantages over the route of the corridor. On balance, they are satisfied that an east-west corridor is acceptable subject to adopting a sound approach to its ecological value and management. The Council accepts that clarification over the different leisure and wildlife roles and ongoing management of the green infrastructure would be helpful to ensure the ecology to be provided is of genuine value. These points can be reflected in amendments to the master plan.
- 5.40 The Council accepts the need for a sensitive relationship between new housing and the existing hedgerows that forms part of the north-south running green corridor / tree belt along Green Lane. An amendment to the master plan to reflect this is felt justified.
- 5.41 The Council received an objection from a landowner whose field lies adjacent to Pouchen End Lane at the south western corner of LA3. It is currently part of the LA3 allocation, but not part of the actual master plan area. The owner is seeking its inclusion into the proposed development boundary. The Council agrees that it would be logical to incorporate this into the master planning area. It therefore supports an update to the master plan maps. This will not result in any change to the land's notation or potential development status.

LA4 Hanburys, Berkhamsted

- 5.42 Very few comments were received on this local allocation (8 in total) and none were made by the two landowners.
- 5.43 Objections were raised by Berkhamsted Residents Action Group (BRAG) and local residents to the principle of the development, and its justification under national Green Belt policy and against current and future levels of windfalls. The principle of the proposal is now firmly established through the adopted Core Strategy as explained previously.
- 5.44 The British Film Institute was concerned over the impact of the scheme on their site adjoining LA4. Historic England voiced similar comments. These can already be dealt with through retaining and supplementing boundary planting and through care in the design and layout of new buildings on this boundary.
- 5.45 The Environment Agency made a number of detailed points regarding drainage matters. It is reasonable to incorporate these as updates to the master plan. It is helpful to note that the site lies within a Source Protection Zone 2 and the need to safeguard against any further groundwater contamination. A reference to maintaining greenfield run-off rates and ensuring that flood risk is not increased are also appropriate given flooding issues they have identified.

- 5.46 The County Council's Ecology Advisor remains concerned over the proposed mitigation for the loss of the area of grassland. The Council acknowledges that this remains an issue. However, it considers that appropriate mitigation can be achieved without the need for any modifications to the master plan through ongoing discussions with the County Council once the practical implementation of the process becomes clearer.
- 5.47 BRAG and local residents made a variety of comments regarding the access to and design, layout and landscaping of LA4. The site is well screened and contained and with careful design, should limit the wider impact of the new development. While the Council's recognises the local sensitivities over the nearby Shootersway / Kingshill Way junction, the local Highway Authority support the proposed access arrangements from Shootersway. BRAG is concerned over the scheme facilitating expansion into adjoining land. The Council consider that the existing and supplemented landscaping together with the proposed access arrangement and layout should limit realistic scope for any expansion.
- 5.48 Grand Union Investments argue that the reduction of the capacity from 60 to 40 should be made up locally by additional housing adjoining the site or on other nearby land (both instances on land in their control). They take the opposite view to BRAG and local residents over preventing future expansion into neighbouring land. The shortfall is not so significant as to justify such actions. The deficit can readily be absorbed in the housing programme and locally through other future allocations and commitments.

#### LA5 Land to the West of Tring

- 5.49 130 responses were received, including 123 objections. Tring Town Council supports the draft Master Plan. However, they emphasise that the development should integrate with the rest of the town, given the prominent gateway location and the need to provide sufficient supporting infrastructure (e.g. school places, health facilities and highway improvements).
- 5.50 A number of objections were made to the principle of the proposed LA5 development from local residents, who consider that the site should remain in the Green Belt. However, the principle of the proposal is now firmly established through the adopted Core Strategy.
- 5.51 Concerns were expressed by the Chilterns Conservation Board, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckland Parish Council, Drayton Beauchamp Parish Meeting and several individuals about the impact on the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), contrary to national and local planning policies. In particular, there was concern regarding the proposed cemetery extension, children's play area, Traveller site and possible playing pitches. In contrast, Sport England supports playing pitches on the site. There were more objections from individuals to the proposed Traveller site than to any other aspect of the draft Master Plan. Many residents also hold the view that the cemetery extension should adjoin the existing cemetery and not be physically separate from it.
- 5.52 The Council considers that LA5 will not significantly harm the special qualities of the AONB. Indeed, the AONB will be enhanced by the public open space and cemetery, which will be green, open, well landscaped uses. The Traveller site will be small, well screened and will have only a limited impact on the AONB. The reasons why the Council favours a detached cemetery extension in the western fields within the AONB are set out in the Draft Master Plan, the main reason being that it will meet the long term needs for burials in the Tring area.
- 5.53 The Council is proposing a number of changes in response to these objections, including:



- referring to the AONB as a constraint in section 4 of the draft Master Plan (constraints and opportunities);
- stressing the need for landscaping to be provided and enhanced along and close to the edges of the cemetery extension and Traveller site which adjoin the new Green Belt boundary. This reflects Cabinet's decision on 21 July 2015 that the Site Allocations document should remove the cemetery extension and Traveller site from the Green Belt (see also paragraph 4.8 and 4.9 of the officer report to your July meeting); and
- stating that playing pitches are acceptable only on part of the western fields open space and that any building and car parking to serve the possible playing fields should be small-scale and unobtrusive.

5.54 Many local residents consider that Tring's infrastructure cannot cope with existing demand and LA5 will make the situation worse. Issues raised include overcrowded schools and doctors' surgeries, and traffic congestion in the town centre and on roads close to the site (particularly, Western Road, Icknield Way and Miswell Lane). Hertfordshire County Council has advised that there is scope to expand schools in Tring to meet anticipated future demand, whilst the Clinical Commissioning Group does not anticipate any capacity problems in the foreseeable future. Some changes in section 3 of the draft Master Plan are proposed to clarify the position regarding schools. The Highway Authority has no concerns regarding the ability of the overall road network to cope with the scale of new development proposed, although some local measures will be required.

5.55 Some objectors are opposed to allowing development at LA5 before 2021 and the increase in estimated housing capacity from 150 homes in the Core Strategy to 180-200 in the Site Allocations document and draft Master Plan. No changes are proposed in response to these objections. Releasing LA5 before 2021 is justified for a number of reasons, including securing the wider benefits of the employment area and cemetery extensions and public open space at an early date. The increased capacity at LA5 is justified on the basis of the more detailed technical work carried out to produce the draft master plan.

5.56 Various other points have been made by objectors. Some of the main concerns and the Council's response are set out below:

- Objection: concern over the adequacy of the public consultation. Response: no change – the Council has complied with the Statement of Community Involvement in preparing the Site Allocations document and associated master plans.
- Objection: priority should be given to Tring residents in the allocation of the affordable housing. Response: no change - the Council has nomination rights to 75% of the rented affordable homes. These properties will be allocated through the Council's Housing Allocations Policy to people with local connections in the Borough. Housing Associations will decide the occupancy of the rest of the affordable housing in accordance with their own allocation policies.

- Objection: there is no need for the employment area extension, as there are vacant units on the adjoining industrial estate. Response: no change – justification for extending the employment area is contained in the South West Hertfordshire Employment Land Update (2010) and the principle has been established through the Core Strategy.
- Objection: residents in Okeley Lane will have their views obscured and will lose their privacy, as the new housing will be on rising ground. Response: no change – the draft Master Plan (paragraph 5.30) already states that the new housing backing onto the Okeley Lane properties will have longer than normal back gardens. Also, the difference in levels between the Okeley Lane houses and the proposed new housing immediately to the west is not significant.

LA6 Chesham Road and Molyneaux Avenue, Bovingdon

- 5.57 Only a few comments were received in response to the draft Local Allocation LA6 Master Plan (7 in total) and of these the majority raised objections relating to the detail of the proposal including consideration of flood risk and sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS), limiting the height of buildings, and requesting clarification regarding the provision of public transport.
- 5.58 In response to these, the Council has proposed changes to the requirements of the Master Plan relating to the need for the developer to prepare a Drainage Strategy (as advised by Thames Water) to ensure that sufficient capacity exists within the waste water infrastructure network ahead of the development being occupied (if planning permission is forthcoming). Due to the restrictions imposed by the nearby National Air Traffic Service (NATS) beacon, the Council has also proposed changes to the Homes and Design principles of the draft Master Plan to ensure that new buildings are limited to two storeys in height. Clarification has also been provided on the existence of bus stops off Molyneaux Avenue and provision of local transport services.
- 5.59 One comment from a landowner objected to the principle of the development stating that it does not meet the full requirements of the Core Strategy in terms of that set out in the Place Strategy for Bovingdon. However, the principle of the development has been established through adoption of the Core Strategy (including the provision of 60 new homes at LA6) and, in developing this, incorporated an assessment of all promoted sites in Bovingdon (Assessment of Potential Local Allocations & Strategic Sites – Final Assessment (2012)). In terms of need, the role of the Site Allocations DPD is to assist in the delivery of the requirements set out in the Core Strategy but this does not need to specifically identify all future housing sites required over the plan period (taking into account the role of unidentified and windfall sites). Therefore, as the draft Master Plan seeks to provide further details of Local Allocation LA6 as agreed in the Core Strategy and as proposed within the Pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD, no changes are proposed to the document in response to this comment.

## **6 Consultation Report**

- 6.1 A Consultation Report explaining the consultation that has taken place on the draft master plans has been prepared. The consultation report sets out the means of publicity used, the

nature of the consultation, the main responses elicited, the main issues raised and how they have been taken into account. It contains:

- A record of the publicity given to the draft master plans consultation, including a list of organisations (or consultation bodies) notified;
- A statement of the number of comments received on each master plan;
- A summary of the main issues raised by these comments and the Council's response to these issues; and
- A summary of the proposed amendments as a result of the above.

6.2 A draft of the Consultation Report is available in the Group Rooms and is on the Council's website (alongside this report). Cabinet's attention is particularly drawn to the following tables within this draft Consultation Report:

- Table 1 – lists the groups / individuals from whom responses were received
- Table 2 – lists the number of responses received to each question for each master plan
- Table 3 - summarises the main issues raised to each master plan and sets out a brief response.

6.3 Most responses received did not raise any new issues that have not been brought previously to Members' attention either through previous reports on the Site Allocations, or relating to the Core Strategy process.

#### Proposed changes

6.4 A number of changes are proposed to the master plans, which are captured by the summaries of the main issues under section 5 of this report. The draft master plans are attached to this report with 'track changes' showing the changes made to the consultation drafts of the master plans.

6.5 The consultation on the 'Focussed Changes Pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD' closed on 23 September 2015. It is possible, that some limited further changes may be required to the master plans in response to comments made on the Local Allocation policies. Cabinet are therefore asked to delegate authority to the Assistant Director (Planning, Development and Regeneration), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, to approve any further wording changes to the draft master plans prior to submission.

## **7 Next Steps:**

#### Submission:

7.1 Following the consultation on the Focussed Changes, Officers will report back to Cabinet on responses received and advise if any further changes to the Site Allocations DPD are required prior to Submission. Full Council will then be asked to ratify the Submission arrangements for the Site Allocations, with the master plans submitted as supporting documents.

7.2 This additional reporting stage means that the Site Allocations will now be submitted for Examination in Spring. Precise dates will be confirmed once the scale of representations received to the consultation is known.

- 7.3 If Members require any changes to the draft master plans which will have a consequential impact on the relevant Site Allocations policy, then these changes can be picked up in the Site Allocations document prior to its Submission.

Post-Submission:

- 7.4 The timetable for the Site Allocations DPD and the master plans following Submission will be determined by the Planning Inspectorate. However, the Examination is expected to be held in early / mid 2016.
- 7.5 The final master plans and Site Allocations DPD, including the Inspector's recommended changes, will be brought before Council for adoption. Provided the Inspector finds the Site Allocations 'sound,' it is hoped that this will be in late 2016.

**FOR ALL APPENDICES, PLEASE SEE THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE:**

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/council-democracy/meetings-minutes-and-agendas/events/2015/10/20/cabinet/cabinet>