

**APPENDIX A**

**FORMAL SUBMISSION LETTER  
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA MAP  
GROVEHILL FUTURE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

the

# GROVEHILL FUTURE

*project*

Grovehill Future Project  
c/o M Devlin  
170 St Agnells Lane  
Hemel Hempstead  
HP2 6EQ

Mr James Doe  
Assistant Director  
Planning, Development and Regeneration  
Dacorum Borough Council  
The Forum, Marlowes,  
Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 1DN

13<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Dear Mr Doe,

## **Submission of 'Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan'**

The Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Forum hereby formally submits its Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying documentation for your consideration. We include to following documents, in accordance with legislation, as set out below:

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (SI No. 637) Part 5 Paragraph 15 (1). States

(1) Where a qualifying body submits a plan proposal to the local planning authority, it must include-

- a map or statement which identifies the area to which the proposed neighbourhood development plan relates.
- a consultation statement; (a) 1992 c.14. 7.
- the proposed neighbourhood development plan.
- a statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood development plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act.

Yours sincerely,

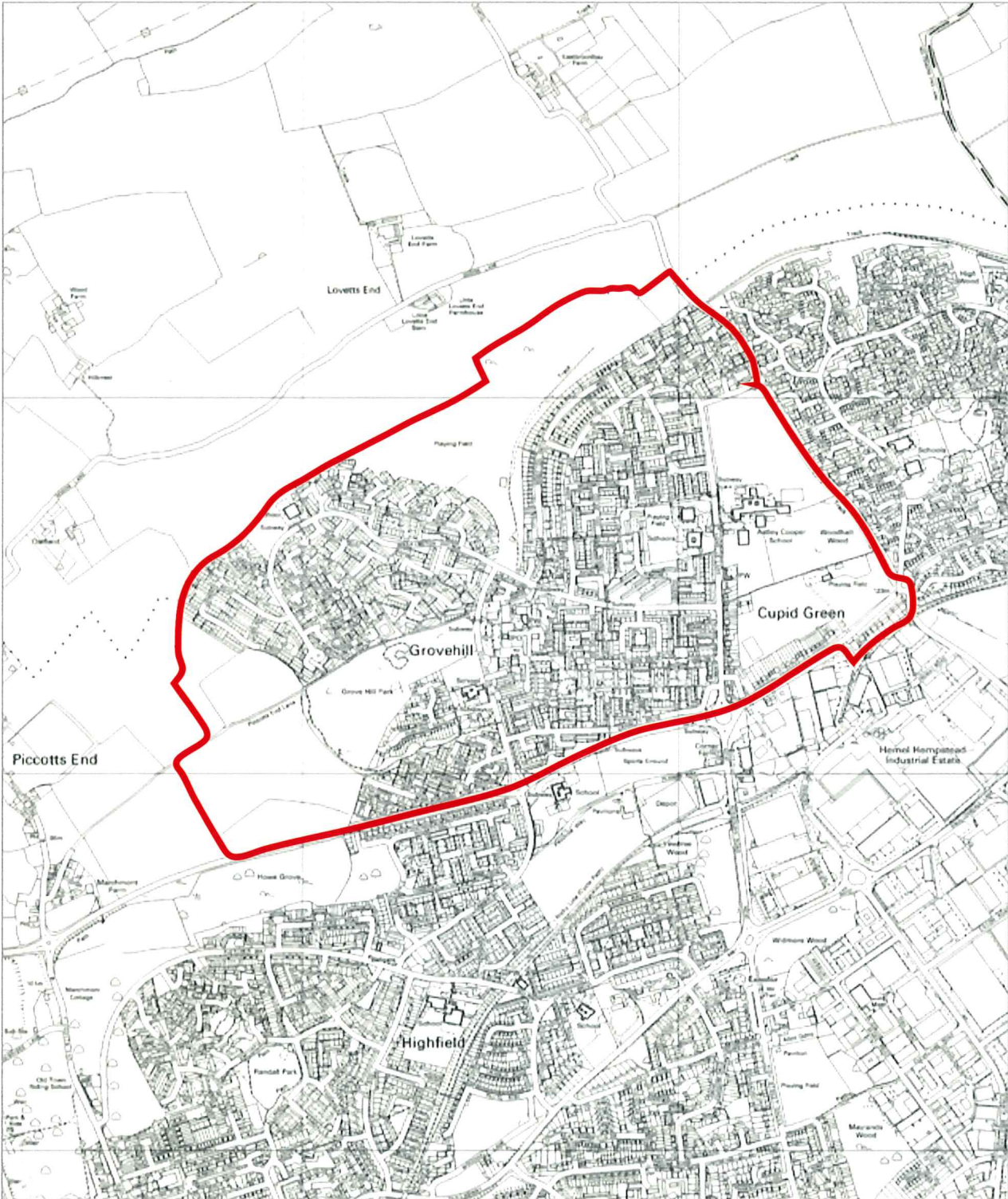
Mike Devlin  
Chairman

Encl.



Figure 1:

Application for 'Grovehill Future Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area'  
The area marked in red is the proposed designated area for a Neighbourhood Plan



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Scaled to A4



# The Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan

March 2017



2016-2031

**GROVEHILL FUTURE**

**Grovehill Future**

**Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031**

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### List of Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan Policies

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**Policy: Area 2: Garage Blocks**

**Policy: Theme 1 Enhancing Public Spaces**

**Policy: Theme 2: Housing**

**Policy: Theme 3: Improving Access and Connectivity**

## Glossary

Affordable Housing	Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. The term does not include low cost open market housing. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision ( <i>National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012</i> ).
Appropriate Assessment (also referred to as Habitats Regulations Assessment)	This assessment is required under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Its purpose is to analyse a plan or proposals and ascertain whether there would be any significant effects on internationally important nature conservation sites (also referred to as Natura or European sites).
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	A new charge which local authorities in England and Wales will be empowered, but not required, to charge on most types of new development in their area. CIL charges will be based on simple formulae which relate the size of the charge to the size and character of the development paying it.
Community Hub	A centralised area that provides for community engagement, which is accessible to all.
Conservation Area	Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character, appearance or setting of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
Conservation Area Appraisals (CAA)	Set out why an area has been defined as a Conservation Area; its different character areas and appearance, buildings of significant interest, features for retention and improvement, and proposals for its future management.
Dacorum Borough Local Plan (DBLP)	This is the Local Plan for Dacorum Borough which was adopted by the Council on 21 April 2004. Its policies will gradually be replaced by the local planning framework. Until that happens the Council will use the policies to help it determine planning applications.
Deprivation (commonly known as Indices of Multiple Deprivation)	Usually used in the context of the indices of multiple deprivation used by the Office of National Statistics to define disadvantage usually relating to poverty but also including data relating to poor health, high crime and limited access to services including shopping, schools, health and social care.
Development Plan Documents (DPD)	Component parts of the Local Plan which makes up the Development Plan.
Evidence Base	The process of producing a development plan document firstly requires the assembly of an evidence base. The evidence base consists of studies, plans and strategies produced by the Council and other organisations.
Greenfield	Land (or a defined site) which has never been built on before or where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time (the opposite of <i>brownfield</i> or previously developed land). It normally includes private gardens and applies to most land outside the built-up area boundaries.
Habitats Regulation Assessment*	A Habitats Regulations Assessment is the assessment of the impacts of implementing a plan or policy on a Natura 2000 site. Its purpose is to consider the impacts of a land use plan against conservation objectives of the site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of the site. Where significant negative effects are identified, alternative options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects.

## Glossary

Heritage Assets	This is a general term for all the valued components of the historic environment such as buildings, monuments, sites, places and landscape, which merit particular consideration in planning decisions. Some are designated nationally or through national legislation e.g. scheduled ancient monuments and listed buildings, conservation areas. Others are identified by the Council or County Council through normal decision making or plans e.g. buildings of local importance, areas of archaeological importance.
Incubation units	Business start-up areas are aimed at supporting individuals with entrepreneurial aspirations to develop which business ideas and provide low cost back office support.
Infrastructure - CIL	A taxation mechanism for developer contributions. A fund to contribute towards infrastructure needed to support the development of the administrative area of the Council and a funding source for local improvements via a neighbourhood proportion of CIL.
Infrastructure Delivery Plan	A plan that identifies the infrastructure required to support the existing and planned levels of housing and employment development within the Borough up to 2031 as set out within the Core Strategy.
Issues and Options	A formal stage of consultation, in which the key issues and options relating to the document are set out within the context of government guidance and policy.
Listed Building	A building included in a list compiled or approved by the Secretary of State. It includes any object or structure fixed to the building and any object or structure within the cartilage of the building which, although not fixed to the building, formed part of the land and has done so since July 1948.
Local Allocation	Local Allocations are modest extensions to some of our towns and large villages. They will help maintain existing populations, meet local housing needs and plug gaps in local infrastructure. They are focused upon meeting specific local needs and the future vision for that particular place.
Local List	A list of buildings and other structures that have local importance from an architectural or historic perspective. They may be buildings of merit in their own right, or form part of an important group of buildings.
Local Needs Survey	A local survey to understand the needs and aspirations of local residents, visitors and user groups.
Local Neighbourhood Centres/Local Centre**	Individual local centres, which are attractive and secure, to serve the community and to attract thriving business and services and which provide valuable services to the local community.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The guidance is to be used by local planning authorities in drawing up plans and determining planning applications.
Neighbourhood Plan	Neighbourhood plans deal with local land use and development issues, rather than strategic issues. They may relate to regeneration or growth. They may cover where new shops, offices or homes should go and what green space should be protected. Plans should be compatible with national policies and policies in the local authority's adopted development plan.
Open Land	Areas of open space greater than one hectare in size that are formally identified on the Proposals Map and protected from development through planning policy.



## Glossary

Open space	All types and scales of open land, both publicly and privately owned. Some of this is also protected as 'Open Land.'
Public Realm***	Those parts of a village, town or city (whether publicly or privately owned) available for everyone to use. This includes streets, squares and parks.
Radburn Design	The Radburn design is typified by the backyards of homes facing the street and the fronts of homes facing each other over common yards.
Redevelopment	To change the appearance of an area especially by repairing and adding new buildings, stores, roads, etc.
Refurbishment	To renovate, redecorate or repair and make improvements to something, especially a building.
Regeneration*	The redevelopment of decaying or run-down parts of older urban or rural areas, in order to bring them new life and economic vitality.
Saved Policy	Local Plan policies that remain in use for town planning purposes until they are replaced by an adopted development plan document, such as the Core Strategy or General Development Management policies.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	SSSIs are designated by English Nature under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They comprise land, which is important nationally for its flora, fauna or geology.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	SACs are designated under the European Union's Habitats Directive. They are of special European importance and should be protected for their wildlife and habitat value.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*	A formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. Local authorities who prepare and adopt such a plan or programme must prepare a report on its likely environmental effects. They must consult environmental authorities and the public, and take the report and the results of the consultation into account during the preparation process, before the plan or programme is adopted.
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	SPDs provide more detailed planning guidance to supplement what is in the development plan. They are part of the local planning framework.
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	An appraisal of local development documents against their environmental, social and economic impacts. This often incorporates Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), required for some plans and proposals under European law.

### Source

\*Herefordshire.gov.uk

\*\* Dacorum.gov.uk/neighbourhoods

\*\*\*planningportal.co.uk/directory\_record/455/public\_realm

## 1.0 Introduction from Grovehill Future Forum

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On behalf of Grovehill Future Forum we invite you to read the **Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan**, proposed for the future of Grovehill as a neighbourhood and community hub.

This important document was created following the opportunity afforded to us by the Government's Localism agenda in early 2011 and an invitation from Dacorum Borough Council to become a 'Front Runner' for Neighbourhood Planning.

'Grovehill Future' was formed in 2011 by members of the local community, businesses and Ward Councillors to lead on the 'Neighbourhood Plan'. It has been supported by Dacorum Borough Council as well as other organisations such as Planning Aid England, Design Council CABE and Locality.

'Grovehill Future' was created by residents and local businesses with one main aim, to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan that would deliver the long term goal of a balanced and vibrant neighbourhood to benefit local residents, businesses and visitors alike.

Neighbourhood Plans can be powerful policy documents that sit alongside the Council's Local Plan. A Neighbourhood Plan considers what the area will need in the future and how the neighbourhood centre, local services and facilities may need to develop and improve. It also sets out the policies for how this will be achieved. To be adopted by the Local Authority, the completed Neighbourhood Plan must be agreed by local people and be in line with national and local planning policies and guidance.

The Neighbourhood Plan was completed with ongoing community engagement through regular public meetings with residents and other stakeholders representing local groups, schools and businesses with an interest in Grovehill. We kept in contact with the community through our website and to assist with consultations, via Facebook and Twitter.

Our 'Vision, Aims and Opportunities' focus on regeneration opportunities and improvements to **housing, services, transport, access, parking, community facilities**, as well as **the environment**. We have also proposed planning policies for the development and use of land within Grovehill and have a vision and plan for regenerating Henry Wells Square for the benefit of the area.

## 1.0 Introduction from Grovehill Future Forum

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We have been determined and driven to do as much of the work as possible, to be able to say that the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by and for the people who live, work and enjoy Grovehill.

However, towards the end of the process we did need the assistance and advice of paid consultants who were familiar with the legislative process for Neighbourhood Plans, James Parker at Community Engagement and Rob Gardiner at C4S, TRL Ltd (for sustainability appraisals)

What has been achieved to date is thanks to the expertise, experience and enthusiasm of the members of 'Grovehill Future Forum' and the many volunteers in the task groups, who have collected the evidence this document utilises. We have worked with many local businesses, residents, user groups and especially our youth, to identify opportunities to improve Grovehill into the place we all want to see.

We've had excellent assistance and advice from Officers at Dacorum Borough Council and the much appreciated support of our Borough and County Councillors in the creation of this dedicated policy document designed to be used to shape our area.

The support of the final Neighbourhood Plan at referendum is therefore essential to ensure the policies and general contents are considered and given significant weight by Dacorum Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and developers as part of any future developments within the Neighbourhood Plan Area and we look forward to receiving your YES vote at referendum and to look for more volunteers to join the delivery group and help implement the proposed community projects.

The Neighbourhood Plan, along with its supporting documents: '**Neighbourhood Plan Appendices 6.1-6.6**', '**Basic Conditions Statement**' and '**Consultation Statement**' can be found on the website. [www.grovehillfuture.org](http://www.grovehillfuture.org).

Thank you for your support.

**Mike Devlin, Chairman, Grovehill Future**

## 1.1 Why Grovehill needs a Neighbourhood Plan



### The Area



Hemel Hempstead is a 'New Town' situated 24 miles North West of London and has two railway stations, Hemel Hempstead and Apsley, on the mainline to London Euston. The town also has excellent road links to London and the north, and the Grand Union canal corridor runs through the southern edge of the town creating great links with Kings Langley, Berkhamsted and Tring and the countryside beyond.

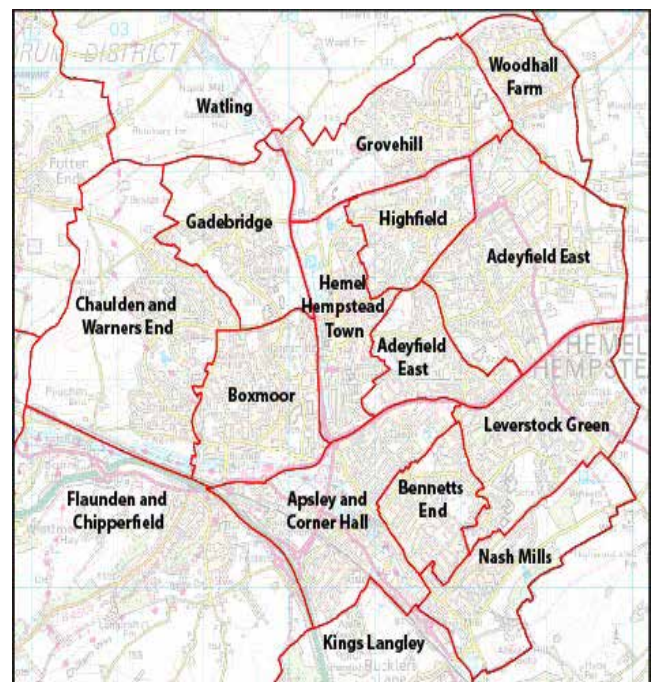
The new town construction commenced in 1948 with further large-scale greenfield development going on in the early 1980s. The population is now around 89,000, with residents living in a number of local neighbourhood centres, each with their own identity and community feel, one of which is Grovehill.

The neighbourhood of Grovehill is located on the north eastern edge of Hemel Hempstead and comprises two distinct developments. The first development was delivered by the New Towns Commission in 1967-68 as a mixture of private and rented housing between Washington Avenue and Redbourn Road.

It was specifically intended to accommodate families migrating from London with management and professional skills that a developing new town would require.

The second development was built around 1972 and includes the social housing estate at Grovehill West. The main development is west of Aycliffe Drive taking in Piccotts End Lane and beyond.

Further developments of both social and private housing has grown around the original core of the neighbourhood in subsequent years.



## 1.1 Why Grovehill needs a Neighbourhood Plan

### Grovehill's attributes

Grovehill currently has a population of around 7,600 with a diversity of residents. The working population are employed in local businesses and organisations as well as commuting from the area. The children and young adults study in the local schools and the non-working population enjoy a variety of social club and general leisure activities provided in the local facilities, all contributing to its family focussed, creative and intellectual qualities.



Many residents have lived most of their lives in the area and play an active part in the community, Grovehill however is on a list of deprived areas<sup>1</sup> within Dacorum. Nonetheless, it is still considered a safe place to live and work but there are areas for improvement<sup>1</sup>.

Grovehill is surrounded by green countryside and there are lots of green spaces within the neighbourhood at Margaret Lloyd and Grovehill parks, which offer a variety of recreational opportunities. It also includes a variety of educational and medical facilities together with places of worship for a variety of denominations.



It is in close proximity to Piccotts End conservation area, which hosts a listed building in Cupid Green Lane. It has the potential to list non-designated heritage assets and has an area of archaeological importance south of Woodhall Woods<sup>2</sup>.

Henry Wells Square, which is primarily owned by Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) as the local authority, is a generously spaced community hub overlooking Margaret Lloyd Park.

It has a variety of independent shops offering a range of goods and services, a community centre and places of worship.

As the local centre, Henry Wells Square has a lot to offer its residents and visitors. The busy community centre hosts a variety of clubs and activities for all ages, with the potential to provide many more services and improve some of the tired and outdated facilities.

The variety of shops, local businesses, health and social facilities offers a lifeline to residents less able to travel into the main shopping area in Hemel Hempstead town centre.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/community-living/statistics-about-dacorum>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-cons-design/conservation-strategies>

## 1.1 Why Grovehill needs a Neighbourhood Plan



Transport links are excellent; there is a good network of local bus and train services with frequent services to other towns and London. Hemel Hempstead is situated minutes away from the M1 and M25, making Grovehill an ideal location for commuters.

Grovehill has attributes which offer key opportunities to enhance the neighbourhood and make it more resilient for the future. The improvements could collectively utilise underused space, enable growth, help integrate the neighbourhood, improve connectivity and enhance transport links to the wider area.

Grovehill has been identified by Dacorum Borough Council in their Core Strategy (adopted 2013) as an area that could deliver housing development if it was released from the Green Belt. The site and revised Green Belt boundary have been confirmed within the Site Allocation Development Planning Document (DPD). This site is known as LA1 - Marchmont Farm and an approved Neighbourhood Plan offers an opportunity for locally based policies to influence how this site is delivered, for the benefit of Grovehill.

A Neighbourhood Plan with clear policies and a strong forum can help deliver these objectives with supporting authorities and organisations as well as community projects helping to deliver additional environmental, leisure, access and movement improvements.

Grovehill Future Forum was formed with its main aims to provide a sustainable local economy (Economic), improve the quality of the local environment (Environmental) with new leisure facilities and to improve residents' quality of life (Social).

The Forum also established clear objectives to help deliver these aims:

- ❖ **Utilising underused space in**
  - Henry Wells Square
  - Garage blocks
- ❖ **Enabling growth**
- ❖ **Integrating all parts of Grovehill**
- ❖ **Maintaining and managing social and leisure facilities**
- ❖ **Improving connectivity and making the most of transport links**
- ❖ **Creating policies and influencing change**

These objectives will be delivered through the implementation of the Policies set out in the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan and Community Projects set out within this document.

## 2.0 Complying with legal requirements and planning policies

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### Legal requirements

The Government's Localism Act 2011; a new tier of planning devolving greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and therefore giving local people new rights to shape the development of their communities. Three new initiatives were introduced to deliver neighbourhood planning:

- Neighbourhood Plans;
- Neighbourhood Development Orders; and
- Community Right to Build Orders.

The rules governing the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans are set out in 'Neighbourhood Planning Regulations'<sup>3</sup> (as amended); they give communities a say in '**how their local areas are planned**' and how planning rules should be addressed.

To meet the general requirements a Neighbourhood Plan must:

- ❖ Meet the requirements of certain EU directives relating to human rights and habitat protection;
- ❖ Be in keeping with policies that determine how UK planning decisions should be made which are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance;
- ❖ Be in compliance with the most important strategic policies prepared by the local planning authority; and
- ❖ Explain how the community and organisations have helped to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan.

### National planning context

In addition, a Neighbourhood Plan must **not** constrain the delivery of important National Policy objectives which are set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), those particularly relevant to the neighbourhood planning process include paragraphs 16 and 184.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/made> & <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/20/made> (as amended 2015)

## 2.0 Complying with legal requirements and planning policies

- ❖ Para 16 makes it clear that those producing a Neighbourhood Plan or Order should support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development needs.
- ❖ Para 184 specifically states that Neighbourhood Plans and Orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic objectives.

These basic conditions provide a framework with clear parameters for neighbourhood plan policy development which are contrary to the Local Plan. A Basic Condition Statement should also seek to identify those parts of national policy which are relevant and will enhance Grovehill.

### Local planning context

One of the basic conditions of a Neighbourhood Plan is that it must conform to the strategic policies of the adopted development plan for the area. In the case of the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan, each policy within the Neighbourhood Plan has been considered in relation to DBC's adopted Core Strategy<sup>4</sup> 2006-2031 (adopted 2013) together with reference to the saved policies of the DBC's local plan 1991-2011<sup>4</sup> (adopted 2004) and Site Allocations DPD<sup>4</sup>. It should also be noted that non-strategic policies have also been considered, where relevant.

DBC is continuing to develop its 'Development Plan' for the borough and is currently working on allocating land for development which has been established through adoption of their 'Core Strategy'.

The 'Site Allocations DPD' proposes to allocate land for housing, employment, retail and other uses. One of the emerging site allocations is the pre-submission allocation at LA1-Marchmont Farm, which is within the Grovehill neighbourhood. See **Figure A**

**Figure A**



<sup>4</sup> <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning>



## 2.0 Complying with legal requirements and planning policies



### Site Allocation - LA1 - Marchmont Farm

A key component of this process is the proposed 'Site Allocations DPD to deliver new homes to meet the needs of the local population. These local site allocations have supporting Masterplans documenting with agreed development principles between landowners and developers. Of the six Local Allocations, three are proposed within the wider Hemel Hempstead area.

The most influential of these in terms of Grovehill would be the 'Site Allocation at LA1-Marchmont Farm'<sup>5</sup> on land to the southwest of Grovehill (adjacent to Margaret Lloyd Park). The Core Strategy also includes specific planning details for LA1-Marchmont Farm, see **Appendix 6.1**.

### Where does Grovehill fit within the strategic and adopted local policies?

The Forum has taken account of the 12 planning principles (NPPF para 17) when developing its policies and ensured that it does **not** seek to repeat National or DBC policies but has, where appropriate, added local detail to those policies.

Whilst the 'Core Strategy' and Site Allocations DPD is designed to give the overarching view of the development requirements and needs for the borough, the policies set out within the Neighbourhood Plan have been prepared and designed to compliment and give them a 'local feel', whilst enhancing and expanding on local specific needs identified by the Forum.

In particular, relevant policy guidelines within the Core Strategy were identified as critical issues through consultation engagement and developed further as part of the policy option process.

### Role of the Neighbourhood Plan in shaping development

Following a successful examination and referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan will become a supplementary planning document for DBC's administrative area. As such, in accordance with section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, '*all applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise*'. Therefore, policies contained within the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan will be taken into account when determining planning applications in Grovehill.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/local-planning-framework>

## 2.1 Sustainable Development



One of the basic conditions that a Neighbourhood Plan must meet if it is to proceed to a referendum is that it must be compatible with European Union obligations relating to the protection of the environment.

For the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan it has been necessary to determine whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment should be undertaken to comply with the EU Directive<sup>6</sup>. The objective of the Strategic Environmental Assessment is to provide a high level of protection to the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans. A Strategic Environmental Assessment is only required however, if the Neighbourhood Plan could result in significant effects on the environment.

Under separate regulations<sup>7</sup> it is also necessary to determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan could lead to 'likely significant effects' upon a European Site of importance for nature conservation<sup>8</sup>, when considered either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The closest European Site to Grovehill is the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation.

### Conclusion

A screening process has been undertaken to determine whether either of these assessments are required. On the basis that the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan does not propose a level or type of development that would have significant effects on the local environment the screening process concluded that neither a Strategic Environmental Assessment nor a Habitats Regulations Assessment will be required to be undertaken during the development of the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan.

The statutory consultation bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England) have been consulted on this issue and have agreed with the conclusions, with one comment from Natural England which has been addressed. A Screening Report has been produced to document the screening process and its findings, see **Appendix 6.2**.

It should be noted that the Strategic Environmental Assessment<sup>9</sup> and Habitats Regulation Assessment<sup>9</sup> have been undertaken during the development of both the Dacorum Core Strategy<sup>9</sup> and the Dacorum Site Allocations DPD and these assessment processes have picked up any general sustainability issues that would be associated with the implementation of the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan, as well as any specific effects associated with any future development at DBC's Local Site Allocation LA1-Marchmont Farm; and potential allocations at Henry Wells Square.

<sup>6</sup> European Union Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) as implemented in the UK by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004 No. 1633)

<sup>7</sup> The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2010 transposed from European Union Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive).

<sup>8</sup> The term European Sites is a collective term that covers Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Birds Directive, and RAMSAR Sites.

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/local-planning-framework/sustainability-appraisals#CS\\_Sustain\\_2012](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/local-planning-framework/sustainability-appraisals#CS_Sustain_2012)

## 2.2 How the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan could benefit from Dacorum Borough Council's vision



Dacorum Borough Council oversees the delivery of services and objectives that are designed to ensure that residents needs are met, effective services are in place and to assist the local economy to grow.

### How the 'Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan' supports the Council's vision

The objectives set by the Council for Dacorum have been taken into account in the development process of the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan. **Appendix 6.3** illustrates how each of these objectives could benefit the specific objectives within the Neighbourhood Plan.



### How Grovehill could benefit from the Council's vision

The delivery of the regeneration programme, led by the Infrastructure and Projects team, to help deliver public realm enhancements to the area has sparked interest from other Councils and influential businesses and landowners. Capital and Regional have purchased the 'Marlowes shopping centre' and key associated properties within the town due to the new investment in the public realm.

The Council and supporting businesses will consider Hemel Hempstead as a Business Improvement District (BID), where local businesses in the town centre choose the issues they feel are important to promote and raise the revenue to pay for these to be actioned.

This will help entice further investors into the area which will have a positive economic knock-on effect to the neighbouring areas with the possible creation of local employment, affordable housing opportunities, increased house prices and better facilities for schools and leisure.

An important investment at Maylands Business Park, supported by an extension to the site, close by to Grovehill, includes a dedicated 'Enterprise and Investment' team to help lead on a 'Maylands Business Partnership', create an incubation hub for start-up businesses and offer support and advice to home workers.



### 3.0 How the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan was prepared

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This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with the help and views of residents, businesses, schools and user groups within Grovehill.

#### **The journey so far - summary of community engagement**

The Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan started when James Doe, Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration, DBC gave a talk on neighbourhood planning at the Neighbourhood Action Group AGM in September 2011. He received a lot of positive feedback to take the idea further. With this in mind DBC applied for the 'Neighbourhood planning 'front-runner' pilot scheme' and was one of the 17 successful applicants. This funded scheme hoped to test radical new rights to give local people much greater ability to shape development in their area. It required Local Authorities to work with community groups and Parish Councils to prepare draft Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders.

The first step in this pilot was to engage with the wider community and in December 2011 a small group of people from the Neighbourhood Action Group, supported by the Council, led the 'Big Neighbourhood Drop-in' consultation event. The launch event saw over 100 people visit Grovehill's community centre, during which the idea of a Neighbourhood Plan was discussed; was well received and subsequently supported.

A survey carried out during the launch event highlighted a number of positive aspects about living or working in Grovehill and a number of opportunities which would make the area even better. The results gave an early indication of the views of the Grovehill community.

A group of residents set up the Grovehill Future Steering Group in February 2012 to discuss the ongoing creation of a Neighbourhood Plan. The Steering Group worked in task groups to receive the survey results and were informed about the new neighbourhood planning process, which was still in its infancy.

### 3.0 How the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan was prepared



Together with the proposed design workshops (supported by Design Council CABE) the Steering Group were able to compile information on Grovehill and set out a number of recommendations to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Once issues were identified several task groups were formed to work on specific issues, e.g. area planning, skills and community, project planning, public relations advertisements and leaflets.

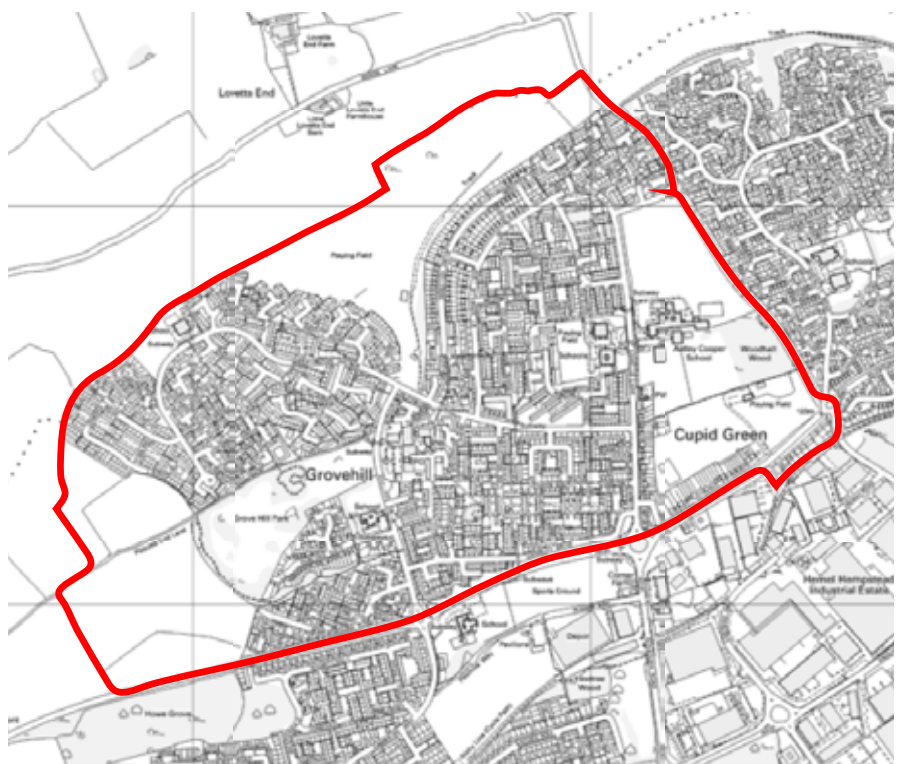
The Group agreed the 'Neighbourhood Plan Area', see **Plan A**, which decided the area to be included within the Neighbourhood Plan and then subsequently became recognised as a 'Neighbourhood Forum' both are legal requirements required to take the project forward.

The Forum undertook numerous consultation events, attended Neighbourhood Action Group meetings and agreed and consulted on the Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan, see **Appendix 6.4**.

A public consultation on the Issues and Options was held in 2014 to help prepare this Neighbourhood Plan for the consideration of residents, users and businesses in Grovehill.

The Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to Dacorum Borough Council for a compliance check and external examination, followed by a local Referendum in order to receive a positive **YES** vote and make the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan a recognised planning document for developers.

**Plan A**



The support of the final Neighbourhood Plan at referendum is essential to ensure that policies and general contents are considered and given significant weight to by DBC, Hertfordshire County Council and developers as part of any future developments within the Plan Area.

### 3.1 The Vision



***'A love and care for the area we live in and a hope that it will continue to grow and improve for our families and their families for years to come'***

The vision emerged from a variety of sources including our December 2011 launch, community engagement events, feedback from letter drops and coffee mornings. Local residents were asked what they liked best about living or working in Grovehill.

- *What they disliked*
- *What they would change,*
- *What features they definitely wanted to keep and*
- *What their vision was for Grovehill.*



From these communication exchanges a lot of ideas were expressed, a common goal was shared and themes emerged.

To develop a strong vision, the Forum used feedback and consultation responses; grouping relevant information under themed headings to ensure the community had captured everything they wanted incorporated within the Neighbourhood Plan. The structure of the final vision was also heavily influenced by these themes.

#### **Grovehill Future Themes**

- Henry Wells Square (Economic)
- Garage Blocks - these overlap with all themes (Economic)
- Quality and Protection of Green Space (Environmental)
- Connectivity and Public Realm Improvements (Environmental)
- Services for the Community (Social)
- Housing and New Development (Social)

### 3.1 The Vision

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#### The Vision

With the assistance of the Neighbourhood Plan it is hoped that Grovehill can improve as a vibrant neighbourhood with a balanced and diverse community. It will be a better place to live, work and enjoy close to the town centre and will support Hemel Hempstead's identity and cultural life.

We believe Grovehill can become known by people, at all stages of their lives, as one of the best areas of Hemel Hempstead in which to live. Grovehill will be recognised as a strong community, with rich urban character, attractive green streets and open spaces with a thriving natural environment. It will be safe and enjoyable to move around on foot and cycle and will be well connected to the rest of Hemel Hempstead and beyond, by public transport.

This vision has remained a constant focus of the Forum to progress the Neighbourhood Plan and the policies that support it.

#### VISION STATEMENT

*In the future, Grovehill will be a **welcoming, vibrant, busy** place to live.*

*We would like Henry Wells Square to be **well lit, safe and attractive**.*

*We would like to see a **wide range of shops**.*

*The medical centre will be **in one building housing a doctor's surgery, dentist, clinic and pharmacy**.*

*Locals and visitors alike will be easily able to navigate their way through Grovehill/Henry Wells Square, by means of **obvious roads, cycle paths and walkways**.*

*Our community centre will **be in a high-quality building with improved facilities, welcoming and open to all**.*

*To help reduce running costs, we would like the building to have **solar panels**.*

*The new development will **complement and integrate** with the existing community.*

*The houses will be **of good quality, solid, stable and secure**.*

*The green spaces will **be enhanced and valued**.*

*There will be **safe spaces and play areas, both indoor and outdoor for children and facilities for the youth of the community, e.g. scout hall and youth club**.*

### 3.2 Key Issues

The Grovehill Future Forum was aware that the Localism Act was still in its infancy and a neighbourhood plan had yet to be completed. As part of the neighbourhood plan’s development, it was important to identify key issues that could affect all aspects of the neighbourhood plan process but also acknowledge the group’s ability to complete the plan. The Forum identified both their strengths and weaknesses, including skills, experience and time constraints, which could affect the progress of the Plan.

The Forum attended a number of workshops and events, led by Design Council CABE and Planning Aid England and benefitted from two feedback days at Design Council CABE’s offices in London. The Forum networked with other neighbourhood groups, learnt about their key issues and how they had overcome similar problems.

At the workshops there were several presentations from planning professionals giving helpful advice about interpreting consultation responses, gathering key issues and how to structure and develop a neighbourhood plan. The Forum were inspired by showing that high density housing areas, previously seen as an issue, could be desirable and could amongst other things accommodate car parking and children’s play areas attractively and safely. The Forum recognised some of the faults in the original design of Grovehill and the opportunity to make Henry Wells Square the best it can be for residents, businesses and visitors to Grovehill.

After the key issues were identified, by grouping responses into short and long term issues and themes, it became clear that there were more common themes and specific areas for improvement.

The Forum’s ‘Issues and Options’<sup>10</sup> consultation in September 2014 incorporated these responses, and the common themes in the topics that were consulted on. **Appendix 6.5** sets out the types of responses received from this consultation.



The policy development also needed to reflect this, but at the same time not be too restrictive to the planning process so as not to dissuade potential developers to deliver.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/regeneration/grovehill-future-project/the-grovehill-journey>



### 3.2 Key Issues

#### Key Issues

##### Short term key issues

<p><b>Identifying a clear, definite purpose for the Neighbourhood Plan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it about redevelopment or refurbishment of Henry Wells Square?</li> <li>• Is it about finding space to create new houses?</li> <li>• Is it about trying to improve the environment that is a legacy of the Radburn design?</li> <li>• Is it about addressing the impact of the proposed Marchmont Farm housing development?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Utilising the in-house skills of the Forum</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited access to retired professional people who could provide valuable experience/time.</li> <li>• Employed members had the skills but limited time to offer.</li> <li>• Issues in filling officer roles such as:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairperson,</li> <li>• Secretary/minute taker</li> <li>• Treasurer</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Lack of numbers in the Forum</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty in maintaining the required 21 members.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Imbalance in Forum representation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More young people needed to join the group</li> </ul>

##### Long term key issues

<p><b>Financial resources to progress our Neighbourhood Plan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbourhood Plans are expensive to create, but as a front runner group we knew we had access to some financial help. But how much?</li> <li>• Will the local authority provide further funding?</li> <li>• How much do we need to finish the process?</li> <li>• Do we need to identify alternative sources of finance?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Finding space for new housing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should we expect assistance from the local authority?</li> <li>• There are many garages/garage blocks throughout Grovehill, that appear to be unused and some are dilapidated.</li> <li>• Garage ownership is mixed, would the local authority actively pursue a solution to the issue, e.g. by facilitating the move of some garage users to alternative blocks to free up whole blocks for housing development?</li> </ul>
<p><b>How to fund the community projects</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viability tests indicated that a high rise development at Henry Wells Square of at least three storeys could be needed to generate enough CIL cash to pay for access road changes.</li> <li>• Will we have to obtain funding through the planning authorities Section 106 or CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) contributions from housing or commercial development?</li> <li>• As a Forum we could attract 15% CIL developer contributions, but ‘as an approved at referendum’ Neighbourhood Plan we could attract 25%, making the process more time critical.</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Aims, Objectives and Opportunities



Grovehill and its residents face a number of economic, environmental and social challenges, including wishing to see the next generation remain in the area. Like other established neighbourhoods Grovehill is in need of some revitalisation. It is the aim of the Neighbourhood Plan to set out clear aims and objectives and exploit key opportunities to address the concerns raised by residents and users. The neighbourhood plan will incorporate strong logical policies that will be able to influence planning decisions in the direction of those improvements.

#### Aims

##### Economic

- ❖ Promote economic growth
- ❖ Regenerate Henry Wells Square

##### Environmental

- ❖ Sustainable transport - Improve/provide connectivity within the area for vehicles, pedestrians and cycles
- ❖ Create amenity spaces for all to enjoy

##### Social

- ❖ Create a community hub
- ❖ Encourage youth involvement in community activities

#### Objectives

##### Economic

- ❖ Re-define the local hub for Grovehill at Henry Wells Square
- ❖ Influence the types of development, ensuring they meet the needs of the community
- ❖ Facilitate growth, through redevelopment and encourage new retail and business units.

##### Environmental

- ❖ Improve and establish connectivity for pedestrian and cyclists and encourage sustainable transport
- ❖ Encourage and improve the natural and built environment in Grovehill.

##### Social

- ❖ Support and maintain community facilities and services within Grovehill
- ❖ Set out a clear vision for Grovehill that most people in the community support
- ❖ Provide opportunities for better amenity facilities, improve the quality of life for all ages.

### 3.3 Aims, Objectives and Opportunities

#### Opportunities

##### Economic

- ❖ The redevelopment of Henry Wells Square is the biggest opportunity for positive change in Grovehill that could realise much of the key aims and objectives;
- ❖ It does require the support of DBC to make this happen since they own the majority of the land in and around the square. Discussions around this opportunity indicate that DBC are willing to liaise with the Forum to progress this, should the opportunity arise; and
- ❖ Encourage new retail businesses and provide 'small business incubator units', to assist the growing 'home working' entrepreneurs to expand their businesses, similar to that of the successful local Maylands Business Centre.

##### Environmental

- ❖ Better connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists, ensure underused spaces such as garage blocks are utilised correctly or replaced with better amenities.

##### Social

- ❖ Work with the local authority, existing management bodies and volunteers to make improvements to existing facilities and to seek grant funding opportunities to provide and improve local social and leisure amenities and after school clubs;
- ❖ Improve access to the digital world for all age groups; and
- ❖ Help to ensure that any new development at DBC's proposed local allocation at LA1-Marchmont Farm, will complement existing housing, with sufficient community amenities for the additional population and encourage the residents of the new Marchmont Farm site to integrate with the existing community.



These key opportunities have greatly influenced our vision and themes, designed to benefit all who live, work and enjoy Grovehill. Whilst these may be the key focus, the neighbourhood plan has been designed to make developers and others think about the wishes of the community and how they can improve and invest in the area.

We are aware that most can only be achieved by major development and investment, but the plan also seeks to encourage minor developments and community projects to help improve the area.

## 4.0 Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan Policies



### Background

Following on from the *Visioning, Key Issues, Aims and Objectives* identified through community engagement events, workshops, consultations and group meetings, the common themes identified earlier have now evolved into strategic and robust policies that form the main focus of the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan. See **Appendix 6.6**.

The following area and theme based policies have been developed in order to influence planning and development outcomes so that they assist in achieving the vision highlighted in the Neighbourhood Plan.

### Policy Summary

#### Area based policies:

- 1) Henry Wells Square
- 2) Garage blocks



#### Theme based policies:

- 1) Enhancing public spaces
- 2) Housing
- 3) Improving access and connectivity



## 4.0 Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan Policies

### Area 1: Henry Wells Square

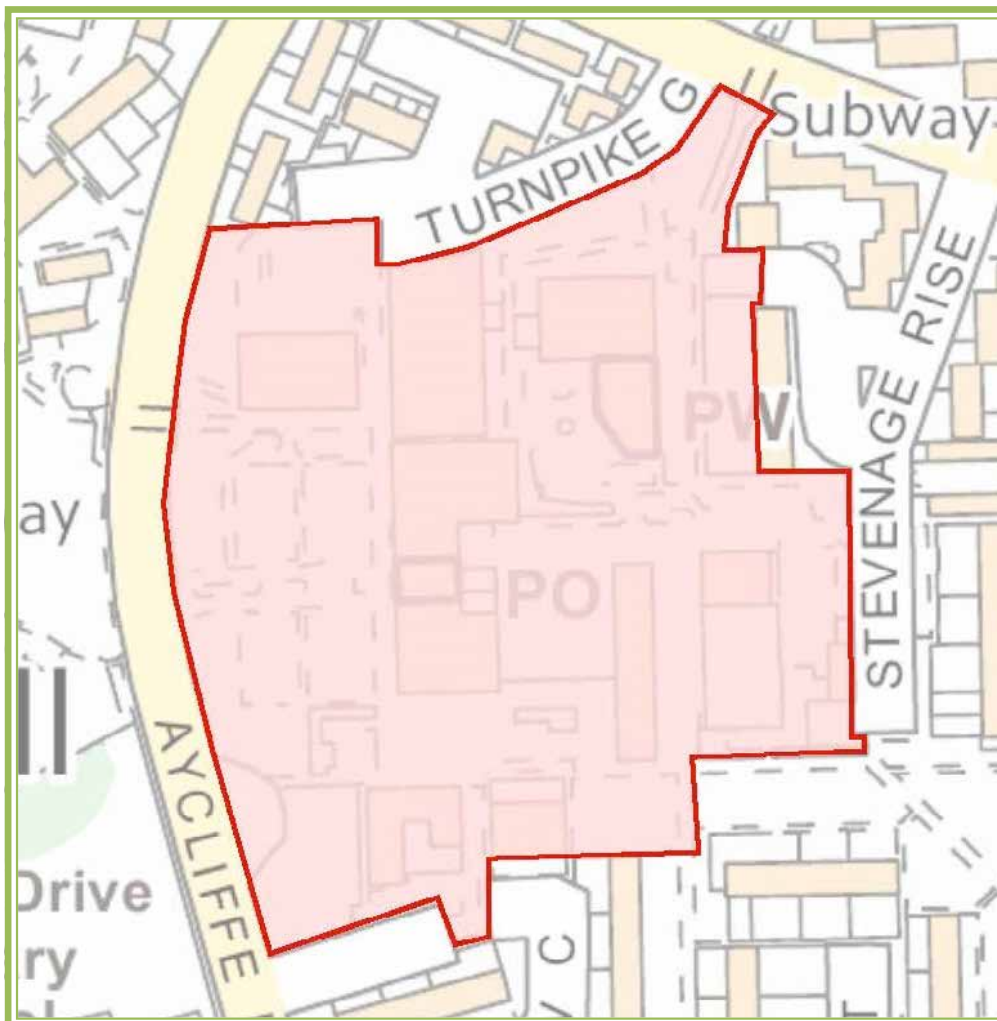
#### Introduction

Henry Wells Square and its close surroundings are bordered by Aycliffe Drive, Turnpike Green, Stevenage Rise and Runcorn Crescent. Henry Wells Square is accessed from Aycliffe Drive and provides Grovehill with essential shopping facilities, doctors surgery, health clinic, dental practice and pharmacy. The rear of Henry Wells Square provides Grovehill with a community centre, youth club, multi-denominational place of worship and access to the retail units for delivery (access to the rear is from Stevenage Rise and Turnpike Green).



As the majority of the site is owned by DBC, the redevelopment boundary area for Henry Wells Square, see map **HW1**, has been designed to optimise the existing roads and landownership to help guide the best regeneration options for potential developers.

**Map HW1**



## 4.0 Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan Policies

### Policy intent

The existing facilities at Henry Wells Square provide key local services for the community within Grovehill and it is therefore essential that this function is retained. However, this area has huge redevelopment potential that can help deliver more housing and create a stronger modern community hub for Grovehill with a full range of services, shops and facilities to meet its needs.

#### **Policy: Area 1 : Henry Wells Square**

**Any new development will complement, integrate and help improve community cohesion. The principles guiding development are:**

##### **1. Land use**

- To incorporate the provision for new homes above the retail/business units, and provide a mix of 1 to 3 bedroom flats. Also, it may be appropriate to provide a mix of other two storey dwellings around the perimeter of Henry Wells Square.
- Height to be determined following urban design analysis.
- To increase the number of units (retail/business) within Henry Wells Square; these should include a variety of retail (A class), business (B1 class) and community facilities (D class).
- To discourage large units such as those attributed to B2 and B8 (industry, storage or distribution) use classes.
- To retain key medical facilities including doctor's surgery, health centre, dental practice, drop-in centre for parents and baby/toddler and pharmacy. Consider a 'one-stop-shop'.
- To ensure all existing places of worship are retained, enhanced or re-provided elsewhere within the site.
- To ensure inclusion of a community centre building; providing space for a variety of users including local clubs, businesses, community events, social occasions such as weddings, productions, dances, a variety of youth activities and faith groups.

##### **2. Access and connectivity**

- To provide safe and convenient access off Aycliffe Drive and include sufficient car parking to meet the needs of the local centre.
- To provide an appropriate delivery and servicing access to the rear with considerate operational hours of this area.
- To provide easy, safe and suitable access to shopping areas and other facilities within the site.
- To provide adequate and accessible parking facilities to support a variety of user groups, including pickup/drop off provisions.

## 4.0 Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan Policies

### 3. Public spaces and landscape design

To encourage a diverse variety of retail outlets and businesses the following design consideration should be taken into account:

- **Enhanced soft and hard landscaping in and around the Square to encourage the use of external spaces for leisure purposes.**
- **Provision of adequate and aesthetic lighting.**
- **Provision of good covered footways between shops for protection from inclement weather.**
- **Informative sign posting, clear street names, unit numbers and names.**



Any large scale development that may affect the operation of businesses must be delivered in phases to ensure the continued operation and provision of existing local services and facilities and to safeguard the interests of established tenants and occupiers by ensuring minimal disruption to businesses.

This policy has been created to help provide high quality design and development opportunities that may arise throughout the duration of this Neighbourhood Plan. Technology options and design tastes will change and we encourage potential developers to undertake design workshops as part of the pre-application planning process.

### Policy Links

This policy supports the NPPF's objective Chapter 2, paragraphs 23, 24 & 26; Chapter 7, paragraphs 56-61; Chapter 8, paragraphs 69, 70, 73 & 75.

It also accord with the design principles set out within the DBC's Core Strategy Policy CS1, CS4, CS12, CS15, CS16 & CS29; DBC's saved Local Plan (1991-2011) Policy 10, 34, 43 and 59 and Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2016) Policy SA3.

## 4.0 Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan Policies



### Area 2: Garage blocks

#### Introduction

Residents would welcome the opportunity to make better use of existing garage blocks to improve the safety, amenity and attractiveness of the public realm. Redeveloping underutilised garage block sites requires a high quality design and layout to make optimal use of land.

#### Policy intent

It is considered that the existing units are of an unsuitable size for modern vehicles and are therefore being used for alternative purposes, such as for storage, or appear to remain vacant or derelict.

These garage blocks cover a large extent of the public areas within Grovehill and currently lack natural surveillance, CCTV or adequate/appropriate lighting.

An opportunity exists to better utilise these spaces for the benefit of our community. Therefore the intention is to create a safer environment, make better use of underutilised sites, help satisfy local housing needs and provide quality hard and soft landscape areas.

#### **Policy: Area 2: Garage blocks**

**New development will be supported as long as the garage blocks are no longer in use or in demand; this can be demonstrated by consulting the immediate community.**

#### **Any redevelopment or refurbishment schemes will:**

- **Complement and integrate well with the surrounding area.**
- **Be designed to prevent crime and facilitate natural surveillance, with appropriate street lighting and provision of CCTV surveillance where appropriate.**
- **Include planting and landscaping to reduce the visual impact of the development.**

#### Policy Links:

This policy supports the NPPF's objective Chapter 4, paragraph 39 and Chapter 6 paragraph 51 and 58.

It also accord with the design principles set out within DBC's Core Strategy Policies CS11, CS12 and CS13, and DBC's saved Local Plan (1991-2011) Policy 10 and 58.



## 4.0 Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan Policies



### Theme 1: Enhancing Public Spaces

#### Introduction

Open spaces are very important to the Grovehill community, the residents agree that the abundance of green space makes it a special place to live, as well as it contributing towards improving the quality of life, in terms of health, social and cultural wellbeing.

#### Policy intent

It is therefore a logical intention to protect and enhance our existing open and green spaces and require new developments to add to the quality of green spaces, enhancing provision where possible. It is also an intention that public spaces will be safe, welcoming, vibrant community places, providing activities for all age groups, comfortable seating, and a possible area for the display and appreciation of artwork.

#### Policy: Theme 1: Enhancing Public Spaces

New development and improvements will aim to provide:

- High quality and well designed public spaces.
- Environmentally sensitive lighting, where necessary, to provide safe and secure off-road routes.
- Adequate and high quality street furniture within and along important routes.
- High quality seating and covered areas.
- Recreational facilities, especially for children and young people.
- Planting and landscaping to reduce the visual impact of the development and improve the natural environment and consider suitable wildlife corridors.
- The installation of artwork and temporary exhibitions in public areas.
- Better public access between green spaces.
- A greater range of leisure uses in urban green spaces.

#### Policy Links

This policy supports the NPPF's objectives (specifically paragraphs 17,57,69 & 70).

It also accords to DBC's Core Strategy Policies CS12, CS13, CS23, CS25 and CS26, DBC's Local Plan (1991-2011) Policy 116, as well as DBC's Green Infrastructure Plan (2011).

## 4.0 Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan Policies

### Theme 2: Housing

#### Introduction

The Proposal of LA1 - Marchmont Farm allocated within the Dacorum's Core Strategy, with more detailed requirements being stated within the Site Allocation DPD is a large-scale housing development for 300-350 homes\*.



This and the opportunity for more housing within Henry Wells Square are the key areas for large-scale development in Grovehill. Other housing development may also come forward over time on the garage block sites or as add-ons and small-scale fringe development to the neighbourhood would also be covered by this policy.

*\*This is an indicative figure - see Appendix 6.1 for more information*

#### Policy intent

This policy should ensure all new development complements and integrates with the existing fabric and enhance the neighbourhood where possible. Any new housing development should also be of good quality and design.

#### **Policy: Theme 2: Housing**

**New residential development will complement and integrate with the existing community by satisfying the following requirements:**

##### **1. Land use**

**Any new development shall provide a mix of new homes to help meet local needs. In particular, regard should be given to the following housing types:**

- **Smaller homes and larger family homes.**
- **Accommodation for the elderly.**
- **Properties available for ownership and rent (including affordable and socially supported housing).**
- **The provision of a combination of living and small-scale employment spaces will also be encouraged (i.e. live/work units).**

##### **2. Access and connectivity**

- **Provide safe, street level access for pedestrians and cyclists.**
- **Good public transport connections.**
- **Well designed, designated pedestrian and cycle routes to link all parts of Grovehill.**
- **Off road parking will be preferable to the creation of new garage blocks.**

## 4.0 Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan Policies

### 3. Building design

- **New homes should be constructed to an appropriate height to reflect the local character, maintain a low skyline, preserve areas with existing open characteristics within Grovehill and include suitable wildlife corridors (retaining existing hedgerows and trees).**
- **Houses should be of a good quality design, use materials to complement and enhance the existing vernacular and comply with modern energy efficient standards (C rating of the Energy performance rating: EU directive 2002/91; Housing Act 2004; Energy performance of buildings regulations SI 2007/991).**
- **New homes should provide an adequate minimum area per room in accordance with the relevant space standards. Consideration should be given to the sensitive provision of storage facilities for refuse collection bins (see DBC's Refuse Storage Guidance Note 2015).**
- **Where garages are provided, these will be of appropriate size commensurate to modern vehicles**

### 4. Public spaces and landscaping design

- **New developments should be softened by the use of appropriate landscaping and planting. Such planting should not undermine the structure or integrity of any new buildings.**
- **All existing trees affected by any development proposal should be surveyed and assessed in accordance with BS 5837. If a development results in the loss of any woodland trees, they should be replaced with saplings of an appropriate species and planted elsewhere within existing woodland areas.**
- **Consideration should be given to the inclusion of play facilities specifically for children and young people in all age-groups.**
- **There should be adequate and high-quality public spaces (including the provision of benches and covered areas) provided along important pedestrian routes within the housing development.**

### Policy Links

This policy supports the NPPF's objective Chapter 6, paragraph 50; Chapter 7, paragraphs 56-61; Chapter 8, paragraphs 69, 70, 73 & 75.

It also accords with the design principles set out within the DBC's Core Strategy Policy CS1, CS10, CS11, CS12, CS13, CS18 & CS29; DBC's saved Local Plan (1991-2011) Policy 10, 18, 21 and Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2016) Policy SA3, SA8 and LA1.

## 4.0 Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan Policies

### Theme 3: Improving Access and Connectivity

#### Introduction

Grovehill was designed for the most part with a modern grid, in favour of the car with every house having access to parking or a garage. The layout also includes an extensive network of off-street pathways, including underpasses that are now underused.



#### Policy intent

To enable residents and visitors to easily navigate through Grovehill and new developments with good access to bus services and a welcoming network of pedestrian and cycling routes that promote well used established networks, such as the Nickey Line.

To provide safe, accessible and well sign-posted routes balancing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, passenger transport, powered two wheeled vehicles and other motor vehicles, in that order, and also ensure appropriate access for people with disabilities.

#### **Policy: Theme 3: Improving Access and Connectivity**

**The design of all new development will:**

- **Incorporate well-designed shared footpath and cycle routes, with the appropriate signage, ground markings and crossing points.**
- **Where practicable, consider the removal of underused and unpopular underpasses and install street level crossing.**
- **Incorporate appropriate traffic calming measures.**
- **Provide garages designed for modern vehicle dimensions.**
- **Provide safe and secure off-road routes with environmentally sensitive lighting.**
- **Provide clear wayfinding for new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes.**

**If the development proposes the removal of underpasses, the community requires the delivery of a suitable alternative crossing close by.**

#### Policy Links

This policy supports the NPPF's objectives Chapter 4, Paragraph 35 and Chapter 8, Paragraph 75.

It also accords with the design principles set out within DBC's Core Strategy Policy CS8, CS11, CS12 and CS13; DBC's saved Local Plan (1991-2011) Policy 61 and 62; Site Allocations DPD (2016) Policy SA3 and the Dacorum Cycling Strategy (2009). Available at [www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/planning-development/spatial-planning---10-01-11---cycling-strategy](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/planning-development/spatial-planning---10-01-11---cycling-strategy).

## 4.1 Grovehill Future Community Projects



### Background

The community has shown real enthusiasm in helping the Forum to identify issues and many great ideas have also been proposed. Whilst these issues have helped form the final and important policies for the plan, there were a number of smaller elements that could easily be addressed and delivered with the support of DBC, HCC, local groups and volunteers outside the formal planning process but alongside the Neighbourhood Plan.

As those elements would not be dependent upon any major development project, it was agreed to identify a small number of community projects with achievable goals that should be actioned if the opportunity arose.

### What are Community Projects?

These are designed to achieve the 'biggest impact' to help regenerate Grovehill as a vibrant and balanced community. The regeneration of a community such as Grovehill requires actions to change perceptions and help increase the confidence of businesses and developers to invest in the area. The Community Projects chosen to help achieve these outcomes have been divided into **Social**, **Economic** and **Environmental** projects.

As with most projects it is often difficult to find partners to take these on but by making them into separate projects it allows the Forum, Borough Councillors and any interested groups/residents to help identify volunteers to carry out any, or all, individual priorities that interest them.



### These include:

- ❖ Identifying projects for allocation of monies from CIL and S106.
- ❖ Liaising with residents' associations to identify potential streets for refurbishment.
- ❖ Requesting grant resources from DBC and County Councillors.
- ❖ The research of and bidding for external funds.
- ❖ Liaison with DBC to 'piggyback' off ongoing or planned projects.
- ❖ Presenting enhancement plans to DBC and/or HCC.

## 4.1 Grovehill Future Community Projects



### Economic: Community Projects

#### Economic: Community Project 1 – Family fun day

Help organise a ‘family day’, to encourage families to Henry Wells Square and/or nearby parks to increase footfall to the centre and encourage local businesses to boost the ‘shopping experience’ for visitors.

#### Delivery options

*Volunteer groups to arrange activities to encourage families to attend.*

*E.g. help businesses create a leisure environment with outdoor seating and tables etc.*

#### Economic: Community Project 2 - Wayfinding improvements

To identify wayfinding options and preferable routes, to encourage visitors and users to access the main facilities.

#### Delivery Options

*Volunteer groups to identify strategic points of interest or footpaths that would benefit from wayfinding signage to help visitors and users increase footfall for businesses, Henry Wells Square, etc.*

*E.g. Liaise with HCC/DBC for funding/support to identify areas in need and provide new or improved signage.*

#### Economic: Community Project 3 - Neighbourhood Centre Improvements

Liaise with businesses and DBC to help improve the façade and surrounds of Henry Wells Square.

Provide and improve renewable energy sources

#### Delivery Options

*Work with DBC and businesses to seek funding*

*E.g. Arrange a deep clean of paving, clean awnings, identify areas for new bins and benches.*

*E.g. Investigate renewable energy grant funding options and identify areas to use them.*

## 4.1 Grovehill Future Community Projects



### Environmental: Community Projects

#### **Environmental: Community Project 1- Improving access and movement**

Residents who need to use wheelchairs or pushchairs know the problems associated with uneven pavements and badly maintained dropped kerbs, so that those every day hazards that make life a little bit less pleasant, could be eliminated.

##### **Delivery options**

*Liaison with HCC to achieve a programme of improvements such as pavement widening or review road layouts and improve dropped kerbs.*

*E.g. Help identify local areas for improvement and priority of action.*

#### **Environmental: Community Project 2 - Improving cycle routes**

Undertake an annual survey of our cycle routes to identify where improvements would be most effective.

##### **Delivery options**

*Liaise with HCC and local cycle groups to consider achievable timescales and viable options.*

*E.g. Consider joining existing routes and/or reducing 'fear of crime' along existing routes, create volunteer days to help keep underused routes open.*

#### **Environmental: Community Project 3 - Improving safety**

Improve lighting in areas where safety or the perception of safety would be enhanced.

##### **Delivery options**

*Liaise with HCC on their lighting programme and improvement options.*

*E.g. Undertake a local survey to identify areas for improvements, encourage change to more efficient LED lighting, request real time passenger information (RTPI) screens and effective lighting to bus shelters.*

## 4.1 Grovehill Future Community Projects



### **Environmental: Community Project 4 - Regenerating streets**

An important message within the Neighbourhood Plan is that ‘*Grovehill is a good place in which to live for people at all stages of their lives*’. Improvements could be achieved by choosing one or more streets, where there is a real opportunity to integrate the community by investing in the environment. Improving a couple of streets would send a message to the wider community that Grovehill is ‘on the rise’ and is therefore a good place to invest, whether properties are rented or owned. These improvements could help promote the conversion of neglected properties back to residential use. If successful this could be rolled out across all streets in Grovehill.

#### **Delivery options**

*Physical improvements to smaller areas such as realigning parking to make the streets more useable for street play can encourage and help bring the community out of their homes and into the street space.*

*E.g. Help prioritise streets for improvement and help facilitate volunteers to take action.*

### **Environmental: Community Project 5 - Tree planting**

Grovehill has pleasant green areas with many trees, but further improvement is possible. A tree planting programme\* would enhance Grovehill further and give opportunities for community involvement.

*\* Using suitable trees as advised by DBC.*

#### **Delivery options**

*The creation of a community orchard, achieved through external support such as the Woodlands Trust providing interest for children and adults.*

*E.g. Hold a volunteer spring flower planting/clear up day.*



## 4.1 Grovehill Future Community Projects



### Social: Community Projects

#### Social: Community Project 1 - Improving youth leisure facilities

The Forum is keen to help provide additional facilities for young people: a fenced area which would be suitable for basketball, five-a-side football, rounders and netball, etc. This would provide focused healthy leisure time activities and a skate park or a BMX track would provide a long-term, low maintenance facility which would be appreciated by lots of our young people and give them a sense of identity and an allocated area of which they can take ownership.

#### Delivery options

*Liaison with HCC/DBC to understand their programme for improvements and what financial support may be available or undertake separate community fundraising to support this.*

*E.g. Carry out a 'local needs' survey and prepare a business case for funding.*

#### Social: Community Project 2 - Improving play area facilities

Residents would welcome upgraded play facilities and propose the creation of shelters and seating areas for parents and grandparents to enjoy while the children play. This would be a relatively low-cost opportunity to provide a more pleasant experience. The Forum would also identify opportunities to create new play areas for toddlers and infants.

#### Delivery options

*Undertake community fundraising, seek external funding from DBC & County Councillors, DBC or HCC to provide funding and identify suitable equipment options/new areas for play.*

*E.g. Carryout a local needs survey and explore other play area sites.*

#### Social: Community Project 3 - Improving fitness

Restoration or creation of an outdoor gym and fitness trail in park areas to encourage a healthy lifestyle for all ages.

#### Delivery Options

*E.g. Liaise with Local Councillors and DBC to consult residents on equipment needs and funding options, agree community hub area, explore other sites and feedback results.*

#### Social Community Project 4 - Improving community facilities management and maintenance

The Forum will work with DBC, existing management bodies and volunteers to make improvements to existing facilities.

#### Delivery options

*Identify areas for improvement through liaison with owners/facilities managers and work with the community to provide new and improved facilities.*

*E.g. Carry out 'local needs' survey and seek grant funding opportunities.*

## 5.0 Delivering the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan

### Who will deliver the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan?

Once the Neighbourhood Plan is supported at referendum it will become an 'official' planning document recognised by DBC and will be taken into account when deciding planning applications. These Neighbourhood Plan policies will be considered by the Council when planning applications are processed within the neighbourhood. The Forum will monitor the delivery of development and help facilitate the delivery of the Community Projects outlined within this document. See **Chapter 4.1**.

### Infrastructure Delivery Mechanisms?

This includes the delivery of infrastructure directly on site through planning obligations or as a result of developer contributions towards infrastructure, e.g. new sustainable transport links. Infrastructure will primarily be delivered by DBC and other agencies with some funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)<sup>11</sup>. However, where opportunities allow, legal agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) (S106), will be sought to deliver improvements alongside a development, e.g. affordable housing. It is important to understand the appropriate use of both mechanisms in order to maximise delivery options.

Delivery of infrastructure projects can be undertaken by a range of groups including the Forum and supporting partnerships/agencies. DBC will assist in the delivery of infrastructure items falling within its statutory duties including open space works and those to encourage regeneration.

Grovehill also sits within the administrative area of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), who as the highways authority have responsibility for 'traffic infrastructure' and 'transport systems' across the county. The principles of creating these sustainable connections lie at the heart of all the transport policies within the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan, e.g. provision of footpath & cycle routes.

The Forum will work to encourage a strong partnership between the community, DBC, HCC, major landowners and stakeholders to address transport and other highway led issues, as the neighbourhood grows and develops. Both HCC and DBC sit on a joint infrastructure advisory group for the consideration of allocating wider CIL funds to specific projects.



<sup>11</sup> General summary of CIL available at <http://www.pas.gov.uk/community-infrastructure-levy>

## 5.0 Delivering the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan



### 1) What is CIL?

- A taxation mechanism for developer contributions.
- A fund to contribute towards infrastructure needed to support the development of the Council's area.
- A funding source for local improvements via a neighbourhood proportion of CIL
- A charge per square metre of floorspace for new developments.
- Once introduced the charge is mandatory on all liable developments.

### What is CIL used for?

- To help pay for infrastructure needed to support new development.
- But **not** to remedy existing deficiencies unless the new scheme will make it worse.
- Councils must spend the income on infrastructure<sup>12</sup>

### How CIL will support the Neighbourhood Plan

CIL will be collected from all liable developments within the area in accordance with the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended). A proportion of the CIL receipts received from developments in Grovehill will be used to support the development of Grovehill in liaison with the local community. The proportion is set at **15%**, but rises to **25%** following a successful referendum and the Neighbourhood Plan is subsequently made<sup>13</sup>.

The major development proposals on the edge of Grovehill at LA1-Marchmont Farm offers the prospect of both Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 obligations to address major issues such as affordable housing, community integration, open space improvements and any other(s) that are identified in the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

The general arrangements for the allocation and administration of CIL funds will be set out within the DBC 'CIL Governance Manual'<sup>14</sup>.

The CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended), requires DBC to consult with the local community over the use of its Neighbourhood Plan, a task which will be undertaken by the local Councillors for Grovehill.

A vital and on-going role for the Neighbourhood Plan is to set out the priorities and assist local Councillors as to how and where the local proportion of CIL should be spent. This includes the delivery of the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan and its Community Projects.

National planning guidance states:

*The use of neighbourhood funds should match the priorities expressed by local communities, including priorities set out formally in neighbourhood plans.*

<sup>12</sup> Infrastructure in this context does not extend to the provision of affordable housing which is delivered through S106 planning obligations & Planning Obligations may not be used on infrastructure projects for which the Council has identified CIL funding and vice versa.

<sup>13</sup> Reference to 'Made' means the plan is approved at referendum and then adopted by DBC as planning policy for a neighbourhood plan.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning>

## 5.0 Delivering the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan

### 2) What are Section 106 agreements?

- They are planning obligations (private voluntary agreements) made between local authorities and developers covering a limited amount of site specific infrastructure and affordable housing.
- They become attached to a planning permission, in order to make acceptable a development which would otherwise not be.
- The obligation binds the land itself and is enforceable against successors in ownership.

#### When can S106 be used?

Planning Obligations are used for three purposes:

- **Prescribe** the nature of development (for example, requiring a given portion of housing to be affordable).
- **Compensate** for loss or damage created by a development (for example, loss of open space).
- **Mitigate** a development's impact (for example, through increased public transport provision).

#### How S106 will support the Neighbourhood Plan.

The use of Section 106 will be limited to the delivery of affordable housing and other proposals (e.g. road access) that are directly related to the application site and the works taking place. The Council is not allowed to enter into agreements for infrastructure items for which CIL funds are identified or for which five or more agreements have previously been completed.



### 3) Infrastructure Delivery Plan

The Forum should aim to have its priorities recognised in the wider infrastructure planning work where appropriate, and through the Council's 'Infrastructure Delivery Plan'<sup>15</sup>. This is reviewed on an annual basis to update the infrastructure needs arising from new and planned growth.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/cil>



## 5.0 Delivering the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan

In order to deliver opportunities identified within the Neighbourhood Plan, the Forum will require the assistance of a developer/investor and DBC to achieve any major redevelopment or changes.

The Forum should consider a review of Community Projects every 3-5 years, to ensure they remain relevant to the aims and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.

These Community Projects can then be prioritised or removed and further additions to the list can be included where projects have either stalled or been completed. Such projects should be discussed and identified in Dacorum Borough Council’s ‘Infrastructure Delivery Plan’.

The Forum will also need to be aware of, and actively seek out, other sources of funding, as shown in **Table A** below.



**Table A**

✓ Local fundraising	✓ School fundraising
✓ HCC locality grants	✓ Volunteers
✓ Central or local Government schemes	✓ Anyone with the vision and the personalities to take direct action
✓ Community groups	✓ School fundraising

Each and all of these sources could enable the Forum to bring forward smaller aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan and/or undertake the larger priorities, which will make a real difference to the future of Grovehill, its residents, businesses and visitors.

The Forum and local Councillors should seek to maximise grant funding opportunities to help deliver the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan.





