



ST ALBANS CITY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL, – STRATEGIC LOCAL PLAN 2011 – 2031
DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION
CONSULTATION RESPONSE
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ON BEHALF OF HCC SERVICES

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS REPRESENTATIONS

- 1.1 On behalf of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) as a service provider, the opportunity to comment upon the draft Strategic Local Plan is welcomed. It represents a continuation of previous joint working between St Albans City and District Council (SACDC) as the Local Planning Authority, (LPA), responsible for spatial planning and HCC over the past 8 years. The LPA have consulted on various different iterations of the Core Strategy, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) in 2012, and most recently in June 2014, upon the SKM Green Belt Review and Sites and Boundaries Study.
- 1.2 By responding positively to the comments which are made in this representation, the LPA can seek to ensure that any subsequent pre submission consultation which they make to the Secretary of State complies with the guidance contained at paragraph 182 in the National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF), and is :
- Positively prepared
 - Justified (considering alternatives and based on proportionate evidence)
 - Effective
 - And
 - Consistent with National Policy,

and, will therefore maximise the prospects of the Plan which follows being sound when it is subjected to Examination in Public.

- 1.3 Given the length of the history here, it is worth reflecting on the consultation responses previously sent by HCC to the LPA. It is also relevant to consider that, with the exception of our comments on the SKM Green Belt review and potential strategic Green Belt releases in June 2014, previous representations were made in the context of the LPA consulting upon a housing trajectory of 250 dwellings per annum (dpa), over a plan period to 2028, (4250 dwellings to 2028 in total). Reprs on the Core Strategy in 2011, and the IDP in 2012 were made on that basis.
- 1.4 The current SLP consultation posits 436 dpa to 2031, (with policy SLP 8 in the current consultation identifying a total additional homes requirement of 8720 dwellings to 2031). The education infrastructure and land use budget implications of that scale of growth were set out, in detail, in the HCC response on the SKM Green Belt study and potential Green Belt Strategic Site releases in June 2014.

Core Strategy Representations in February 2011

- 1.5 The previous HCC service representations on the Core Strategy comprised two main elements.
- firstly overarching service comments, Core Strategy Consultation response prepared by Development Services, and

- secondly, a separate body of evidence relating to the need to plan for additional secondary school capacity in SACDC. That separate piece of work was produced by Town Planning Consultants, Vincent and Gorbing (V and G)

The LPA has both submissions, but they are available on request if required again.

- 1.6 It is worth noting that, with regard to secondary school needs, the 2011 HCC consultation response concluded :

In summary, (see Section 7 of Vincent and Gorbing Delivering Secondary Expansion) from a secondary perspective, it is considered that it would be helpful if the Core Strategy can identify education reserve allocations on land as indicated in the accompanying Vincent and Gorbing report, (2 at Harpenden and 4 at St Albans). The confirmation of which sites should be allocated in any subsequent Site Allocations Document will be dependent upon the views of the LPA, and subsequent technical investigations.

Source Para 6.2 of HCC Core Strategy Repls February 2011

- 1.7 The V and G work identified that, for the purposes of engagement in the spatial planning process, a site at Lower Luton Road, Harpenden, known as Site F was considered to be prudently required to be identified over the plan period. In addition, it was considered that it would be appropriate for education allocations to be made on HCC rural estate land to the west of Roundwood Park Secondary school in Harpenden, and at 4 sites at St Albans. (Refer to section 7.12 and 7.13 of the Vincent and Gorbing St Albans Secondary Schools, Delivering Secondary School Expansion – Town Planning Appraisal Summary Report January 2011 for full information).

HCC Service Position Update June 2014

- 1.8 The current consultation SLP reflects potential growth areas which were identified in the SKM Green Belt Review – Sites and Boundary Study, a piece of independently produced work, commissioned by the LPA as a companion to the independent assessment of Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAN). Together, the two documents have informed the Development Strategy which is contained in the SLP consultation.
- 1.9 It may be helpful to revisit HCC's comments on the issues it is necessary for the spatial plan to deal with and reconcile in a reasonable amount of detail, insofar as it relates to those broad locations for development which have been identified in the consultation Plan, at East Hemel, East St Albans and North West Harpenden.
- 1.10 It was agreed with SACDC officers that it would be helpful if HCC identified the implications of the selection for development of each of the different strategic growth areas in the update document. A text only version of the document without appendices is attached at Appendix 1. Section 2.0 of the document was a resume of previous representations, and cross referenced to the previous work carried out by V and G.

- 1.11 Section 3.1 to 3.14 of the document dealt with the education needs and land use budget implications of development of the two strategic land parcels to the east of Hemel Hempstead contained in the current consultation.
- 1.12 Those representations identified that for the scale of growth which was being proposed at East Hemel Hempstead it would be necessary for the LPA to deliver one 6-8 form entry (f.e) secondary school site, and up to three 2fe primary school sites.
- 1.13 Sections 3.15 to 3.22 of the document dealt with the education needs and land use budget implications of development to the east of St Albans as identified in the current consultation. Our comments on that development (referred to as S3 in the SKM study) also cross referenced with the V and G representations regarding new secondary school capacity from February 2011, identified that

In addition to primary school requirements, the additional child yield arising from development at S3 would amplify and emphasise the need for the LPA to respond positively to the evidence submitted to inform the Core Strategy in February 2011.

Insofar as it related to the St Albans Secondary Primary Planning Area, those representations identified that it would be helpful if the Local Planning Authority could make education allocations in relation to land:

- **At Site C : Land north west of St Albans Road, St Albans**
- **At Site D : Land south of House Lane, St Albans**
- **At Site K : Land south of Holyrood Crescent, St Albans**
- **At Site L : Land south of Butterfield Crescent, St Albans.....**

Source : paragraph 3.19 HCC Service Position Update June 2014

- 1.14 For ease of reference, an extract from the key plan which formed part of the Vincent and Gorbing work is appended to these representations as Appendix 2.
- 1.15 Paragraph 3.20 of the update also commented that :

...it is integral to any release of strategic sites for housing at St Albans, that the LPA also ensures that the strategic local plan makes appropriate provision for new secondary school places. In so doing the local planning authority will be meeting the requirement set out at paragraph 72 in the NPPF for local planning authorities to :

Take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that might widen the choice in education,

And to

Assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for....education...and its ability to meet forecast demands, as required by paragraph 162 of the NPPF.

- 1.16 Paragraphs 3.26 to 3.32 dealt with the implications of selection for development of land to the north west of Harpenden. In addition to repeating the text quoted at 1.15 above, with replacement of the words 'at St Albans' with 'at Harpenden' HCC commented that :

In addition to primary school requirements, the additional child yield arising from development at (S5...the Luton Road location now featured in the SLP)...would amplify and emphasise the need for the LPA to respond positively to the evidence submitted to inform the Core Strategy in February 2011.

Source : paragraph 3.29 HCC Service Position Update June 2014

- 1.17 The quote above, at 1.15, relating to positively dealing with this need representing a demonstration by the LPA of its commitment to taking on board the advice in the NPPF at paragraphs 72 and 162 was also repeated.

2.0 FURTHER CONTEXT SET BY THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

- 2.1 Further context to the comments which follow in this document is provided by the NPPF. It is helpful to other stakeholders in the process, including colleagues in the Childrens' Services Department of the County Council, to identify relevant sections of the NPPF considered to be relevant. It is worth observing that the land take requirements of a secondary school are most unlikely to be capable of being met on land within the existing urban area, and equally, the land use budget implications of a secondary school (as identified in the HCC Services Position Update June 2014), have significant implications for spatial planning which need to be factored in by the LPA.

The NPPF and Green Belt

- 2.2 Paras 79 to 92 deal with Green Belt. Paragraph 83 states that:

"Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their areas should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation and review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider Green Belt boundaries having regard to their permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period". (My underlining).

- 2.3 The NPPF makes it clear that new schools are not an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt. Therefore, in the absence of an appropriate land allocation, or in the absence of an appropriate policy, the only way of securing planning permission for a school would be via a demonstration of very special circumstances. That brings with it uncertainty for all stakeholders in the process including the education authority, parents, local residents etc.

The NPPF and Plan Making

- 2.4 Paragraph 156 of the NPPF advised that local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area in their local plan. This should include strategic priorities to deliver :

- The provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities (para 156 4th bullet)

2.5 Paragraph 157 emphasises that as part of Local Plan making, it is crucial that Local Plans should :

- Plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of this framework (the NPPF para 157 1st bullet).
- Indicate broad locations for strategic development on a key diagram and land use designations on a proposals map. (para 157 4th bullet).

Plan Making and the Use of Proportionate Evidence Base

2.6 With regard to infrastructure provision, paragraph 162 of the NPPF emphasises local planning authorities should work with other authorities and providers to :

- Assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for '.....'education'... and its ability to meet forecast demands'.

Requirement to Plan Strategically

2.7 Para 178 articulates the fact that ;

"Public bodies have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those which relate to **strategic priorities** set out at in paragraph 156. The Government expects joint working on areas of common interest to be diligently undertaken for the mutual benefit of neighbouring authorities".

2.8 The fact that this duty to cooperate includes both Districts and Counties in two tier areas of Local Government is confirmed at paragraph 180 where both are encouraged to 'co-operate with each other on relevant issues'.

2.8 These paragraphs confirm the fact that it is the Local Plan process which should be :

- Reviewing Green Belt boundaries capable of enduring beyond the Plan period,
- That the question of provision of additional education capacity is a proper strategic consideration,
- That new schools are not an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt,
- That identifying that development to the East of Hemel can be delivered via a jointly prepared Area Action Plan, with Dacorum Borough Council is an appropriate way to seek to plan for that area
- The close working between SACDC and HCC officers which has taken place to date is right and proper and should be maintained for the purpose of good planning and to maximise the prospects of producing a sound Plan.

- That the SLP should be reconciling other infrastructure needs as a strategic issue where there is otherwise a conflict between what might be required and fundamental Green Belt policy.

By ensuring that these matters are positively addressed, the LPA can maximise the prospects of ensuring that the tests for Sound plan production set out at paragraph 182 of the NPPF, (repeated at 1.2 of this document) are achieved.

The Timmins Judgment and detached playing fields

- 2.9 Since the Core Strategy representations were submitted to the Local Planning Authority in 2011, and the IDP in 2012, case law regarding the interpretation of the NPPF has begun to emerge which is also pertinent to the emerging Spatial Plan. The judgment of Mr Justice Green in the case between Timmins and Lymn and Gedling Borough Council and Westerleigh Group, handed down in March 2014, confirmed that the introduction of a cemetery or playing field uses (which was a 'not inappropriate' form of development in the superseded Planning Policy Guidance Note 2, Green Belts), is an inappropriate use of land in the Green Belt. This means that in the absence of an appropriate policy or land use allocation, it would be necessary for an applicant for planning permission to demonstrate very special circumstances to secure planning permission for playing field, or detached playing field use.
- 2.10 This point is relevant insofar as the education allocations requested in the HCC/V and G reps 2011 is concerned, since in the case of the rural estate land to the west of Roundwood Park school, and in respect of the St Albans education allocations at Sites C, D, K and L, their use as detached playing fields to support the expansion of existing schools would require an explicit education allocation.
- 2.11 Without an explicit education allocation detached or expanded playing fields would be inappropriate.

3.0 COMMENTS ON THE CONSULTATION DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

- 3.1 Taking into account the NPPF context and the previous representations made by HCC from a service provision perspective, this section comments on the content of the Consultation Draft Strategic Local Plan. Comments are made using the section numbering and sub headings contained within the consultation document.

Section 1 Introduction – 1.7

- 3.2 It is important to note that the previous consultation Core Strategy in 2010/11 put forward a housing trajectory associated with a build rate of 250 dpa to 2028. The current consultation features an increased build rate of 436 dpa to 2031, reflecting what the LPA considers to be a defensible position with regard to the OAN once the constraints relating to the District are taken in to account.
- 3.3 In general terms, the observation can be made that the uplift in housing delivery and housing land supply set out in the SLP is achieved via a combination of the Strategic Site (SS) releases from the Green Belt. These

are set out in the SLP, together with around 500 units which the SLP and background SKM Green Belt review work confirm will be delivered via a series of 'Adjustments to the Green Belt' which will be left until the Detailed Local Plan, (DLP) stage.

- 3.4 It is important for the LPA to note that the additional infrastructure demands generated by these additional units and in particular, the certainty and timings of some of the infrastructure needs are not factored in to the IDP which dates from 2012, though it has clearly been revised to try to anticipate some of the needs.

Modification Suggested

The IDP document and schedule of infrastructure set out at Appendix 5 of the Consultation Document therefore requires comprehensive review in order to accurately reflect the scale and timing of needs generated by new housing proposed across the District.

- 3.5 HCC look forward to continuing to work in constructive partnership with SACDC to update the IDP. The comment at 1.25 of the SLP relating to the continuation of the long standing approach to co-operation and multilateral working is welcomed and supported by HCC. In the case of the Area Action Plan that will be required for Hemel Hempstead East that will require tripartite working with Dacorum Borough Council.

Section 2, paragraph 2.4 The St Albans City and District Context

- 3.6 The acknowledgment of the fact that there are excellent schools within the City and District is noted. It is appropriate to note that those schools have limited capacity to expand. The need to provide additional school capacity both through identifying development management policies which enable the maximisation of use of sites, and by identifying new education allocations in the Green Belt will be essential in ensuring that it is possible to match delivery of infrastructure to new housing.

Section 2, paragraph 2.8

- 3.7 The LPA notes the trend towards urban intensification and the loss of employment land to residential redevelopment. All of this development generates school age children who require educating and, as part of the strategic challenge to be reconciled by the SLP, needs to be considered in the light of declining capacity to meet the need to provide new school places in existing schools.

Key Issues and Challenges Facing the District

- 3.8 The LPA has set out those issues it considers to be key issues and challenges facing the District at paragraph 2.18. HCC would observe that the provision of new schools, (which by definition are likely to be in the Green Belt), is not an appropriate form of development in the NPPF at paragraph 89.

Modification Suggested

Empirical evidence submitted to date demonstrates to the Local Planning Authority that there is a need to provide new primary and secondary school sites to meet needs arising from existing demand. In addition, the new housing development which is planned across the District, will, in the plan period to 2031, generate a need for new education infrastructure provision.

The provision of new schools is not an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt.

With the exception of the 'Broad Location for Development' to the east of Hemel Hempstead, the SLP provides no certainty about new school sites in the Green Belt.

It is considered that the list of key challenges facing the District set out at paragraph 2.18 of the consultation SLP would be improved if it identifies the need to provide additional primary and secondary school sites.

- 3.9 In support of the assertion made above, HCC would point to the advice which the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) offered to St Albans in 2010 when offering advice to the LPA concerning those issues which ought to be dealt with in the then, Core Strategy. PINS commented that:

"The need for more schools is a critical issue that the Core Strategy must deal with. If a school is needed early in the plan period and other proposals depend upon its provision, then it may require a strategic allocation in the CS. Otherwise, the rough location of the schools must be specified in the CS, including alternative sites, the criteria for selecting them specified and then the detail can be left to a later DPD".

Extract from PINS advice to SACDC 2010 included as Appendix 3.

- 3.10 The fundamental need for a the emerging spatial plan to deal with the issue of new schools is also amplified in Planning Inspector Keith Manning's letter to Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) in respect of their Site Allocations Document in November 2013. That letter is attached to these representations as Appendix 4.
- 3.11 On page 8/9 of his letter and in the second bullet point on page 9, the Inspector commented that :

Positive and decisive provision for future school development, including for primary schools, is of the utmost importance to the local community. The SALDD is neither positive nor effective without such provision, the need for which has been well evidenced by the Hertfordshire County Council at the Hearing Sessions. School provision that comes on stream too late is not characteristic of a sound plan and is harmful to children and families. The certainty of firm allocations is key to minimising the risks of delay.

Source Page TRDC PINS letter dated 28th November 2013, first bullet point at the foot of page 8 and over to page 9.

- 3.12 Taken with the advice contained at paras 156, 157, and 162 of the NPPF this emphasises the need for the SLP to deal with the issue of provision of new education capacity. Further emphasis is added to this requirement at Harpenden where the need is demonstrably early in the plan period and where, in the absence of a strategic policy to cater for the need, any planning application put forward for the proposal will be for an inappropriate form of development which can only be justified by very special circumstances.
- 3.13 While not disputing any of the assertions relating to the importance of Green Belt as set out in section 2.22 and 2.13 of the SLP, it is a fact that the pursuit of a policy of urban concentration means that the yield of additional children requiring school places will also continue to rise against a dwindling finite capacity of existing schools to meet that need.

Section 3 Vision and Objectives The Local Plan Vision for 2031

- 3.14 HCC supports the SLP vision for the District to 2031 at 3.7 that :
- ‘New schools, health facilities and other community infrastructure have been provided alongside development’.
- 3.15 However, in noting that support the LPA needs to reconcile the fact that at Harpenden, it is not the broad growth location at North West Harpenden in itself that generates the need for a new secondary school. The 500 houses which are proposed there certainly amplify the need for new secondary school capacity to serve Harpenden. [See comments on the Harpenden Broad location for growth at sections 7.11 to 7.15 in this document for further information].

Core Strategic Objectives – Strategic Objective 2 : Mixed and Balanced Communities

- 3.16 The aspiration at 3.16 of the SLP, to secure :
- Promotion of balanced, mixed and sustainable communities through the provision of new housing and in particular addressing the need for affordable housing, all with appropriate community infrastructure, (our underlining), is supported. Evidence submitted to the LPA to date demonstrates that additional secondary school capacity at St Albans and Harpenden, and as part of the Broad location of growth to the East of Hemel Hempstead is fundamental in meeting that objective.

Strategic Objectives – Strategic Objective 7 : Delivering Infrastructure

- 3.17 The SLP commitment to taking appropriate measures throughout the Plan period to ensure that an historic infrastructure deficit is addressed and that new development fully addresses current and future physical, social and green infrastructure needs, (3.21 of the SLP), is welcomed. This commitment is taken to signal the preparedness of the LPA to deal with the need to provide additional school capacity at Harpenden to meet existing known forecast needs as a strategic objective of the plan, as well as confirming that new development will be expected to make appropriate provision for new infrastructure.

- 3.18 This strategic objective suggests that the modification to the Plan suggested at 3.8 above is required in order to ensure the soundness of the SLP.

4.0 SECTION 4 STRATEGY – THE GENERAL DISTRIBUTION OF DEVELOPMENT

Paragraph 4.3

- 4.1 The comprehensive Green Belt review needs to respond to the evidence put forward by HCC in 2011, and in the Service Position update in June 2012, regarding the need to provide additional education capacity to meet known needs. New schools are not an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt, and the fact that there is an established need now for additional secondary capacity to meet existing need at Harpenden, and that it would be prudent to plan for additional capacity at St Albans across the Plan period needs to be dealt with. (The central importance of dealing with these matters adequately to avoid uncertainty is covered in the PINS and TRDC advice set out at 3.9 to 3.11 above).

Wider Spatial Planning – para 4.18

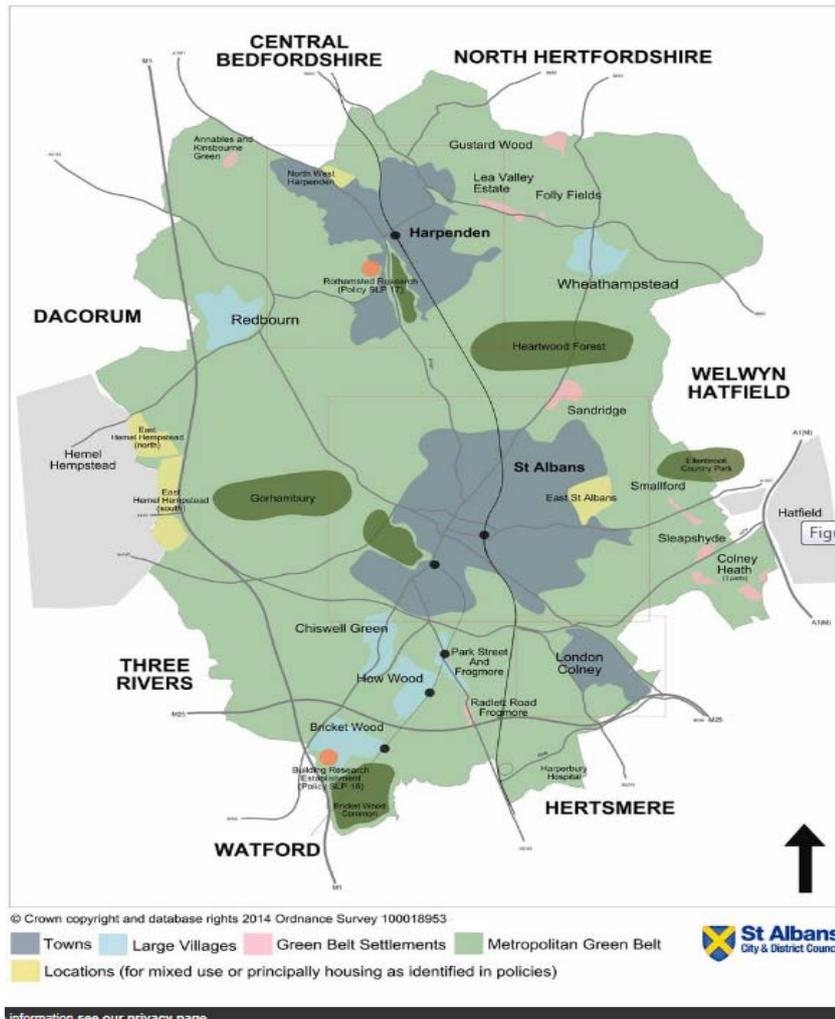
- 4.2 The commitment to joint working with Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in relation to the eastwards expansion of Hemel Hempstead is noted. From a service delivery perspective, HCC officers have previously identified their eagerness to continue the positive joint stakeholder working which has taken SACDC and DBC to date and fulfil the requirement set out at paras 178 and 179 of the NPPF concerning the duty to cooperate.

Policy SLP 1 – Spatial Strategy and Development Strategy

a) Spatial Strategy

- 4.3 The fundamental approach, identifying a settlement hierarchy as part of the underpinning strategic approach to the spatial strategy is supported. The implications of the development strategy from an education perspective, insofar as each settlement in the City and District is concerned is set out at sections 6.4 to 6.25 of these representations.
- 4.4 As drafted, the policy (and the key diagram copied overleaf) is primarily focused upon the delivery of housing, understandably focusing on the fact that where possible, the LPA will continue to pursue a policy of urban concentration. However, it is worth noting that the development strategy set out within the SLP will require solutions to the delivery of additional school places located in the Green Belt. The LPA needs to be confident that the DLP can deliver these solutions and provide reassurance to HCC that the policy framework which emerges from the SLP and the DLP will ensure that this is the case.
- 4.5 Reference to 1.12, 1.13, and 1.16 above is clear evidence that for East Hemel Hempstead, St Albans and Harpenden the Green Belt will be required to deliver land to contribute towards the delivery of additional school places over the Plan period to 2031.

- 4.6 For certain settlements, notably Harpenden, and in the light the Timmins judgment, (see 2.9 to 2.11 above), the policy context and the key diagram are considered to be inadequate and require modification. The key diagram needs to be amended to reflect the fact that, as identified at paragraph 3.8 above, there is a need for there to be the identification of explicit education allocations in the Green Belt, which may follow through the DLP in due course. [The comments of PINS in relation to the CS in 2010 and the TRDC Inspector's remarks, referred to at sections 3.9 to 3.13 above are reiterated].



Policy SLP 1 – Spatial Strategy and Development Strategy

b) Development Strategy

- 4.7 The Development Strategy clearly identifies the main locations where the LPA consider that future development needs cannot be accommodated within the existing urban area or within previously developed land, (pdl).
- 4.8 The Broad Location for growth at East Hemel Hempstead, (which can be seen in the key diagram above), acknowledges the need for mixed use (including education). However, for both North West Harpenden and East St Albans, the words 'principally housing' following the words 'Broad Location' for NW Harpenden and East St Albans are considered to be otiose because

there is a need for land at both of those locations to be released in order to provide sufficient school places in those locations.

- 4.9 There are needs to identify additional sources of education land capacity at both St Albans and Harpenden which require land currently washed over by the Green Belt. In the case of Harpenden, the need for that additional educational capacity comes very early in the Plan period and in the words of PINS at 3.9 above, in the case of Harpenden, 'other proposals do depend on its provision', in other words, the housing which is planned at Harpenden will generate additional demand for school places at a secondary level which cannot be satisfied locally if the LPA does not make an appropriate allocation.

Modification Suggested

It is considered that the key diagram would be improved if, in addition to acknowledging the need for Green Belt releases to achieve the mixed uses to the east of Hemel Hempstead, it also identifies the fact that education allocations on land which is currently located in the Green Belt are required at both Harpenden and St Albans.

5.0 SECTION 5 OUR SPECIAL CHARACTER

- 5.1 The concept of protection of the Green Belt is supported, but again, the text at 5.5 of the Plan states that "Inappropriate development in the Green Belt would harm the Districts high quality environment and further erode areas particularly within the south of the District where the Green Belt is already fragmented by infrastructure and development".
- 5.2 This statement does nothing to acknowledge or reconcile the tension between the objective of protecting the Green Belt and the key issue for the community in the District, of ensuring the SLP is providing sufficient school places for families both within existing housing, (especially in the case of Harpenden), and as will begin to emerge as the 8720 houses (in policy SLP 8) planned in the SLP come forward across the Plan period. It is again worth restating the fact that the development of schools or their playing fields is not an appropriate form of development as set out at paragraph 89 of the NPPF.
- 5.3 This once again highlights the need for appropriate education allocations being made as part of the SLP/DLP process.

Modification Suggested

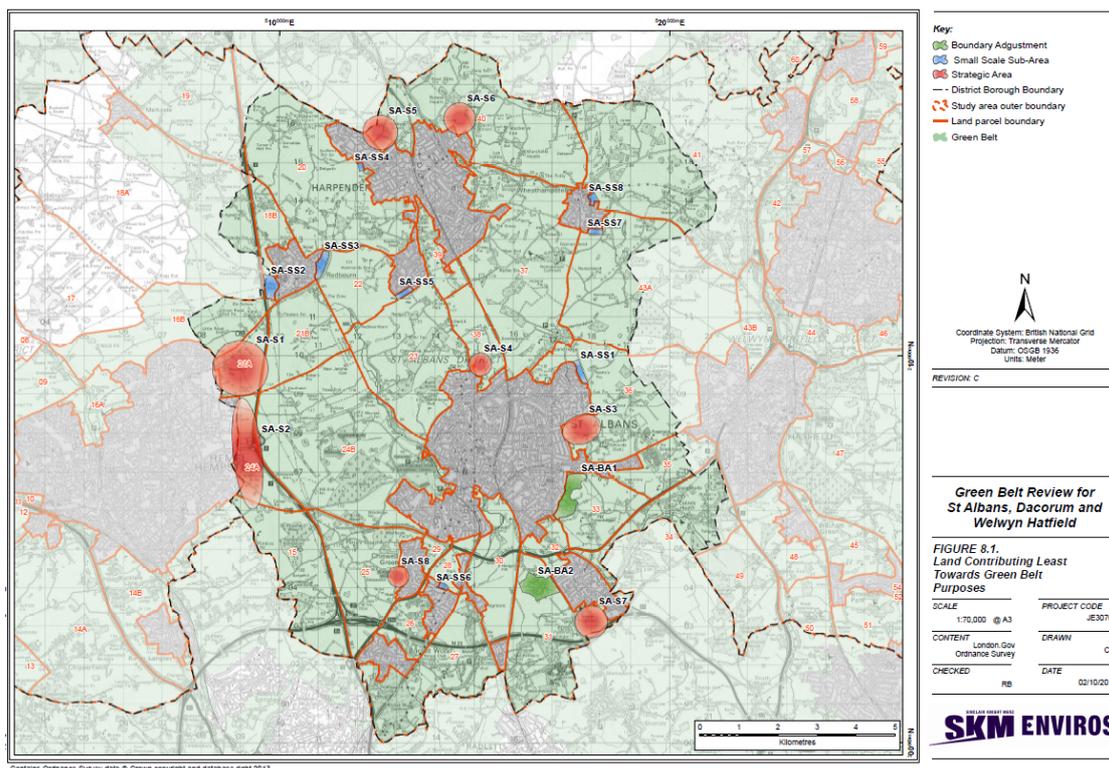
It is considered that the fact that it would be helpful if the Green Belt presumption against inappropriate development and the need for additional education allocations across the plan period to 2031 is acknowledged with greater clarity in the text at 5.5 or within policy SLP 2, (see below).

Policy SLP 2 - Metropolitan Green Belt

- 5.4 This policy does not mention education. It confirms that boundaries for the broad locations for growth, (four broad locations when one considers Hemel East, North and Hemel East, South as separate entities), will be defined on a new policies map, being prepared through the DLP. The policy continues that

“Some further minor amendments to the Green Belt boundary may also be made through the DLP”

- 5.5 The final paragraph of the policy states that “areas excluded from the Green Belt for possible longer term development will be reserved and only released for development through a review of the SLP”. Clarification/confirmation is required from the LPA as to whether the text underlined in the quote above is intended to cover the delivery of new school sites through the DLP process. If that is the intention then it might be helpful if the Plan makes its intentions more transparent in that respect.
- 5.6 In addition to the broad locations for growth which are set out in the current consultation SLP, the SKM Green Belt work has identified a limited number of smaller more minor green belt adjustments, which the underlined text suggests will be bought forward through the DLP. Those more minor Green Belt adjustments are the blue shaded areas shown in the plan below. Given that the NPPF identifies that new schools are an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt, from the perspective of consistency, it seems reasonable to expect that the DLP would also identify potential school sites on a similar plan.



Source : SKM Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment (St Albans City and District only) Report 02 October 2013

6.0 SECTION 6 – MIXED AND BALANCED COMMUNITIES

- 6.1 Within this section, the acknowledgement of the need to plan for additional school places at section 6.7 of the Plan is noted and welcomed. It should be noted that the figures set out within the document relating to the scale of need

are outdated, being based upon representations made to the LPA in 2011, and at the time of the IDP in June 2012.

6.2 The content of previous representations relating to education service needs is summarised at sections 1.5 to 1.17 above. Issues which previous representations have identified and which remain pertinent are :

- A need for development management policies which maximise the potential to expand existing schools, whether they are in areas washed over by Green Belt/or urban open land designations.
- A need to identify an education allocation for a new secondary school at Harpenden (with the work submitted as evidence to the spatial planning process in 2011 identifying Site F at Lower Luton Road.
- A need to make an education allocation on land adjacent to Roundwood Park School (potentially an even more important issue now in the light of the Timmins Judgment – see 2.9 above)
- A need to identify education allocations in the St Albans Secondary Planning Area – sites C,D, K and L – whether as detached playing fields to support the expansion of existing schools or as new school sites was, and is uncertain.

6.4 Colleagues in Childrens Services have provided an updated statement which articulates the need for additional school capacity as they currently consider it. That document is attached to these representations as Appendix 5.

6.5 As noted at 3.2 to 3.4 above, in the main, the additional housing which is now proposed in the SLP is that which is proposed as part of the strategic Green Belt releases in the Broad Locations for Growth. While the information is provided in Appendix 5, since Policy SLP 6 articulates need on a settlement by settlement basis, it will also be helpful to summarise needs on a settlement basis here. The information which follows is based upon the most up to date CS forecast information, and what is known from the SLP. The main unknown at this point in time is the quantum and phasing of development associated with the more minor Green Belt adjustments referred to in Policy SLP 2 and shown in the plan at 5.6 above. Further information relating to CS forecasts can be provided if the Local Planning Authority consider that would be helpful.

Education Needs Settlement by Settlement (including the implications of the broad growth locations)

6.6 St Albans Primary

There is limited capacity to expand existing schools.
Existing forecasts show continued pressure on school places.
Prudent to plan for 2 X 2f.e. school sites and 1 X 3 f.e. school site (based on currently identified growth and assumed trajectories).

St Albans Secondary

- 6.7 At a secondary level, the forecast in St Albans indicates a potential demand for between 5 and 7.5 f.e. of additional capacity.
- 6.8 The DfE has agreed to open Harperbury Free School a 4 f.e. secondary school to the south of St Albans. It is unlikely that all these places will be allocated to St Albans residents, given its relative proximity to settlements in Hertsmere, so it seems reasonable to assume around 2 f.e. of capacity would be provided by this school.
- 6.9 While the previous V and G work in 2011 suggests that there may be some potential to expand existing schools, there are constraints relating to most sites which means that this is not certain. Therefore CS have confirmed their view that the following approach would be prudent
- Flexible planning policies relating to the expansion of existing secondary schools in St Albans
 - Allocation of one of the previously identified sites as an education reserve site, in order to help accommodate either expansion of existing schools, (through provision of detached playing fields) or via the provision of a further new school in the event that a new school is required over the Plan period.

Harpenden Primary

- 6.10 There is limited capacity to expand primary schools. With known housing allocations at Harpenden there is a need to plan for a single 2f.e. school site, (which is referred to in the Harpenden broad location for growth). In addition, it is worth noting that HCC would have to reserve its position with regard to the potential need for additional primary capacity depending on the quantum and phasing of additional housing which may come forward from the two more minor Green Belt Adjustments which may come forward through the DLP. (See 5.6 above).

Harpenden Secondary

- 6.11 A new 6 - 8f.e. secondary school site is required. It is required primarily to accommodate the existing known growth locally, and the additional yield coming from existing housing. The need is amplified by the identification of a strategic site for the delivery of 500 houses at north west Harpenden.
- 6.12 There is no capacity within existing secondary schools in the town, which are all academies, to provide this additional capacity. It is worth restating that the identification of a strategic allocation at the town is dependant upon the provision of a new secondary school site to provide school places for the children who will live in that development. In addition, the two potential more minor Green Belt adjustments at Harpenden which will come through the DLP, (see 5.6 above), will also amplify the need for additional secondary school capacity at Harpenden.

East Hemel Hempstead

- 6.13 At the scale of development being planned, there will be a requirement for a 3X 2f.e. schools and a new 6 to 8 f.e. secondary school site as part of the development, (which is referred to within Policy SLP 13 (a) and Policy SLP 13 (b) dealing with that growth location. That new secondary school would also potentially support the delivery of additional school places in Hemel Hempstead, where there is a forecast deficit of places from 2019/20.
- 6.14 The fact that HCC officers ready to participate in any bilateral or tripartite talks with SACDC/ DBC to discuss the issues and opportunities which could arise from the East Hemel Area Action Plan has been noted elsewhere in these representations.

Bricket Wood

- 6.15 There is potential to expand the existing primary school on to adjoining rural estate land owned by HCC. However to enable this helpful planning policies which facilitate the expansion of the school are required.

Colney Heath

- 6.16 The school is on a large site washed over by the Green Belt, helpful policies to facilitate the expansion of the school on its site are required.

London Colney

- 6.17 There is limited capacity to expand existing schools. Previous representations (in 2011) have been submitted which demonstrate how rural estate land at Napsbury could provide a new 2f.e. primary school.

Park Street/How Wood/Chiswell Green

- 6.18 Existing school sites in all three settlements are extremely difficult to expand. The service provision update sent to SACDC in June 2014 identified that if there is growth at Chiswell Green, then it would be necessary to identify a new 2f.e. school site.
- 6.19 The minor adjustments to the Green Belt which will be dealt with by the DLP suggest that there will be a release at Chiswell Green. HCC would need to consider how additional places might be provided, should they be required.

Redbourn

- 6.20 Further expansion of existing schools could be challenging. The minor adjustments to the Green Belt will be dealt with through the DLP (see 5.6 above), suggest that there could be two Green Belt releases at Redbourn.
- 6.21 Until such time as it is clear what the quantum and phasing of the DLP related development might be, HCC would look for helpful planning policies to enable the expansion of existing schools, and the potential for identification of a detached playing field.
- 6.22 Depending upon the quantum and phasing of housing coming which might be proposed as part of the DLP, HCC would want the opportunity of being able

to review as part of that later document, how additional places could be provided for the village.

Sandridge

- 6.23 Subject to helpfully worded planning policies, and given the absence of Green Belt releases at that settlement, there should be adequate capacity within the Green Belt school site to meet anticipated needs for additional capacity.

Wheathampstead

- 6.24 This is another location where the SKM work and policy SLP 2 of the SLP suggest that there could be two more minor Green Belt releases through the DLP. The quantum and scale of development associated with those two releases is currently unknown.
- 6.25 Further expansion of existing schools is likely to be difficult. As a result, while it would be helpful if planning policies are adopted which maximise the potential to achieve additional school capacity on existing sites, further measures may also be required in Wheathampstead. This could consist of the identification of detached playing fields to assist in further expansion of existing sites and as with Redbourn, the opportunity to review in the light of the DLP, how additional places in the village could be provided should they be required.

Policy SLP6 – Educational Facilities

- 6.26 As drafted, Policy SLP6 specifies that the Council will support new or expanded educational facilities in appropriate and sustainable locations including at the Broad Locations for Development in the Green Belt if all other expansion possibilities have been exhausted.
- 6.27 The Broad Location for development at Hemel Hempstead East, (North) and (South) is specified within the relevant policies, (SLP 13(a) and SLP 13 (b)), as delivering both primary and secondary school capacity.
- 6.28 SLP 13 (c) Harpenden is a Green Belt release for 500 houses, and the associated Policy only talks about delivery of a 2 f.e. primary school. There is no explicit mention of how this release will deliver secondary capacity. It is worth noting that the need for additional secondary capacity to serve Harpenden is a definite, not a possible, requirement as expressed in Policy SLP 2.
- 6.29 Policy SLP 13 (d) is the 1000 dwelling St Albans release at Oaklands. Again, while that Green Belt release is specified as delivering a 2 f.e. primary component, that development will amplify the need to plan for additional secondary capacity at St Albans.

Primary Schools

- 6.30 Subject to the amendment of policy SLP 6 to reflect the need for additional primary capacity set out at section 6.6 to 6.25 above, HCC is content with the wording of the policy SLP 6 insofar as it relates to primary schools.

Secondary Schools

- 6.31 The need for a more detailed policy approach to be adopted through the DLP to identify detached playing fields is welcomed. For the reasons set out above in section 5, HCC would question whether the potential need for detached playing fields to support the provision of additional school places at St Albans, should be made clearer in the key diagram.
- 6.32 For the same reason the words in the policy that 'Reserve education locations including in the Green Belt will be identified in the DLP to provide new secondary schools, if required, in the following settlements :
- St Albans
 - Harpenden
 - Hemel Hempstead',

are cautiously welcomed. As is noted in Harpenden, the additional capacity is required, it is not an 'if'.

- 6.33 In light of the imminence of that need at Harpenden, the LPA will be aware that HCC has commissioned an Alternative Site Assessment to identify the 'least worst' site in the Green Belt. Currently that work is intended to support a very special circumstances planning application in the Green Belt. However, the possibility exists that the Local Planning Authority could receive and consider the outputs of that Alternative Site Assessment as evidence and use that to acknowledge and inform both the SLP, by more clearly acknowledging the strategic need at Harpenden and St Albans on the key diagram and in policy, and by making an appropriate land allocation in the DLP in due course.
- 6.34 By doing this the LPA will be able to provide a policy context acknowledging the need for additional education allocations now as part of the SLP, and in HCC's opinion, accepting that as a key issue to be reconciled through the SLP/DLP process. In doing this, the issues identified above at 3.7 to 3.13, 4.3 to 4.9 and 5.3 to 5.6 inclusive, would all be positively addressed.
- 6.35 Dealing with the secondary school issue with more clarity and certainty, and taking the evidence which will emerge from the Alternative Site Assessment to inform an allocation would also represent a reconciliation of the conflict between the Green Belt presumption against inappropriate development and the need to provide additional school places. In locations like Harpenden, that need is now.

Modification Required

The LPA should identify the broad location for a secondary school at Harpenden identified in the Alternative Site Assessment (ASA) in the SLP, with the detailed boundaries to be identified through the DLP.

Policy SLP 7 – Community, Sport and Recreational Facilities

- 6.36 Policy SLP 7 needs to be updated to reflect the fact that
- i) Harpenden Library has already relocated to a location in the High Street
- 6.37 In addition, colleagues in Early Years and Childcare have provided a document identifying and evidencing their need for additional capacity in St Albans City and District. That work is appended to these representations at Appendix 6.
- 6.38 SACDC officers will note that a number of the areas are identified as being 'Red' ie, areas that require additional childrens centre capacity – of those areas that are Red, one is in Harpenden, one in Colney Heath and four in St Albans. There may be opportunities for meeting the need for this additional capacity as part of the new primary school sites referred to above in section 6.6 to 6.30.

Housing – Local Housing Target/Requirement paragraph 6.30

- 6.39 The housing trajectory set out within the document is noted. SACDC officers will be aware that considered crudely, the range of child yield arising from new development is currently considered to be in the region of 1f.e. per 500 dwelling – 1f.e. per 850 dwelling range, (see Appendix 5 page 3 for further information).
- 6.40 By way of context, the local housing target enables the broad parameters of potential child yield to be identified from the different sources of housing demand.

Source	Dwelling numbers	Child yield @ 1 f.e. per 500 dwellings
Completions 1 st April 2011 to 1 st April 2014	1075	2f.e.
Urban/Non Green Belt capacity (identified)	1750	4f.e.
Urban/Non GB capacity (Windfall)	1800	4f.e.
Large scale Greenfield GB releases	4000	8f.e.
Small Scale Green Belt releases	500	1f.e
Total	9125	19f.e.

- 6.41 From the above table it is simply worth noting for information that the annual build rate that the LPA has selected as being appropriate in policy SLP 8 – Local Housing Requirement of 436 dpa, to meet the 8720 dwelling target identified in policy, equates to approximately one f.e worth of additional child yield for each year of the Plan.
- 6.42 It is also worth noting that the LPA itself has identified that there have been 2f.e of completions in the City and District since 2011. It would seem reasonable to conclude that a significant number of those completions have

been on brownfield urban capacity sites in the main settlements of St Albans and Harpenden. This urban concentration, is likely to be a contributory factor which helps to explain the pressure for additional school places in St Albans and Harpenden which is already being revealed in CS forecasts.

7.0 BROAD LOCATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT para 6.61

- 7.1 The differentiation between the broad locations, where East Hemel Hempstead north and south is identified as being a broad location which will support 'mixed use', whereas North West Harpenden and East St Albans are identified as 'principally housing', is considered an unnecessary distinction between the broad locations. It is fundamental to the acceptability of all the broad locations that they make appropriate infrastructure provision from an HCC perspective.
- 7.2 Paragraph 6.64 suggests that it is considered appropriate to set the development boundaries for East St Albans and North West Harpenden which are associated with the provision of new housing. The NPPF is clear that Green belt boundaries which endure beyond the plan period should be set by the Local Plan. It must follow that if it is appropriate to identify Green Belt boundaries associated with the provision of new housing at Harpenden and St Albans, then it follows that the same is true for new schools.
- 7.3 In the case of Harpenden the Broad Location for housing at North West Harpenden which has been identified cannot deliver the a secondary school site as it is not large enough. Therefore the DLP will have to identify a secondary school site at Harpenden. This need should be reflected now in the text concerning what Green belt releases at the Broad location settlements will need to provide.
- 7.4 The same is true at St Albans, (although the particular infrastructure need there is not so pressing, r is it so certain to be a school but new playing fields are not an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt as has been noted at 2.9 to 2.11 above).

Broad Locations for Development –

Policy SLP 13 (a) East Hemel Hempstead (North) Broad Location – Mixed Use and SLP 13 (b) East Hemel Hempstead (South) Broad Location – Mixed Use

- 7.5 HCC support the identification of the fact that the development of circa 1500 dwellings, at East Hemel Hempstead north would deliver :
- A secondary school. (As noted elsewhere in these representations, that secondary school would also help to provide additional school places for the existing settlement of Hemel Hempstead,
 - A 2f.e. primary school, (see caveat below at 7.6)
 - Other community facilities,

and the reference to the fact that part of the site would be 'a reserve for long term housing development' (area to be defined), is also noted.

- 7.6 At the scale of development proposed, and taking into account the fact that the scale of development being proposed is also subject to potential future long term further additional housing growth, rather than just the single primary school which is proposed as part of the development, it would be appropriate to plan for a second, 2 f.e. primary school. It may be that the second school would be built as a 1f.e. school on a 2f.e site with Core facilities capable of supporting further expansion to 2 f.e.
- 7.7 Depending upon the scale of development which is proposed in the longer term, it may also be appropriate to plan for additional primary school provision, (at a ratio of provision of 1f.e. per 500 dwellings, since that is the ratio it must be prudent to plan for).
- 7.8 For Hemel Hempstead East (South), the Plan does not postulate the same potential additional further long term growth as is the case with Hemel Hempstead North, and therefore at the scale of development which is proposed, the level of education infrastructure which it is proposed to be provided is set at the correct level. [NB Policy 13 (a) and Policy 13 (b) quite correctly identify the fact that at the combined scale of development proposed, (2500 units), only one 6 – 8 f.e. secondary school site would be required. Again HCC reserves its position in the event that the overall scale of growth to be delivered at this location increases.
- 7.9 There may also be opportunities to consider the relocation of existing Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), and co location with Waste Collection Authority (WCA) facilities as part of development at Hemel Hempstead East. There is ongoing feasibility work considering the potential for expansion of Hemel Hempstead HWRC, however HCC officers would welcome the opportunity of considering the future long term potential to co locate facilities as part of any Area Action Plan at East Hemel Hempstead.
- 7.10 The Hemel East Area Action Plan may also provide opportunities to investigate whether there are other opportunities which might arise in considering how public services could be recast. Those opportunities might achieve economies of scale to assist in more economic service re provision, through site sharing, which might quite appropriately be provided within an employment area. By considering how these matters might be achieved as part of the Area Action Plan, maximum benefit can be derived from investment by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Colleagues in the Strategic Asset Management Team would be happy to participate in further bilateral and tripartite discussions with colleagues at St Albans and Dacorum in order to discuss those opportunities further.

Modification suggested

The text at Policy SLP 13 (a) needs to be amended to refer to the provision of 2 no. 2f.e. primary schools being provided as part of Hemel Hempstead East (North). The Infrastructure Delivery Schedule at Appendix 5 requires similar amendment

Policy SLP 13 (c) North West Harpenden Broad Location – Principally Housing

- 7.11 Text at paragraph 6.69 of the Plan states that, 'Education capacity issues exist but are capable of resolution'. As it stands that statement oversimplifies the potential town planning difficulties associated with the delivery of a new school in the Green Belt at Harpenden. For the reasons set out at 2.2, 2.3 and 3.8 of these representations, the provision of a new school is not an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt, and therefore any proposal seeking planning permission for a school on the site would need to be supported by a robust very special circumstances argument. Alternatively, as described at section 6.33 above, the LPA could use the Alternative Site Assessment (ASA) work which is currently being carried out on behalf of HCC, to inform a more formal acknowledgment of the need in the SLP, to be followed up by a specific site allocation in the DLP.
- 7.12 Suggestions relating to the way that the SLP might be amended to acknowledge the need have been made above at sections 4.9 and 5.3. As it stands, HCC are concerned that the site being identified for housing at Harpenden is one of the sites currently being considered as a potential school site in the ASA work. Housing and new schools are both inappropriate forms of development in the Green Belt.
- 7.13 It might be argued to be counter intuitive that on the one hand the SLP and key diagram identify the Green Belt housing release at North West Harpenden, yet do not identify a secondary school site. This is particularly the case given the housing site which has been identified is included within the ASA, (and was identified as one of the potential school sites in the representations submitted to the LPA in 2011).
- 7.14 The identification of the housing allocation amplifies the need for additional secondary school capacity at Harpenden, (as was set out in the Service Provision update in June 2014- para 1.15 above). In addition, given the fact that the need for that new school capacity is imminent, the comments contained at section 3.9 to 3.12 inclusive above are considered to be relevant.

Modification Required

As drafted the SLP is unsound. There is no explicit acknowledgment of the need for a Green Belt greenfield site at Harpenden to deliver additional secondary school capacity on the key diagram, - for example by reference to a broad area of search around the settlement. The need for primary capacity is quite rightly identified amongst the proposals for SLP 13 (c), but the policy is silent on the subject of secondary capacity. This issue needs to be reconciled in order to enhance the soundness of the Plan.

Modification Required

As drafted the SLP is unsound, it is inappropriate to allocate a broad location for housing growth at north west Harpenden, (given that location is one of the potential secondary school sites). The provision of additional strategic scale housing development at Harpenden is

contingent upon the provision of additional secondary school capacity to serve it.

- 7.15 By incorporating the modifications required above, and confirming that any site emerging through the ASA will be identified within the DLP as suggested by Policy SLP 2 Green Belt and SLP 6, the LPA will be ensuring that the emerging spatial planning framework is reconciling spatial land use issues and responding to the guidance contained in the NPPF.

Policy SLP 13 d East St Albans (Oaklands) Broad Location

- 7.16 The identification of 1000 homes to the east of St Albans is correctly identified as requiring the provision of a new 2 f.e. primary school to provide sufficient school places to support it. Similarly, the development will amplify the need to provide additional secondary school capacity. The locations where it has been suggested that need could be satisfied are set out at paragraph 1.13 above.
- 7.17 It is considered that the SLP would be improved if it incorporated the suggestions made above at 3.8 and 4.9 in terms of responding to the need to prudently plan for additional secondary school places. (ie, Empirical evidence has been submitted previously demonstrating that there is a need to prudently plan for additional secondary capacity at St Albans. The latest information from CS at Appendix 5 confirms the ongoing need. Education allocations which may be for detached playing fields could be usefully referenced on the key diagram to acknowledge the need).

Inclusion of Any Other Strategic Sites from the SKM Work

- 7.18 In the event that representations are submitted to the LPA, which for whatever reason lead to the conclusion that additional housing or strategic sites should be included over and above those set out in the SLP then they will have additional implications for delivery of education and potentially HCC's other services. The Service Provision update June 2014, gives guidance on the infrastructure which is required to support additional housing growth. Officers in Hertfordshire Property/Children's Services will be happy to discuss these matters further.

8.0 SECTION 11 – INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Schedule

- 8.1 It is good that the IDP sits alongside the SLP. The need for the IDP to be updated is set out above at 7.4, and the explicit education requirements that flow from the plan are summarised settlement by settlement at Section 6.6 to 6.25 of this document.
- 8.2 Paragraph 11.3 of the SLP states that there are no showstopper items of infrastructure essential to deliver any one specific element of the SLP strategy. This is true subject to the caveat that the SLP needs to adequately deliver a new secondary school site at Harpenden, education allocations at St Albans and by referring to an additional primary school being required to serve the Hemel Hempstead East (North), allocation of 1500 dwellings. These are infrastructure provision matters which need to be resolved in order

for there to be a closer match between the housing that is planned and the infrastructure to serve it.

Policy 30 – Delivery of Infrastructure

- 8.3 The policy commitment to ensuring that appropriate infrastructure is provided to support development as it comes forward is noted and supported. In the case of East Hemel Hempstead, it may be necessary to consider how infrastructure contributions might be passed across administrative boundaries – for example development in Dacorum Borough at East Hemel might reasonably be expected to make contributions towards any new secondary provision in SACDC at East Hemel and children from new development in Markyate would be likely to look to Harpenden schools for their secondary education. Likewise, housing development at East Hemel North and South in SACDC, would reasonably be expected to make contributions towards enhanced library capacity in Hemel Hempstead Town Centre. The Principal Infrastructure Officer within the Development Services Team at HCC would be happy to consider and advise further on these matters.
- 8.4 While thoughts are still emerging, current thinking from a service provision perspective is that CIL will relate to developments of less than 500 units, (or less than 1f.e. of child yield), while for development of 500 + dwellings, infrastructure needs including land, will be met via Section 106 Agreements. Therefore, HCC's preference would be that all of the Broad locations of growth in the SLP would see their infrastructure delivered via Section 106 Agreements.
- 8.5 Care must be taken to ensure that developments of 500 + are not sub divided thereby frustrating the ability to address infrastructure requirements via Section 106.
- 8.5 The Planning Obligations team in Development Services would be happy to assist further on these points as well as well as contributing to the dialogue around the update of the IDP, as set out at paragraph 3.5 above.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Local Planning Authority has provided the opportunity for HCC to comment on the emerging Spatial Plan from a service provision perspective since 2006. The opportunity to comment on the consultation SLP is appreciated and HCC is committed to maintaining a positive dialogue.
- 9.2 This consultation response identifies a number of areas where it is considered the SLP would benefit from amendment in order to clarify the spatial plan and to ensure that it reconciles competing land use issues.
- 9.3 All of the Broad Locations for Development have service implications. In the case of Hemel Hempstead, subject to the proposals including another 2fe primary school for Hemel Hempstead North, the infrastructure needs have been correctly scoped out. However, in the case of both Harpenden North West and St Albans East, there is a need for the implications for additional secondary school infrastructure to be factored in to the Plan.
- 9.4 In the case of Harpenden, the need for additional secondary school capacity exists now. This need will almost certainly require a Green Belt site, and the

need requires acknowledgment in both SLP policy, and on the key diagram. A detailed Site Allocation could then be made through the DLP. Failing to deal with that issue more positively and proactively at this stage is considered unsound.

- 9.5 Also in Harpenden, the identification of a housing allocation, (on one of the sites currently being considered in the ASA for a school), without dealing positively with the education issue, is considered unsound.
- 9.6 In the case of St Albans, and taking into account the implications of the Timmins judgment, it is considered important that the issue of education allocations, which could be used to achieve additional secondary school capacity serving the city across the plan period to 2031, is similarly factored in to the SLP.
- 9.7 Subject to these revisions to the SLP, it is considered that if SACDC take into account the suggested, and required changes set out in this representation then the LPA will be able to demonstrate that the Plan is:
- Positively prepared.
 - Justified, based on a proportionate evidence base.
 - Effective and,
 - Consistent with National policy.

This will maximise the prospects of the Strategic Local Plan being found sound when it is submitted to the Secretary of State and subjected to Examination in Public.

- 9.8 Further information regarding the needs of HCC Services (Education, Early Years/Childcare/Youth/Library/Waste/Adult Care and Fire and Rescue services) within the District can be obtained from Development Services Team as strategies evolve with time and updated use requirements.
- 9.9 If there are any matters contained in this consultation response which Spatial Planning Officers at St Albans wish to discuss further then please do not hesitate to contact Development Services and a meeting can be coordinated with Planning Obligations/Principal Infrastructure Officer and /Services colleagues.

Matt Wood
Principal Planner
Development Services 18.11.14

**ST ALBANS CITY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL, – SKM GREEN BELT REVIEW
SITES AND BOUNDARIES STUDY**

HCC SERVICE POSITION UPDATE

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ON BEHALF OF HCC SERVICES

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Principal Planning Officer
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.18 HCC continues to welcome the opportunity to engage with the Local Planning Authority in preparation of the Strategic Local Plan for St Albans City and District. The opportunity to continue to support development of the evidence base being gathered by the Local Planning Authority, and assist in the identification of the issues which the strategic local plan can helpfully deal with, is positively supported. This should help to ensure that the Strategic Local Plan is :

- Positively prepared
- Justified (considering alternatives and based on proportionate evidence)
- Effective
- And
- Consistent with National Policy,

and, will therefore maximise the prospects of the Plan which follows being sound when it is subjected to Examination in Public.

1.19 The work associated with identifying objectively assessed housing need and in relation to the Part 1 and Part 2 Green Belt review which have been reported to recent meetings of the City and District Council's Planning Policy Committee has been noted. The 4th March resolution of the St Albans Planning Policy Committee to consider the economic, social and environmental implications of development of the strategic sub areas identified in the **SKM Green Belt Review Sites and Boundaries Study, February 2014**, has also been noted.

1.20 It is clear from the minutes of the St Albans City and District Council's meeting of 1st May that issues relating to the adequacy of infrastructure, such as school capacity, are of interest to Planning Policy Committee Members in considering the implications of the strategic sites in the SKM report. The minutes of the 1st May Planning Policy Committee state that:

The interim Head of Planning and Building Control made the point that through the process of developing a strategic local plan the Committee should attempt where possible to address existing problems as well as addressing the needs arising as a consequence of any potential development, but that addressing existing problems could not be a requirement.

1.21 While it would not be possible to address historic/existing problems from a planning obligations/CIL/Section 106 perspective, it is the case that a positively prepared, justified, evidence based, Strategic Local Plan **will** deal with the spatial land use needs that are flowing out of existing and new communities. If the Strategic Local Plan deals with issues, like the need for new schools to serve the existing, as well as new communities that will lead to a sound Plan. [This approach has been found sound in Dacorum and Three Rivers].

1.22 The purpose of this document is to provide the Local Planning Authority with an overview of the implications of selection of the different strategic sites for development, in terms of HCC service delivery.

- 1.23 Consideration of the implications for service delivery of each of the Strategic Sub Areas, (the 'S' areas in the Sinclair Knight Metz work), might assist the Local Planning Authority in identifying which of the four Strategic Local Plan development strategy options they are considering to pursue, ie:
- Mixed location/scale development
 - Mixed location/scale development with smaller, but more sites, or
 - Dispersed development; or
 - Concentrated development,

With the current work being carried out by the Local Planning Authority seeking to assist in informing which strategy will be pursued in the Strategic Local Plan.

- 1.24 Before considering each of the Strategic Sub Areas set out in the SKM report, it will be helpful to briefly summarise what has been said in previous representations.

2.0 PREVIOUS REPRESENTATIONS

- 2.1 This document is complimentary to the representations which were submitted to the Local Planning Authority in February 2011:

- **(St Albans District Council Shaping our Community: Consultation on the Strategy for Locating Future Development in the District December 2010 Consultation Response by Hertfordshire Property on Behalf of HCC Services).**

and the separate Vincent and Gorbing representations:

- **St Albans City and District Secondary Schools Delivering Secondary School Expansion – January 2011**

- 2.2 In summary, those previous representations identified the capacity of schools within each of the settlements in St Albans City and District to expand. They identified the fact that it would be helpful to identify new major developed site boundaries in the Green Belt, and that flexible urban open land policy and policies enabling the expansion of school sites, including by providing detached playing fields would be helpful. They identified the fact that it is considered important for the spatial plan to deliver education allocations at St Albans and Harpenden to prudently plan to provide sufficient primary and secondary school places and identify the interrelationship between development within Dacorum to the east of Hemel Hempstead, and any development within St Albans to the East of Hemel Hempstead.

- 2.3 The representations identified that education allocations would be helpful in terms of assisting with the economics of site acquisition and consequent delivery of additional school places. [See paragraph 6.1 to 6.3 and 7.3 to 7.4 of Consultation response on behalf of HCC Services February 2011]. It is worth repeating the quote from the Land Compensation Act 1961 which was contained in those previous representations here:

Part III of the Land Compensation Act 1961 provides a mechanism for indicating the kind of development (if any) for which planning permission can be assumed by means of a 'certificate of appropriate alternative development'. The permissions indicated in a certificate can briefly be described as those with which an

owner might reasonably have expected to sell his land in the open market if it had not been publicly acquired. Therefore, if X number sites are identified as being educational sites in the development plan and they are located in the Green Belt, then the alternative use is limited to those uses which are appropriate in the Green Belt. If however, the identification is simply as a school as part of a wider housing release, then one might argue that the alternative development would be residential and the site acquisition will be prohibitively more expensive.

- 2.4 The need to enlarge, or relocate the existing Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) in St Albans, (Ronsons Way), was also mentioned in previous representations.
- 2.5 Also, included as **Appendix 1**(page 25 of this document), is a copy of the document sent to St Albans City and District Council officers to assist them in preparation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan in July 2012.
- 2.6 Attention is drawn to section 10.1 to 10.2 of that document, which identified that assuming child yield of 1form of entry (fe) per 500 dwellings will provide 97.5% confidence that child yield will not be underestimated, and it is likely child yield will be in the range of 1fe per 500 to 1 fe per 850 dwellings, depending upon the specifics of development.
- 2.7 Sections 16.1 to 16.7 of the document at Appendix 1 summarise the work that had been done to evidence the need for additional secondary school places in the City and District. Appendix 3 (page 51 of this document), **within the Appendix 1 document** is an analysis of the child yield coming from housing sites identified in the District Council's Housing trajectory and the latent capacity of schools within settlements in the City and District to accommodate those yields. The housing site information was supplied to HCC by the City and District Council.
- 2.8 Applying the range of child yield identified at 2.6 above, it was possible to attribute a range of child yields to those sites, and therefore the need to prudently plan for additional primary school capacity arising out of the development set out in the housing trajectory. The yields represented in the summary table, (Appendix 3, (page 51 of this document), **within the Appendix 1 document**), in no way factor in the scale of demand for additional school places which would be generated by the strategic scale development represented in the SKM document. It is assumes that the housing development set out in the SKM report would represent additional demand which would need to be layered in, 'in addition'.
- 2.9 Having set the context provided by previous reps, it is appropriate to consider the implications for service delivery of each of the areas of search.

- **IMPLICATIONS OF SELECTION OF THE STRATEGIC SITES**

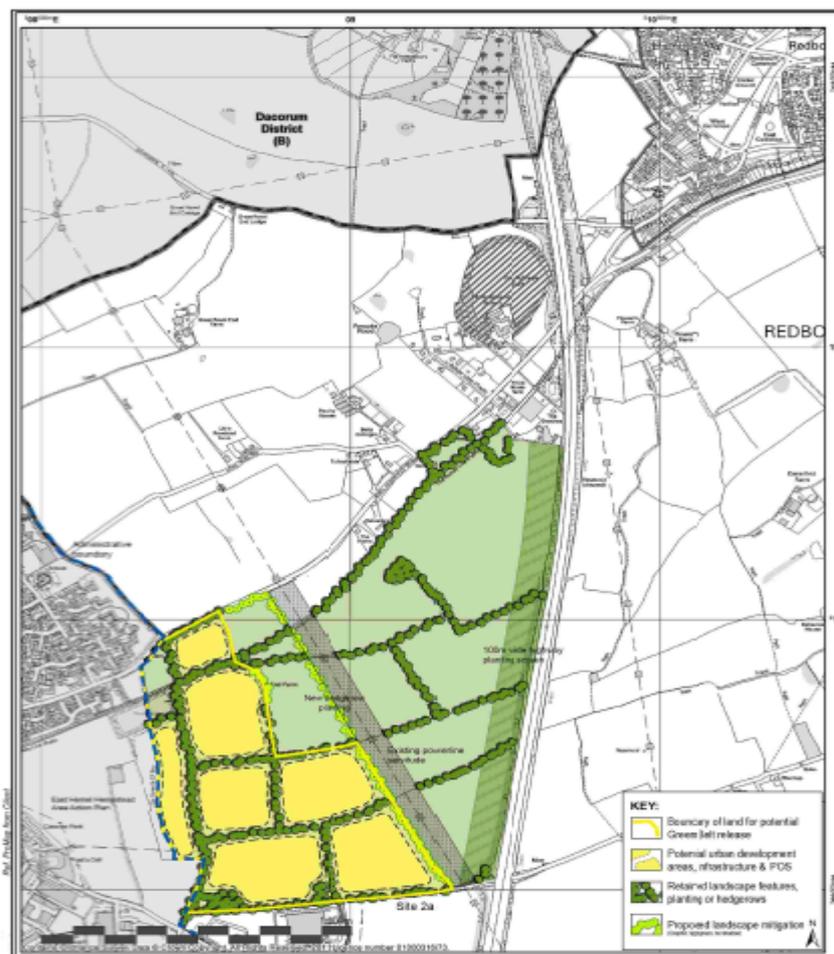
In this section, the dwelling yields which are given are based upon the dwelling range for each of the sites set out in table 13.1 of the SKM report – ie estimated residential capacities based upon a range of 30 dwellings per hectare to 50 dwellings per hectare.

S1 : East of Hemel Hempstead North

- 3.1 It is worth noting that the need to prudently plan for an additional 2fe primary school to serve the Hemel Hempstead East Primary Planning Area (at a location east of Hemel within Dacorum's administrative area), has been

identified in separate representations to Dacorum Borough Council. (Those separate representations have previously been copied to colleagues in spatial planning at St Albans).

- 3.2 It seems likely that this need is most likely to be addressed in the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan in due course. The need exists without taking into account any additional housing in St Albans.
- 3.3 The SKM report indicates site S1 could accommodate between 1,026 and 1,710 dwellings. Therefore, development of S1 would necessitate provision of a single 2 fe primary school site (2.5 ha) at the lower end of delivery, and 2 number 2fe primary school sites, (5 ha), at the higher density of development. In addition it would be appropriate for the site to provide a reserve secondary allocation for need arising from the site itself and as a contingent source of secondary education land supply to the east of Hemel Hempstead.
- 3.4 **Appendix 2**, (page 56 of this document) identifies the land use budget required to meet the secondary need, and identifies that a 12 ha site would be required to deliver an 8 fe secondary school. It may be that the playing fields associated with this, (which would have a land take in the region of 6.5 ha) could be located to the east of the area which figure 3.3 of the SKM report suggests could be released for development.



Sites and boundary study for St Albans City and District Council

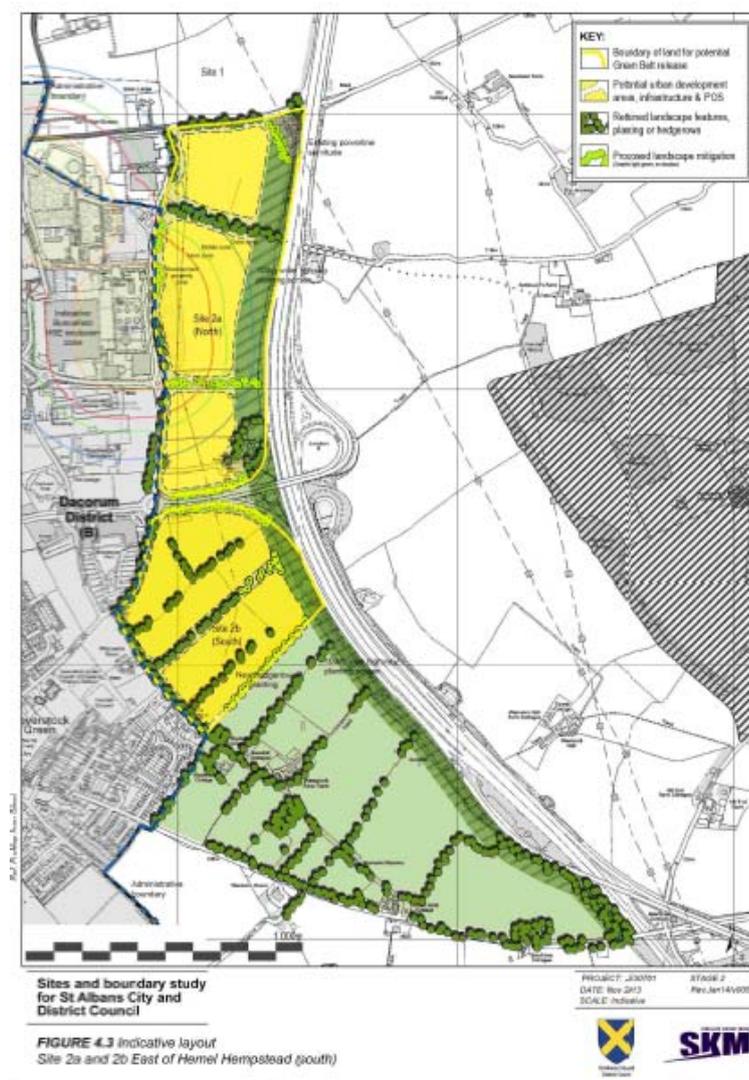
FIGURE 3.3 Indicative layout Site 1 East of Hemel Hempstead (north)

PROJECT: J32021 STAGE 2
 DATE: Nov 2013 Rev: Jan14V005
 SCALE: Indistinct



S2 : East of Hemel Hempstead South

- 3.5 The SKM report identifies that this land could accommodate between 684 and 1140 homes. It seems likely such development would come forward through the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan in due course.



- 3.6 Considered in isolation, it would be appropriate for the site to provide for a 2 fe school under either scenario, however, at the 1140 home scale, it would be prudent for any primary site to be capable of providing a 3 fe school. (A 3 fe school would require 3ha of land). Again, it would be appropriate for the land to the south to deliver a reserve secondary school of 12 ha area. (As with land parcel S1, it is worth noting that 6.5 ha of that overall secondary school site area would be playing fields). Therefore the Local Planning Authority might consider that this is more compatible with the land to the south east of the area identified for potential Green Belt release.
- 3.7 It is also worth noting that the identification of land for development to the east of Hemel Hempstead may provide opportunities to consider the potential for the provision of a new expanded HWRC serving Hemel Hempstead. In this respect, attention is drawn to section 4 of the separate service provision

update document (repeated for convenience at **Appendix 3**, pg 57 of this document) which was sent to Dacorum Borough Council at the start of May.

- 3.8 Most particularly, paragraph 4.2 of **Appendix 3** identifies that the most appropriate location for any new HWRC to serve Hemel Hempstead, is likely to be influenced by the extent of development east of Hemel, including land within St Albans City and District, (if any). HCC officers would welcome further tri partite discussions in relation to this, and other service related issues relating to the land to the east of Hemel Hempstead.
- 3.9 Such joint working would be helpful in the event that development in this broad area is taken forward. That could be by St Albans, as part of an Area Action Plan to the East of Hemel, or as part of the early partial review of the Core Strategy to reconsider housing need and the role of the Green Belt, to which Dacorum are committed. [As set out in the Duty to Co-Operate letter sent by Dacorum in relation to their pre submission Site Allocations DPD on 23rd May]. It would also be consistent with the duty to co-operate which is set out in sections 178 to 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

S1 and S2 Individually / or in Combination

- 3.10 In terms of the consideration which is being given to the environmental and social/economic implications of the different development scenarios it is relevant to note the following in terms of giving consideration to any land use budget.

Individually

Site S1	Low 30 dph	High 50 dph	Land use budget
Dwelling range (no of dwellings)	1026	1710	14.5 to 17 ha
Child yield (fe) (1 fe per 850/ 1 fe per 500)	1.2/2.05	2.01/3.42	1 no. secondary site + between 1 no. 2fe primary school and 2 no. 2fe primary school sites

Site S2	Low 30dph	High 50 dph	Land use budget
Dwelling range (no of dwellings)	684	1140	14.5 to 15ha
Child yield (fe) (1 fe per 850/ 1 fe per 500)	0.8/1.37	1.34/2.28	1 no. secondary site + 1 no. 2 fe or 3fe primary school site

NB the above tables **do not** contain the land take for a new HWRC.

3.11 **S1 and S 2 in combination**

Site S1 and S2	Low 30 dph	High 50 dph	Land use budget
Dwelling range (no of dwellings)	1710	2850	14.5 ha to 19 ha
Child yield (fe) (1 fe per 850/ 1 fe per 500)	2.0/3.42	3.35/5.7	1 no. secondary site + 1 no.2 fe to 3 no. 2fe primary school sites.

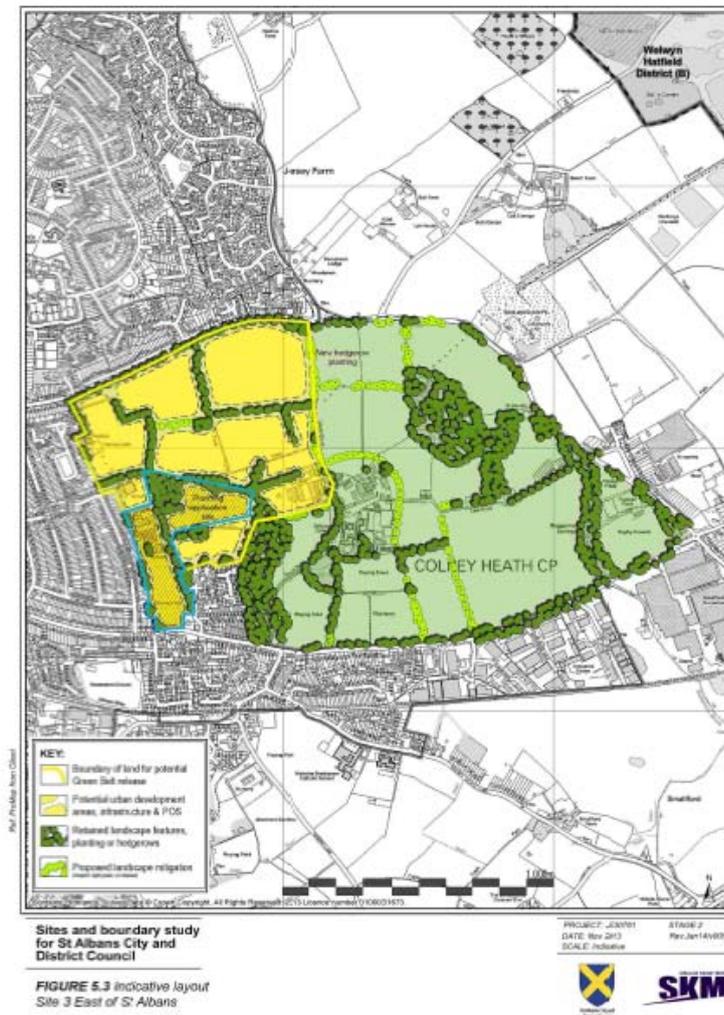
NB the above tables **do not** contain the land take for a new HWRC.

- 3.12 Of the options set out above, it is apparent that the option involving development of both S1 and S2 would be better balanced in terms of creating a critical mass of need which would come closest to enabling the creation of a new viable secondary school, which could also potentially provide additional school places for the existing urban area of Hemel Hempstead to the west.
- 3.13 It has been noted that the site capacity work carried out by SKM has sought to take into account potential infrastructure needs, including education, but the assumptions made about what land is taken for what uses, are not clear from their report. However, considered crudely, the 14.5 to 17 hectares of land required for education uses at Site 1 would leave only 5 hectares of land (from the 23 ha) referred to at para 3.6.9 of the SKM report, available for supporting infrastructure.
- 3.14 What this emphasises is the need for a detailed land use budget to be drawn up to accurately factor in the potential scale of land needed to ensure that new development is indeed 'sustainable', and to achieve the aim of delivering sufficient new education infrastructure, (para 162 of the NPPF). This approach will help ensure that the suggestion to ensure cooperation between two tiers of Local Government as advocated in paragraph 180 of the NPPF is achieved. The opportunity provided by the Local Planning Authority for HCC to comment on the implications of the Strategic Sites from a services perspective is welcomed.

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S3 : East of St Albans

3.15 Site S3 is identified as having an area of 55 hectares and the potential of providing between 990 and 1650 houses. For the purposes of the Green Belt Sites and Boundaries report, SKM have assumed that only 33 hectares of this would be developed with housing, with the remainder being used to provide supporting infrastructure, including education. It is worth noting that there is an inconsistency in the text for site S3. Section 5.6.10 of the report makes it clear that 22 hectares would be used for supporting infrastructure, but the calculation of residential yields at 5.6.12 of the SKM report, transposes the site area for supporting infrastructure in to the calculation of housing yield. This is a little confusing with the text informing the calculation leading one to expect a lower housing yield.



3.16 In previous Core Strategy representations we have set out the fact that Oakwood Primary school may have the potential to expand by 0.5fe subject to flexible green belt policy, access improvements and additional playing fields in third party ownership. [Section 5.6 of HCC Core Strategy Consultation response December 2010]. Any additional capacity that might be released through that policy approach is probably best regarded as providing latent capacity which could assist in meeting demand arising out of the existing urban area.

- 3.17 Considered in isolation, 990 to 1650 dwellings would yield between 1.16/1.98fe and 1.9/3.3fe respectively. There would therefore be a requirement for any strategic release to incorporate one no. 2fe primary school site at the bottom end of the scale, and two no. 2 fe primary school sites at the upper end of the scale. [Land take of 2.5 and 5 hectares respectively].
- 3.18 In addition to primary school requirements, the additional child yield arising from development at S3 would amplify and emphasise the need for the Local Planning Authority to respond positively to the evidence submitted to inform the Core Strategy in February 2011. [The previous work referred to at paragraphs 2.1 to 2.3 of this service provision update].
- 3.19 Insofar as it related to St Albans Secondary Planning Area, those representations identified that it would be helpful if the Local Planning Authority could make education allocations in relation to land:
- At Site C : Land north west of St Albans Road, St Albans
 - At Site D : Land south of House Lane, St Albans
 - At Site K : Land south of Holyrood Crescent, St Albans
 - At Site L : Land south of Butterfield Crescent, St Albans

For ease of reference, an extract of the key plan showing the above sites which related to St Albans, taken from the representations submitted by Vincent and Gorbings on behalf of HCC services is included at **Appendix 4**, (page 58 of this document).

- 3.20 Therefore, it is integral to any release of strategic sites for housing at St Albans, that the Local Planning Authority also ensures that the strategic local plan makes appropriate provision for new secondary school places. In so doing the local planning authority will be meeting the requirement set out at paragraph 72 of the NPPF for Local Planning Authorities to :

Take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that might widen choice in education,

and to

assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for.....education.....and its ability to meet forecast demands,

as required by paragraph 162 of the NPPF.

- 3.21 As drafted, the plan at figure 5.3 for S3 includes 7.3 hectares of detached playing fields which serve Verulam school. A plan showing the extent of these fields is included as **Appendix 5**, (page 59 of this document). In order to achieve the 33 hectares of housing land that is specified in section 5.6.9 of the SKM report, it would be necessary to re provide these playing fields – potentially on the land areas to the east. The need to re provide the Verulam playing fields has been included in the land use budget that is set out in the table below.

S3 : East of St Albans

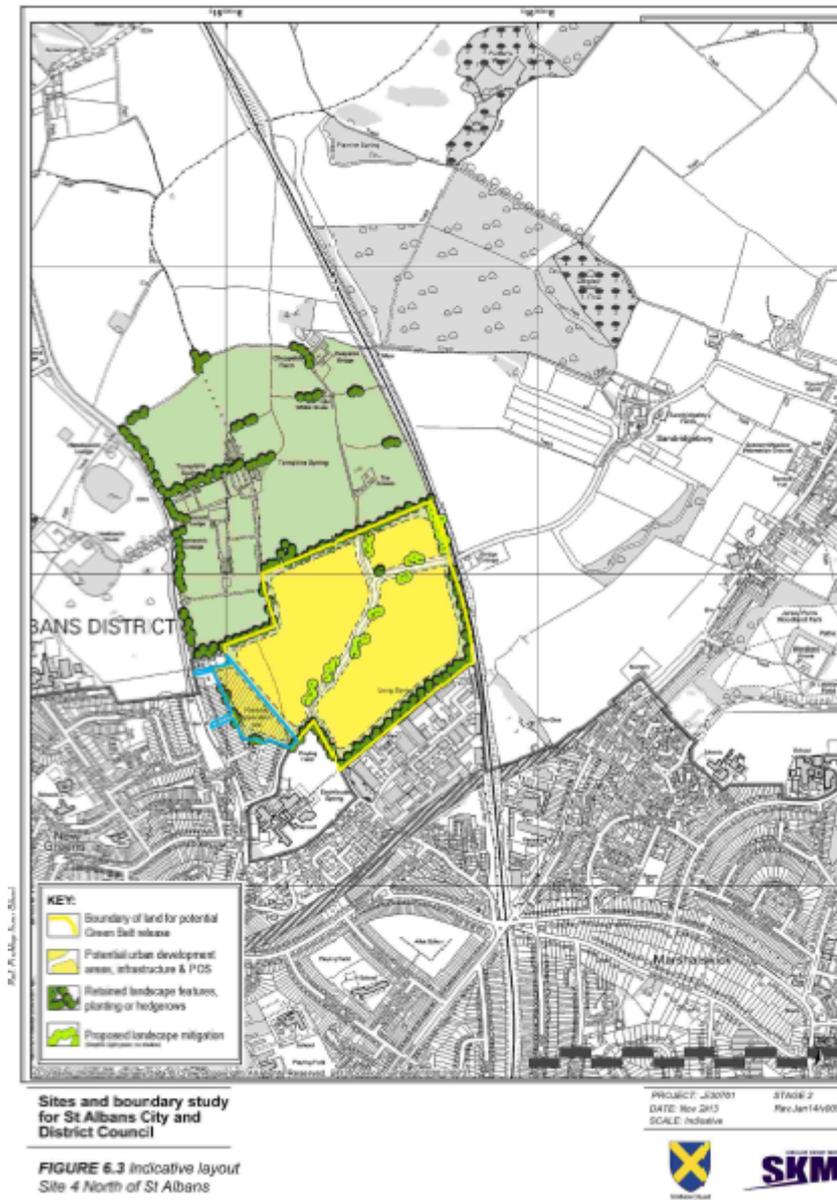
Site S3	Low 30 dph	High 50 dph	Land use budget
Dwelling range (no of dwellings)	990	1650	7.5 hectares* + 2.5 to 5.0 ha
Child yield (fe) (1 fe per 850/ 1 fe per 500)	1.16/1.98	1.9/3.3	*replacement playing fields to Verulam School + between 1no. and 2 no. 2fe primary sites

- 3.22 Fundamentally, with site S3, if it is taken forward as an option for further development it would be important that the site should provide for itself in terms of primary capacity. Therefore, it would be helpful if the scale and phasing of any development is devised with this in mind. It may be that the location of any new primary school element, could be on the eastern edge of the proposed Green Belt release since the playing fields associated with any such release may assist in providing the transition between urban and rural areas. Consideration would need to be given to whether any replacement playing fields enjoyed a functionally acceptable relationship with the school (which is an academy). If the functional relationship is not acceptable, then the scale of release is likely to require amendment or additional land will need to be identified to provide the residential capacity identified in the release.

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S4 : North of St Albans

- 3.23 Site S4 is identified as having an area of 38 hectares, of which 23 hectares would potentially be released to provide housing land with the remaining 15 hectares providing supporting infrastructure, including education land. The range in housing capacity given for the land is between 684 and 1140 dwellings.



- 3.24 This equates to a primary yield of between 0.8/1.36fe and 1.34/2.28fe. At this scale of development it would be appropriate to provide a new 2 fe primary school on a 2.5 ha site at the lower end of the scale and a 2 fe school on a site capable of expanding to 3 fe, (a 3 ha site) if housing at the upper end of the scale is achieved.
- 3.25 The comments made at 3.18 to 3.20 relating to secondary capacity are reiterated. If this location were to be selected for housing growth, as well as site S3, then need for provision of additional secondary school capacity, as an

issue to be considered and dealt with is an even more compelling requirement for the Strategic Local Plan.

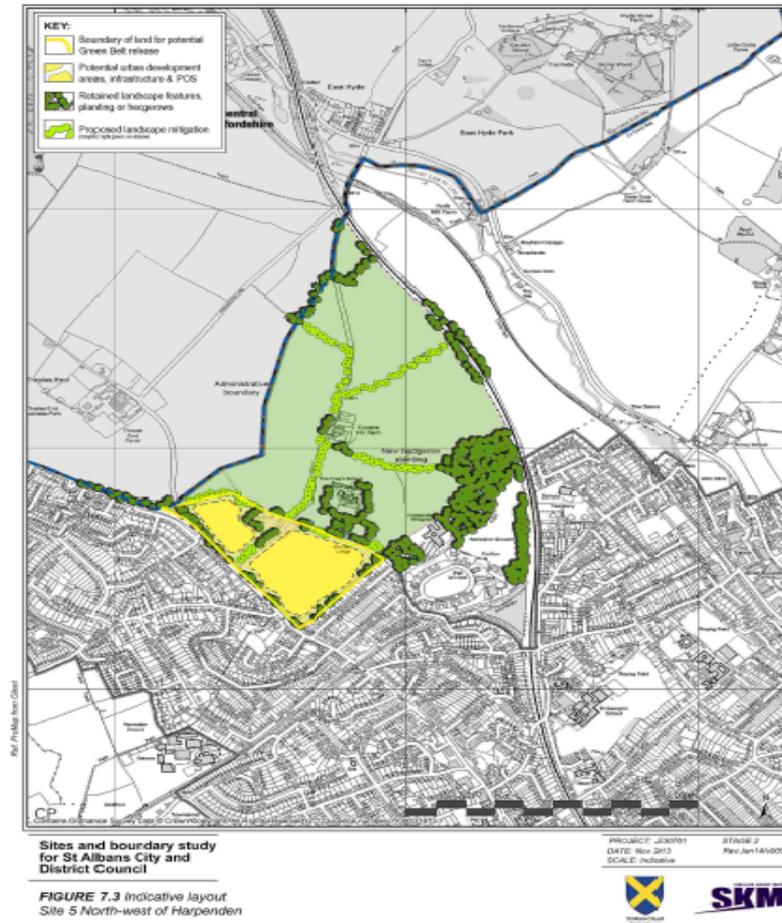
S4 : North of St Albans

Site S4	Low 30 dph	High 50 dph	Land use budget
Dwelling range (no of dwellings)	684	1140	2.5 to 3 ha
Child yield (fe) (1 fe per 850/ 1 fe per 500)	0.8/1.36	1.34/2.28	Between 1no.2fe primary and 1no.2fe primary on a site capable of expanding to 3fe.

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S5 : Land Northwest of Harpenden

- 3.26 Site S5 is identified as having a total area of 18 hectares of which 11 hectares would be developed for housing. 7 hectares is identified as potentially being available to support delivery of new infrastructure, including education. It is worth noting that 7 hectares is less than the 12 hectares identified as being required to provide a new 8fe secondary school in **Appendix 2**, (page 56 of this document).



- 3.27 At the range of densities in the SKM report, the site has a residential capacity of between 324 and 540 dwellings. This equates to a primary yield of 0.38/0.65 fe to 0.63/1.08fe. This suggests that it would be prudent to plan for an additional 2fe primary school on a 2.5 ha site to meet the need arising from this housing. [It may well be that any such site would be developed as a 1fe school with 2fe core facilities, but the logic of ensuring that any new provision is capable of further expansion will be self-evident].
- 3.28 The need to prudently plan for additional primary school capacity to serve Harpenden has been identified in HCC representations since February 2011. [Section 5.9 to 5.12 of the HCC Core Strategy Consultation Response on Behalf of HCC Services relates. In addition, that need is reflected in the Infrastructure Provision in Hertfordshire document attached as **Appendix 1** to this service position update. [Section 10.14 to 10.16, section 10.28, and Appendix 3 **within the Appendix 1 document** provide further details].

- 3.29 In addition to primary school requirements, the additional child yield arising from development at S5 would amplify and emphasise the need for the Local Planning Authority to respond positively to the evidence submitted to inform the Core Strategy in February 2011. [The Vincent and Gorbing work referred to at paragraphs 2.1 to 2.3 of this service provision update].
- 3.30 Insofar as it related to Harpenden, those previous representations identified that it would be helpful if the Local Planning Authority could make education allocations in relation to land:

- At Site F : land north of lower Luton Road, Harpenden,

and the HCC service representations also submitted in February 2011, identified that;

- In order to provide flexibility within the plan period, it would be prudent for SACDC to make an education allocation on rural estate land adjacent to Roundwood Park School and running up to Roundwood Lane, which could assist in the provision of additional secondary and primary school places in Harpenden. [Section 5.11 and 6.2 to 6.3 of HCC Service response on SACDC Core Strategy Consultation February 2011].
- The confirmation of which sites should be allocated in any subsequent site allocations document will be dependent upon the views of the Local Planning Authority, and subsequent technical investigations [Section 6.2 of HCC Service response on SACDC Core Strategy Consultation February 2011].

For ease of reference, an extract of the key plan showing the above sites which related to Harpenden, taken from the representations submitted by Vincent and Gorbing on behalf of HCC services is included at **Appendix 6** of this document.

- 3.31 It is integral to any release of strategic sites for housing at Harpenden, that the Local Planning Authority also ensures that the strategic local plan makes appropriate provision for new primary and secondary school provision. In the absence of the strategic local plan doing that, the only way of taking forward proposals for new schools in the Green Belt will be via very special circumstances arguments, with all the uncertainty associated with that for all stakeholders.
- 3.32 In positively planning for schools, the local planning authority will be meeting the requirement set out at paragraph 72 of the NPPF for Local Planning Authorities to :

Take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that might widen choice in education,
and to
assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for.....education.....and its ability to meet forecast demands,

as required by paragraph 162 of the NPPF.

S5 : North West of Harpenden

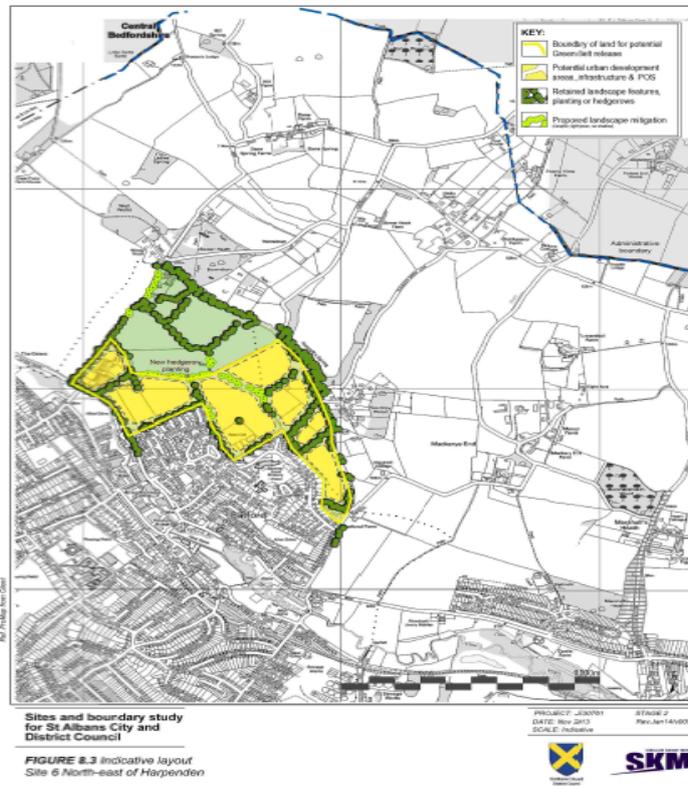
Site S5	Low 30 dph	High 50 dph	Land use budget
Dwelling range (no of dwellings)	324	540	2.5ha
Child yield (fe) (1 fe per 850/ 1 fe per 500)	0.38/0.65	0.63/1.08	1no.2fe primary school site, (which may be 1fe with 2fe core facilities in the first instance.

NB The above table does not include the land requirements for a new secondary school [12ha]

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S6 : North East Harpenden

- 3.33 Site S6 is identified as having a total area of 32 hectares. Of this, the SKM suggest that 19 hectares would be developed with housing, with the remaining 13 hectares providing for supporting infrastructure.



- 3.34 There is an inconsistency in the SKM report as while the text at paragraph 8.6.8 indicates that gross site area to be developed for housing will be 19 hectares, the calculation at paragraph 8.6.11 identifies that housing yields would be 576 and 960 dwellings respectively, and confusingly identifies that the amount of residential development land would be 20 hectares. The figures of 576 and 960 are repeated in the table of estimated residential capacity at 13.1 of the SKM report. At 19 hectares, the figures in table 13.1 should be 570 (at 30 dph) and 950 (at 50 dph).
- 3.35 Assuming that 19 hectares of land are developed, the child yield arising from the development would be in the range of 0.67/1.14fe to 1.12 to 1.9 fe. It would therefore be prudent for any development in this location to provide a 2fe primary school site of 2.5ha area. Depending on the specifics of development, it might be considered that a 1 fe school with 2fe core facilities should be provided in the first instance.
- 3.36 The comments made at paragraphs 3.29 to 3.32 above relating to the need to plan for additional secondary school capacity to serve Harpenden are reiterated.
- 3.37 If **both** site S5 **and** S6 were to be taken forward then given that they could yield 3fe of pupils. Under those circumstances, it would be prudent to identify two no. 2fe primary school sites to support both housing releases, and to provide some flexible contingent sources of capacity to serve the existing residential area.

S6 : North East of Harpenden

Site S6	Low 30 dph	High 50 dph	Land use budget
Dwelling range (no of dwellings)	570*	950*	2.5 ha
Child yield (fe) (1 fe per 850/ 1 fe per 500)	0.67/1.14	1.12/1.9	1no. 2fe primary school

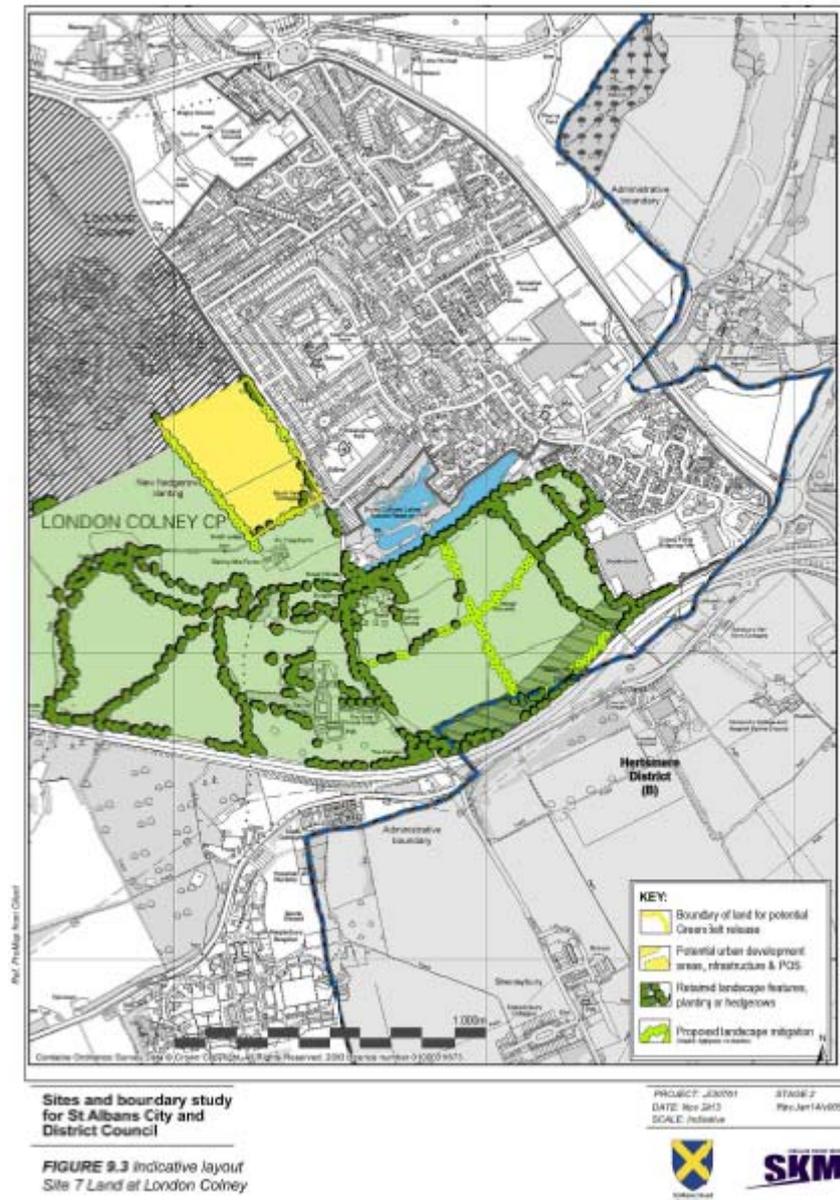
***dwelling range assumes 19 hectare of residential land**

NB The above table does not include the land requirements for a new secondary school [12ha]

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S7 : Land at London Colney

- 3.38 The SKM report identifies that 8 hectares of land at London Colney would be available for housing, with 8 hectares providing supporting infrastructure, including education facilities.
- 3.39 Again, the calculation which has been used to identify dwelling yields at paragraph 9.6.12 is not entirely clear, since multiplying the site area of 8 hectares by 30 dph/50 dph would give dwelling yields in the range of 240 dwellings to 400 dwellings. The yields actually identified at 9.6.12 of the report are repeated in Table 13.1 of Estimated Residential Capacity, and are identified as being between 252 and 420 dwellings. For the purpose of calculating child yields, these differences are not fundamental. However it might be helpful if the correct figure could be clarified.



- 3.40 Development of between 240 and 400 dwellings would generate a child yield in the range of 0.28fe/0.48fe and 0.47/0.8fe.

- 3.41 In HCCs Core Strategy Consultation response on behalf of HCC Services, a need was identified to provide additional primary school capacity to meet the needs arising from development south east of London Colney and from the Harperbury Hospital site. [See section 5.20 of HCC Core Strategy Consultation Response February 2011]. In the Infrastructure document attached to this update as **Appendix 1**, section 5.20 restates that need. The analysis of potential child yield from urban capacity sites, and comments on London Colney **contained within Appendix 3 of the Appendix 1 document**, identified that urban capacity sites, could yield 1.03 fe of child yield and confirmed that it would be prudent to plan for an additional 2fe of primary school capacity at London Colney.
- 3.42 The yield arising from the strategic growth at S7 would be slightly less than 1fe, however taking into account the potential demand for school places which could come from urban capacity sites, it would be prudent to ensure that any new strategic site should also provide a 2.5 ha, 2fe primary school site. Such a site would not only meet the needs arising from the strategic development, it would also provide latent capacity to serve the existing urban area.
- 3.43 The additional demand for secondary school places which would result from development at London Colney would amplify the need to for the Strategic Local Plan to consider additional education allocations to deliver additional secondary capacity at St Albans to 2031, as set out at 3.18 to 3.20 above.

S7 : Land at London Colney

Site S3	Low 30 dph	High 50 dph	Land use budget
Dwelling range (no of dwellings)	240*	400*	2.5ha
Child yield (fe) (1 fe per 850/ 1 fe per 500)	0.28/0.48	0.47/0.8	1 no. 2 fe primary school site

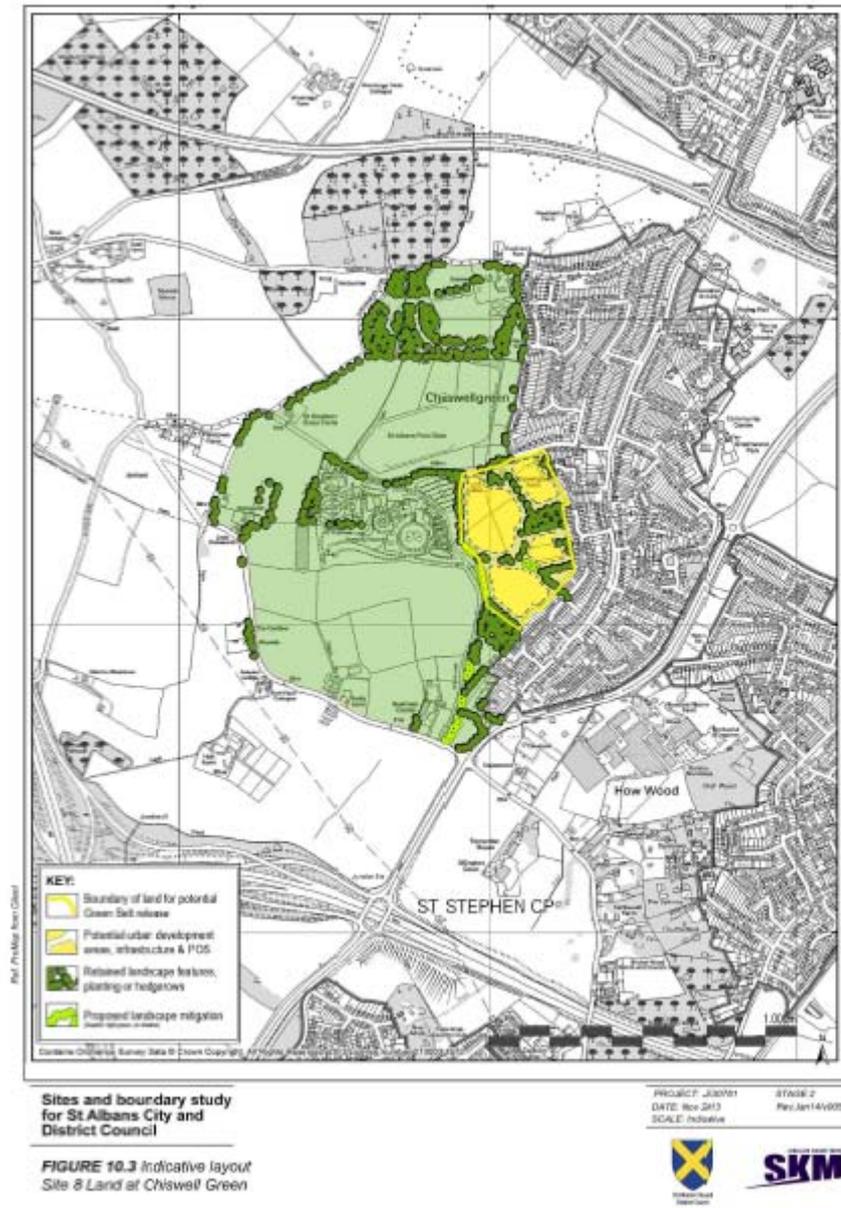
***dwelling range assumes 8 hectares of development land as set out in the report.**

- 3.44 In terms of meeting the need to provide contingent primary capacity, the planning authority might consider that the siting of any school on the edge of any Green Belt release for housing might assist in transitioning from open countryside to the urban area.

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S8 : Land at Chiswell Green

- 3.45 The SKM report identifies that the 9 hectares of land to the west of Chiswell Green could provide between 270 and 450 dwellings. The report identifies that in addition, 6 hectares of land would be available to provide supporting infrastructure, including education facilities.



- 3.46 The dwelling numbers identified in the SKM report would yield between 0.31/0.54fe to 0.52/0.9 fe respectively.
- 3.47 Concerns over the deliverability of expansion of existing schools were identified in previous representations, (HCC Core Strategy Representations February 2011, para 5.6). It was identified that any further expansion of Killigrew school would rely upon flexible Green Belt policy and upon the resolution of highways issues which may be insurmountable.
- 3.48 Given these uncertainties, and the child yield which would arise from the new development, it would be appropriate for any release here to provide for a

new 2 fe school on a 2.5ha site, (which might be developed with a 1 fe school in the first instance). However, the additional potential capacity would provide additional latent, deliverable capacity to provide both for the new community and any additional needs arising from recycling of sites in the existing urban area. In addition, it is worth noting that the strategic release would offer the potential to provide a new school on the south west side of Chiswell Green, and west of Watford Road.

- 3.49 In addition to the fact that it would be prudent to plan for additional primary capacity within the settlement, further development at Chiswell Green would generate demand for additional secondary school places. This amplifies the need to for the Strategic Local Plan to consider additional education allocations to deliver additional secondary capacity at St Albans to 2031, as set out at 3.18 to 3.20 above.

S8 : Land at Chiswell Green

Site S3	Low 30 dph	High 50 dph	Land use budget
Dwelling range (no of dwellings)	270	450	2.5 ha
Child yield (fe) (1 fe per 850/ 1 fe per 500)	0.31/0.54	0.52/0.9	1 no.2fe primary school site

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4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Local Planning Authority has provided the opportunity for HCC to comment on the emerging Spatial Plan from a service provision perspective since 2006. The opportunity to comment on the SKM report, while the next stage of the Strategic Local Plan is a work in progress paper is appreciated. HCC officers are committed to maintaining the dialogue.
- 4.2 This document confirms the major land use allocation implications raised by each of the sites in the SKM report. All of the releases have implications for service delivery. S1 and S2 to the east of Hemel Hempstead have implications which stretch across the District/Borough administrative boundary, but equally, they offer the opportunity to provide a solution to new secondary capacity which would assist not only the development itself, but also provide additional capacity for the existing settlement. HCC officers would be positively welcome the opportunity to participate in any tripartite discussions with St Albans and Dacorum which might be associated with taking this work forwards. Likewise HCC officers would welcome the opportunity of meeting to discuss mechanisms to secure delivery of infrastructure. (Current thinking is that for development of over 500 units Section 106 is appropriate, with CIL applying to smaller schemes).
- 4.3 Throughout this document, the range of child yield that is likely to arise from development has been identified. It is worth emphasising that as part of a prudent spatial plan, **it must** be appropriate to plan for the higher yields and identify appropriate land use allocations and policies to deal with the implications of them.
- 4.4 Subject to the strategic local plan:
- taking on board the land use budget implications associated with the service uses,
 - positively facilitating provision,
 - ensuring appropriate phasing and funding, (whether by section 106 or through the Community Infrastructure Levy) for delivery of facilities,

then, from a service provision perspective the Plan is likely to be:

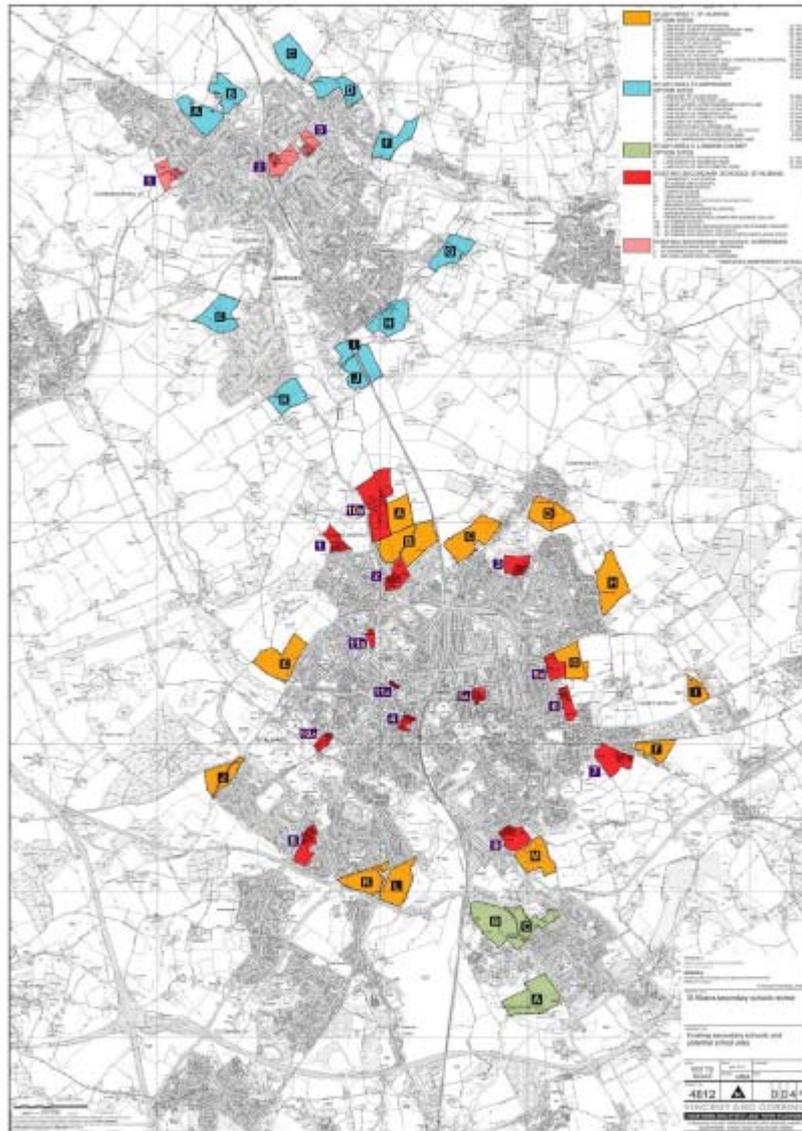
- Positively prepared.
- Justified, based on a proportionate evidence base.
- Effective and,
- Consistent with National policy.

This will maximise the prospects of the Strategic Local Plan being found sound.

- 4.5 If there are any matters contained in this updated position statement which Spatial Planning Officers at St Albans wish to discuss further then please do not hesitate to contact me and I can facilitate a meeting attended by appropriate Estates and Asset Management/Services colleagues.

Matt Wood
Principal Planner
Development Services 04.06.14

APPENDIX 4



- 34) If exceptional economic conditions persist the monitoring arrangements should identify the implications of this and point to what changes may need to be made to the CS. It is a feature of residual valuations that comparatively minor adjustments to the constituent figures can have a major effect on the result. Nevertheless, this methodology and this particular tool are commonly used for the valuation of development sites, which shows that it is potentially a reasonably precise valuation instrument.
- 35) The Community Infrastructure Levy is not yet resolved, and so the CS cannot deal with it in detail. Instead, it should provide a "hook" in a policy (possibly including matters to be included in S106 Obligations) for a later DPD policy.

Evidence base

- 36) Apart from the Glossary of Terms, the Appendices to the CS should not be part of the CS. They are part of the evidence base. From what I can see, they are summaries of key parts of more detailed and complex evidence elsewhere, and could be kept as part of the "audit trail" (see below).
- 37) See the PINS article on the evidence base. Evidence should be proportionate (only as much as is necessary) to the job that needs to be done. Remember that evidence gathering is a means to an end and not an end in itself. The starting point for the Inspector's Examination is the submitted CS and the evidence base will be explored only as much as is necessary to be satisfied that the CS is sound.
- 38) The evidence should inform what is in a CS. The evidence should be as up-to-date as is practical (¶ 4.47 PPS12). Be rigorous in selecting what is needed. You may need to update old studies. Give Executive Summaries to long, technical studies.
- 39) It could be a useful exercise to go through each policy and proposal in each CS asking yourselves critically what its justification is and what are the facts/analysis that backs this up. Is there a clear linkage from evidence to policy?
- 40) The CS needs to be clear what evidence is relied on. This can be achieved by very short explanations in the text and cross references (footnotes) to specific parts of supporting documents. All the evidence on which the CS is based should be published at the same time as the Pre-Submission publication. It is important that the evidence to inform the strategic choices is available in time to influence those choices, whereas evidence more concerned with aspects of delivery might come a little later, leading up to the Pre-Submission publication.
- 41) There is no need to summarise study findings in the CS itself as this can reduce clarity. Some councils (and Inspectors) have found it helpful to have a statement or "Audit Trail" that sets out the preparation process and which has clear links to the relevant evidence, including non-technical summaries, and to the policies. This is because it is often not clear to what extent the recommendations or conclusions of evidence reports have been taken forward, and why some recommendations are preferred over others.
- 42) I have looked through the list of the evidence base studies that has been sent to me and I can see no obvious gaps. Try not to over-complicate the evidence base – for instance, are all the conservation area character statements needed?

Schools

- 43) The need for more schools is a critical issue that the CS must deal with. If a school is needed early in the plan period and other proposals depend upon its provision, then it may require a strategic allocation in the CS. Otherwise, the rough location of the schools must be indicated in the CS, including alternative sites, the criteria for selecting them specified, and then the detail can be left to a later DPD.

**Examination of Three Rivers Site Allocations
Local Development Document**

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28th November 2013

Dear Mrs May,

**Examination of Site Allocations Local Development Document
(SALLD)**

You will recall that, at the end of the Hearing Sessions last month, I undertook to write to you this month regarding my preliminary conclusions, in advance of my formal report, as to the changes necessary in order to make the SALDD sound in the sense now intended by the relevant legislation and the NPPF, i.e. positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy to promote sustainable development.

A number of intended changes have already been signalled by the Council in response to my early concerns regarding the contradiction, in most instances, of 'allocated' sites remaining in the Green Belt. The Council has also signalled its intention to positively address the similar difficulties at Leavesden Studios highlighted early on in the Hearing Sessions.¹ The content of this letter, which explains the additional changes I consider to be necessary to make the plan sound in its present context, has substantive implications for a small number of the changes signalled in advance of the Hearing Sessions, but none for those at Leavesden. You may take it that all the changes covered in this letter are necessary to make the SALDD meet the above requirements embodying an appropriate degree of flexibility to adapt to rapid change and will be comprehensively reasoned in my final report.

To be adequately helpful this letter is necessarily lengthy and foreshadows, in summary form, much of the content of what will ultimately be my formal report, but the 'headline' points are as follows:-

¹ My letter of 8 November 2013, to which the Council responded on 19 November 2013.

1. The SALDD as submitted cannot be considered sound, but with appropriate modifications it can be made so, without undue delay or further significant development of the evidence base.
2. Although national policy provides for the safeguarding of land excluded from the Green Belt for future development beyond the plan period, the circumstances of Three Rivers District are such that substantial safeguarding of this nature would, in effect, require a major review of the Green Belt boundary, well beyond the scale of alteration anticipated by the adopted Core Strategy. This would be premature. As yet, the evidence base and strategic context are insufficiently developed to inform such a review and it is in the public interest to complete the Council's 'Local Plan' broadly as currently conceived.
3. Notwithstanding the above, the close matching of housing allocations to Core Strategy requirements, which includes the (justified) reliance on some expectation of windfalls, introduces an unduly constraining rigidity in respect of the anticipated housing land supply, which renders the SALDD vulnerable to unexpected non-delivery of sites or unexpected delays in reviewing the 'Local Plan' and adopting a replacement. In the context of national priorities to deliver sustainable housing development, such lack of flexibility is inconsistent with the intentions of the NPPF, which promotes adequacy of housing land supply year on year. Equally, it is a national priority to maintain, as far as possible, established Green Belts.
4. In all the circumstances, pending formal review of the Local Plan, I consider a small margin only for flexibility is required to ensure the plan remains effective in its delivery of housing land throughout the plan period whilst minimising the chances of disruption to supply during transition to the next. This is achievable without a major review of the Green Belt boundary and the SALDD phasing mechanism, which is locally justified, should enhance the robustness and overall longevity of the plan-led housing land supply, if delivery works out equal to or better than expectations.

5. A small minority of the housing allocations is not justified in the context of the Core Strategy and the NPPF as, for a variety of reasons, the allocations are unsustainably located in principle or in practice, or do not accord with principles underlying effective and positive planning. These allocations should be deleted for soundness.
6. Inevitably, given the tight constraints of the site allocation strategy, this requires compensatory allocation in addition to that required for a small margin of provision for flexibility. This requires clear choices by the Council to identify sustainable replacements and, in practice, the room for manoeuvre is very limited, but it does exist within the purview of options previously considered.
7. Decisive provision of school sites, both primary and secondary, is a major priority if the SALDD is to be considered effective and therefore sound. Appropriate sites exist and have been highlighted during the course of the Examination to date and are adequately evidenced. Froghall Farm is unsuitable for a variety of reasons and should be deleted. Building zones for both primary and secondary provision should be removed from the Green belt as appropriate.
8. In combination with changes previously signalled by the Council, modifying the SALDD in the manner indicated above should lead to a finding of soundness and subsequent adoption of the SALDD.

Contextual Matters: Duty to Co-operate, Relationship to Core Strategy and NPPF, General approach to Green Belt, Housing Land Supply and Schools Provision

The Council's 'Local Plan', as now conceived of in the context of national requirements and policy, is effectively a suite of local development documents, of which the SALDD will be an important component. Prior to the introduction of the NPPF, the Core Strategy (CS) was found capable of being made sound in the context of the national policy statements and policy guidance prevailing at the time, together with the now defunct RSS in the form of the East of England Plan. The CS was duly adopted in October 2011. The Development Management Local Development Document (DMLDD) was similarly made sound and adopted, having been independently examined earlier this year, subsequent to the introduction of the NPPF in March 2012 and the Duty to Cooperate previously

introduced with effect from November 2011. The latter is clearly an ongoing obligation, but insofar as site allocations pursuant to the CS may have implications that transcend administrative boundaries and for other statutory agencies, I have no evidence of a failure to co-operate in the sense required, bearing in mind that the Duty is not necessarily a duty to always agree. Much of the evidence base for the SALDD is derived from co-operative working and the tradition is strong in the area. In common with my colleague who examined the DMLDD, I am satisfied that the obligation has been complied with.

The Duty to Co-operate of course continues on a day-to-day basis and will be especially pertinent in the determination of objectively assessed development needs in the Council's area in anticipation of the Review of the Council's Local Plan in due course, which the Council recognises will not only be necessary but could have significant implications for the Green Belt boundary as currently defined and, as you know, the extent to which it should be altered so as to cater for development needs beyond the plan period (i.e. post 2026) remained a live issue at the Hearing Sessions. The previous policy guidance set out in the former PPG2 is reflected as policy in the NPPF insofar as the use of safeguarded land to help facilitate enduring Green Belt boundaries is strongly encouraged.

The Council's cycle of development planning activity was well advanced at the time the NPPF was introduced and its Local Plan therefore sits astride the circumstances prevailing prior to its introduction and those now prevailing. Various views were expressed by participants in the Hearing Sessions as to the implications of this for the SALDD, some more radical than others, and some more pragmatic in tenor than others. Bearing in mind the Council's commendable diligence and very tangible progress in addressing the continuous process of development planning which is required to effectively deliver plan-led sustainable development, and its effective engagement with the local community, I am inclined to the view that the public interest, as reflected in the national intentions of the Framework, is best served by a pragmatic approach appropriate to the local circumstances.

Although, as you know, the SALDD is no longer bound in hierarchical fashion by the provisions of the CS, I consider that the Council's Local Plan as a whole (i.e. the suite of LDDs) should nevertheless be coherent if any particular element is to remain justified within the context that the rest of the Local Plan provides. Hence, in the case of the SALDD, a broad measure of consistency with the CS is required, as I indicated in defining my issues.

Having said that, I use the term 'broad measure of consistency' because I do not consider it necessary for the SALDD to slavishly adhere to the letter of the CS in order for the Local Plan as a whole to remain coherent. The adopted CS is, after all, a land use strategy rather than a rigid blue print and the subsequent introduction of the NPPF and its intentions must also be recognised if the SALDD is to be considered sound, always bearing in mind that the SALDD is but one element of the Council's partially adopted Local Plan and not the whole picture. The key to soundness, as far as the SALDD is concerned, is achieving a balance, where necessary, between the overall thrust of the Council's local planning framework and the NPPF that is appropriate to the local circumstances, without creating fundamental inconsistency with either.

In some circumstances, that might not be achievable, but happily I believe that in the case of Three Rivers it is. While I do not consider the SALDD to be sound as submitted, I consider that, with the changes I consider necessary, which are capable of being addressed through an appropriate set of Main Modifications, it is capable of being made so.

The Ministerial Foreword to the NPPF makes it clear that a significant part of its task is to render that which it replaced concise and accessible. There is therefore significant continuity between the general intentions of the diverse documents which preceded it, and which formed the context for the Council's CS, and those of the NPPF itself. Having said that, it must be recognised that the NPPF introduces changes in emphasis and approach that, where relevant to the content of the SALDD, have to be taken into account if the document is to be considered sound.

Of particular relevance is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is as relevant to plan-making as it is to decision-taking in respect of individual planning applications. This requires Local Plans to be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change, albeit not in an unqualified way which would leave important restrictions on development, such as Green Belt designation, vulnerable to being undermined.

A salient theme of the NPPF is to boost significantly the supply of housing and in Three Rivers, which is subject to considerable market pressures for residential development, I see it as of paramount importance that Council can continue to ensure delivery year on year throughout the plan period and into the next, without disruption of the necessary plan-led supply of land for that purpose.

The integrity of the Green Belt is also a matter of national importance. The longstanding advice that Green Belt boundaries may in exceptional circumstances be altered is carried through into the NPPF. Also carried through is endorsement of the principle of creating enduring boundaries through the safeguarding of land for longer term development needs beyond the plan period. Nevertheless, having become familiar with the local circumstances and considered all the evidence and opinions, I am persuaded that the major review of the Green Belt boundary which the Council recognises to be inevitable, if it is to continue to meet its housing needs in the decades ahead, would be premature in the context of the SALDD. To attempt such a review by that route would require an evidence base far beyond that which is currently available as a consequence of current local plan preparation, associated consultation and sustainability appraisal, involving as it has done the serial preparation of the CS, DMLDD and SALDD. It would set back the achievement of a firm and site specific local planning framework in Three Rivers by a number of years, to the detriment of NPPF intentions that planning should be genuinely plan-led so as to deliver sustainable development in the right place at the right time.

Moreover, my working assumption is that the advice currently contained in the web-based National Planning Practice Guidance, that "Plan-makers should not need to rely on windfall allowance in years 6-15" will not be applied retrospectively to plans that have advanced as far as submission. While it is undoubtedly good practice to avoid such uncertainty when local authorities generally have the ability to identify broad locations in years 6-15, there is a risk that, in doing so, the Three Rivers District Council could in practice step beyond a modicum of necessary flexibility so as to initiate a review of the Green Belt that goes beyond the CS intention of minor alteration to it, thereby jeopardising the CS intention to confine such alteration to the periphery of the principal town, key and secondary centres. The Council's approach to windfalls was considered sound at the time of examination and is supported by evidence of delivery. In view of the above considerations, I do not consider a fundamental change in direction or approach is warranted in the SALDD.

Having said that, I am seriously concerned that the SALDD approach of allocating only sufficient land, net of the 190 dwellings assumed to be delivered by the windfall allowance, to numerically meet the residual requirement for circa 1850 dwellings until 2026 introduces a rigidity that renders it hostage to the unexpected non-delivery of even small identified sites, let alone the major contribution assumed from South Oxhey Town Centre and a lesser

contribution from windfalls than anticipated. The SALDD as submitted (with 280 units at South Oxhey Town Centre²) identifies land for 1658 dwellings and assumes 190 windfalls. This equates to the residual requirement of 1848 dwellings needed over and above the 2442 dwellings built 2001-2013 taken together with the committed dwellings projected to be delivered by April 2014.³

I acknowledge that the strength of the market and past performance suggest that all will, in the event, turn out better than planned for in terms of housing delivery, but there is no margin for error or upset, or delay for practical reasons. It is a question of travelling hopefully and with expectation, rather than, in practical terms, creating the virtual certainty that the plan-led system calls for.

Having examined the allocations site by site, and bearing in mind the indicatively phased approach to land release embodied in the SALDD, I do not consider, in the circumstances of Three Rivers that the large margin over and above the planned housing land advocated by some participants is necessary to make the plan positively prepared with sufficient flexibility. However, in view of my concern about rigidity, I am of the view that some margin should be built in to the housing allocations, say 4-5% of the total plan requirement to be delivered, but certainly the equivalent of one year's supply (180 units). In order to be sound, I consider that to be the minimum headroom to ensure delivery of the CS requirements, to avoid potentially harmful disruption to the housing land supply year on year and to facilitate a safe and smooth transition into the beginning of the next plan period (on the assumption that formal adoption of a reviewed local planning framework occurs more or less at that time.) Conversely, if delivery exceeds hope and expectation, the phasing mechanism in the SALDD should ensure that delivery does not run ahead of existing and planned infrastructure capacity and would mean that a larger element of the land identified could be carried over into the next plan period, thereby affording a small measure of relief to the pressures that will undoubtedly be experienced then. That would not be harmful and it is certain that more land will be needed then in any event.

As it is, I have identified a limited number of housing allocations in the submitted SALDD which, having regard to the evidence put to me and all the circumstances, I consider do not sit well with the intentions of the Core Strategy and the interests of sustainable development as articulated in the NPPF, or about which I have

² As opposed to the 378 assumed on the Council's subsequent spreadsheet.

³ See Council's closing remarks

significant doubts in terms of deliverability or capacity. These are detailed later in this letter to inform the necessary changes I consider necessary in the interests of soundness. The loss of capacity implicit in making such changes must be compensated for, and whilst I acknowledge the Council's desire to retain local choice, the approach adopted to identifying and allocating housing sites (i.e. the very close fit between requirement and allocation) means that, in reality, the room for manoeuvre is extremely limited. However, two significant alternative sites previously considered by the Council have been identified by participants in the Hearing Sessions that I consider would be consistent with the CS intentions and sustainable in NPPF terms and which would not be unduly harmful in terms of Green Belt purposes. There are additional possibilities to make up capacity for soundness and the most obvious one I have identified, a site also previously considered by the Council.

The reliance on South Oxhey Town Centre to deliver at least additional 280 units net of clearance and possibly as many as 360 represents a risk which, on balance, I consider to be justified, subject to the proviso that failure to achieve key milestones should, if necessary, trigger an early review of the SALDD. I have seen no firm evidence that the higher figure now being assumed for design purposes will achieve planning permission, let alone funding, and therefore, in the interests of flexibility and responsiveness, apply a discount equivalent to 50% of the additional capacity now assumed. In other words my working assumption is that the eventual delivery figure could be at least 360 additional dwellings but for robustness and confidence at this stage I am assuming that it will be 320 additional dwellings, an increase on the submitted SALDD of 40 units. Should the regeneration project falter, the Council would need to consider the impact on the projected land supply and take the necessary action. The additional flexibility I consider to be necessary could cater for delay and, in combination with a better performance than anticipated on windfalls, might obviate the need for early review, but this cannot be clear at the present time.

Aside from the above concerns about the housing land supply, I have serious concerns about the submitted approach to school provision, which may be summarised as follows:

- Positive and decisive provision for future school development, including for primary schools, is of the utmost importance to the local community. The SALDD is neither positive nor effective without such provision, the need for which has been well evidenced by the Hertfordshire County Council at the Hearing Sessions.

School provision that comes on stream too late is not characteristic of a sound plan and is harmful to children and families. The certainty of firm allocations is key to minimising the risk of such delay.

- The building zones for schools remain in the Green Belt, giving rise to the contradiction of having to demonstrate very special circumstances for allocated development.
- While the choice of site and disposition of its building zone in the east of the District for a secondary school (i.e. Baldwins Lane) does not compromise soundness, the indecision between the two sites 'allocated' in the west does. It should be one or the other.
- The Council's preference for Froghall Farm, moreover, would compromise soundness because the site is very likely undeliverable within a realistic timescale and would be more harmful to the Green Belt than the Mill End site, which is markedly superior in virtually all respects.
- There is no provision for primary school development despite the demographic situation and the evidence indicates need for new primary school sites in the Rickmansworth and Abbots Langley areas.

These concerns can readily be overcome by; by continuing with the Baldwins Lane allocation as submitted (see detailed housing site comments below); by deleting the Froghall Farm allocation; by expanding, if necessary, the Mill End building zone to allow for an "all through" approach to primary and secondary provision; by allocating land at Woodside Road for a primary school; and by removing all the relevant allocated building zones from the Green Belt. A primary school at Woodside Road could be considered in conjunction with housing development to compensate for lost capacity (see below), an approach which the relevant agencies and the Council might see as advantageous. I would certainly consider it to be a sound approach which would not unduly compromise Green belt purposes. There may be other options to consider, but on the basis of the evidence to date, those I have mentioned seem to me to speak for themselves. Logically, policy SA3 should refer to allocated (as opposed to "identified" sites for new schools. **The SALDD can therefore be modified in respect of its education allocations to make it sound.**

Detailed comments on housing sites

As far as the housing sites are concerned, there is no evidence to suggest that the Council has fundamentally misjudged the appropriateness, capacity or deliverability of the majority of the housing sites. There is, however, a problematic minority which in

one way or another would compromise the soundness of the plan. There are a number of sites for which I consider the assumed capacity should be reduced (certainly pending detailed design/achievement of planning permission) and which should therefore contribute less to the overall supply; there is one which appears, in view of its history and circumstances, doubtful in practice even though controlled by the Council; and there are some which are inconsistent with the broad thrust of the CS and are of little merit in sustainability terms. These latter sites should be deleted and compensated for by alternative allocations, including from amongst the range that has been put forward by participants in the Examination process. Brief details and summary reasoning are set out below.

Sites to be deleted for soundness	Lost capacity	Total	Summary Reasons
H(1) Adjacent 65 Toms Lane	10		Unsustainable location*
H(2) Land at Three Acres, Toms Lane	20		Unsustainable location* Adequate vehicular access for significant housing may not be deliverable
H(6) Leavesden Pumping Station	15		Unsustainable location**
H(13) Killingdown Farm Buildings	30		Should not be developed in isolation from immediately surrounding land***
H(17) Branksome Lodge, Loudwater	10		Unsustainable location Conflict with CS Spatial Strategy
Site H(28) Land South of Tolpits Lane	50	135	Unsustainable location Green Belt harm No positive planning rationale
<p>* Further significant piecemeal housing development should not be encouraged east of railway until solution is found to pedestrian access problems to Kings Langley. A more comprehensive approach could be planned for in future. Some scope perhaps for lesser development deemed not inappropriate in a Green Belt through development management processes.</p> <p>**Would result in isolated pocket of housing in Green Belt with poor access. Some scope perhaps for lesser development deemed not inappropriate in a Green Belt through development management processes.</p> <p>*** Poor boundary definition to Green Belt and awkward-to-farm residue of land on removal of farm buildings. Site H085 in SD42 is the basis of a much more satisfactory allocation that could be</p>			

sensitive to both conservation area and access issues .			
Reduced capacity sites	Reduction in capacity or doubtful delivery	Total	
H(3) the Kings Langley employment Area	50		Over-ambitious capacity assumption
H(26) Harefield Road Depot	25 (doubtful delivery)		History of unrealised allocation. Relocation possibilities unproven.
H(33) former Little Furze School	25		Over-ambitious capacity assumption
H(36) the Grapevine Public House	10	110	Over-ambitious capacity assumption
Combined total: Compensatory capacity required		245	

Given the close matching of allocations to requirements, the loss of 245 units of capacity would need to be compensated for directly and a further year's supply is needed for flexibility, as I have pointed out. Thus, even if it is assumed that South Oxhey Town Centre delivers in full the 360 units now hoped for, land for 345 units needs to be identified over and above the soundly allocated sites inclusive of adjusted capacity. This figure is calculated by subtracting the extra 80 units at South Oxhey Town Centre from the 245 units of lost capacity and adding the extra year's supply of 180 units for flexibility ($245 - 80 + 180 = 345$). If, as I consider prudent, a discount of 50% (40 units) is applied to the extra capacity hoped for at South Oxhey Town Centre, the figure increases to 385 units.

While there is little to be gained from excessive fine-tuning in an allocations plan for many years ahead, the essential point is that for soundness, once the sites which should be deleted are deducted from the supply and an appropriate element for flexibility (i.e. one year's supply) is added, land for between 340 and 380 units needs to be identified in the SALDD through modification for a truly robust and therefore effective land supply. It is important to note that this approach retains the assumed windfall element in the last five years of the plan. If that were to be taken out of the equation, land to accommodate a further 190 units would be needed, but I am content in the circumstances that it should be retained.

Moreover, given the indicative approach to phasing/safeguarding derived from policy CP2 of the CS, there seems to me to be no impediment in principle to identifying one or more sites 'post-2026' with a view to bringing them forward if needed or retaining them undeveloped if appropriate to contribute to the next plan period.

The letter of the policy does not look beyond the plan period in that sense, but phasing for orderly release over time is very much in the spirit of the adopted policy and the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances accords with the intentions of the Framework in promoting sustainable development. **Essentially, however, soundness lies in providing, with a small margin for flexibility, a robust supply overall of sustainably located sites.**

A range of alternative/additional sites was canvassed by objectors and those which I conclude should not be considered further for the purposes of the SALDD are detailed in tabular form below.

Sites which would not contribute to soundness	Summary Reasons
Ebury Road, Rickmansworth	Flood risk, access difficulty
Land at Baldwin's Lane, Croxley Green	Needed for secondary school*
Land at East Lane, Bedmond Village	Green Belt and environmental harm Conflict with CS Spatial Strategy
Land north of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	Green Belt harm Access constraints
Wellcome Trust site, Kings Langley	Unproven ability to adequately resolve pedestrian access problems. Places it in same category as H(1) and H(2) from a sustainability perspective. **
*For site planning and flexibility reasons the building zone for the secondary school S(d) as submitted is appropriate and there is no reason to alter it for soundness. Nor is there any reason to alter the wider allocation boundary for soundness or take land beyond the building zone out of the Green Belt. The Council might wish to consider an element of housing at a future date if less land for education purposes is ultimately needed than currently anticipated, in which case a layout which did not preclude that possibility would be appropriate. But at this juncture it is <u>necessary</u> to maintain the concept as submitted because it would be unsound to constrain the allocation by housing intentions as this would reduce flexibility; and a practical inability to provide adequately for additional secondary education capacity in the east of the district would render the SALDD ineffective and therefore unsound.	
** Would need to be considered as part of a comprehensive approach to this area.	

The sites which have been suggested by objectors and which I consider could (and should) be added by modification to ensure soundness are those at Woodside Road (H029 in SD42 anticipates combination with primary school development and could be advanced in the context of a comprehensive package of uses as has been suggested) and the reduced site at Fairways Farm (i.e. the site H068 in SD42 corrected to give a capacity of 100 units on 3.3 hectares.) They potentially contribute 100 houses each in sustainable locations in Key Centres. Each site is in the Green Belt at present but could be allocated in a manner which leaves a clearly identifiable distinction between development land and open uses to remain protected as Green Belt. Given that the CS provides for minor revisions to the Green Belt whilst maintaining its general extent, neither site would be unduly harmful to Green Belt purposes if removed from it. Both have been subject to sustainability appraisal.

A further possible contribution to the planned land supply could be achieved by amending the Green Belt boundary opposite Kings Langley Station to expand the mixed use allocation and encompass sites advanced by the Alpine Press and the New Gospel Halls Trust for housing and worship respectively, but the numerical contribution to supply is unlikely to be influential as far as soundness is concerned.

There is also the Killingdown Farm site (H085 in SD42) to consider. It is unsatisfactory in Green Belt boundary terms to confine the allocation to the farm buildings alone, as the SALDD proposes. The residual land south and east of Little Green Lane would be hard to manage productively and could deteriorate. A broader allocation would create the scope for a much better defined Green Belt boundary and, ultimately, a development scheme that is more accessible by foot and sensitive to the conservation area. Some adjustment to the assumed capacity might be considered necessary or desirable but that is essentially a site planning matter. The implied density in H085 (26dph) is not, in principle, too intense. The site is in a Key Centre.

I acknowledge that the Council is anxious to retain choice of housing development sites, but in reality the CS and the subsequent approach to the SALDD limits such choice. In conclusion, however, I have identified scope to delete the allocations which render it unsound whilst substituting allocations which add to soundness by ensuring a robust land supply. Such substitution would, moreover, direct more development to sustainable locations in Key Centres, which are to provide approximately 60% of the District's new housing over the plan period, and would allow revisions to the Green Belt boundary that are effectively minor to reflect the intentions of the CS. The precise percentage of housing to be located in each level of the settlement is less important than the characteristics of individual sites, but there is in any event scope for allocating a higher proportion to secondary centres without significantly distorting the balance sought in the adopted Spatial Strategy. **The SALDD can therefore be modified in respect of its housing allocations to make it sound.**

In conclusion

The Examination Hearing Sessions covered a range of issues and matters including ones not mentioned above. Those that are mentioned above, including my early concerns regarding the contradiction of allocating sites but retaining them as Green Belt, and the associated necessity to resolve the difficulty at Leavesden Studios, are the ones that the soundness of the SALDD turns on

and, with your general request that I recommend main modifications in mind, I have sought to be as clear as I can in advance of my final report in order that you may take the necessary action in inviting me to recommend specific main modifications to be detailed in an appendix to it.

On balance, given the layers of statutory and policy protection enjoyed by the heritage assets at Langleybury and the Grove and the existence of an adopted brief consistent with the provisions of policy SA7, I do not consider that main modifications pertinent to my fifth issue are required for soundness. Given that the anticipated housing would be confined to that which would be considered not inappropriate within a Green Belt, the comments box in H(10) might be deployed to clarify the point. This is essentially, however, a matter for the Council.

I trust the above is helpful and constructive, as it is intended to be.

Yours sincerely

Keith Manning

Inspector

Hertfordshire County Council's Education Statement for St Albans District Council

1. Introduction

This document forms the response to the Strategic Local Plan consultation. It updates information previously provided on primary and secondary schools across the **District**. It is therefore considered a standalone comprehensive response to the current development growth outlined by SADC

To assist with interpreting the information provided, the background to the current situation regarding school places within the **District**, together with a definition of the terms used throughout this document, is given below.

2. Role of the County Council

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) is the local education authority and is subject to a number of statutory duties and responsibilities including:

- Promoting high standards of education
- Planning and commissioning school places in its local authority area
- Extending diversity and choice
- Co-ordinating admissions for all maintained schools
- Co-ordinating admissions for Academies and Free Schools – where requested to do so
- Resourcing the shared maintenance, improvement to, and provision of, the built school environment, and securing value for money.

In coming to a view about the most appropriate strategy in response to development growth proposals, HCC is looking for a solution which takes into account each of these elements.

3. School Planning Context

HCC has a duty to secure sufficient school places in its area, ensuring that every child has access to a school place. HCC fulfils these planning responsibilities by forecasting the demand for school places in order to identify an appropriate balance between supply and demand. It negotiates the right number of places on an annual basis, whilst in parallel undertaking longer term strategic planning.

Rising Demand

Hertfordshire has experienced a significant rise in the demand for primary places across the County in recent years in line with the picture nationally. The rise is not consistent across the county, with some areas experiencing substantial increases in the primary aged population, whilst in some more rural areas demand is less pressing or currently remains fairly static. More information on the rising demand is available through HCC's strategy document '*Meeting the Rising Demand for School Places*', available at <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/aboutstatesch/planning/>

Forecasts

HCC produces pupil forecasts every six months for both Reception and Year 7 demand. At a primary level, HCC forecast 5 years ahead and secondary forecasts stretch to 10 years in the future.

These forecasts are based on actual date of 0-5 year olds in an area, historic pupil movement as well as an assumed pupil yield from new housing developments. The forecasts have taken account of an assumed housing growth trajectory for the longer term, as provided by Hertfordshire's District and Borough Councils.

Latest forecasts are referred to in this response and can be found at <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/aboutstatesch/planning/>. These project demand for admissions into Reception and Year 7 and do not include any margin. HCC would normally plan a surplus of 5 to 10% across an area to allow for fluctuations in forecast demand.

Further information on the methodology around the pupil forecasts can be found at <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/aboutstatesch/planning/>.

New Schools

The way in which new schools are set up has undergone significant change in recent years. The County Council's role as a commissioner of places is such that where it considered there is a basic need for a new school it must:

- Seek proposals to establish an academy/free school; or (if unsuccessful)
- Hold a statutory competition; or (if unsuccessful)
- Publish its own proposals for a new maintained school

The County Council remains responsible for providing the site and meeting all associated capital and pre/post-opening costs, in instances where the new school provision is meeting basic need. Therefore, the County Council continues to hold the key role in negotiating S106 contributions for, and the provision of, all school infrastructure.

4. Principles

Forms of Entry

School provision is often described in terms of 'forms of entry'. 1 form of entry (f.e.) equals 30 places per year group.

Primary schools have seven year groups from Reception through to Year 6. HCC has a preference for primary schools of 2 f.e. or more, as this larger size provides improved opportunities for delivery of a broad education curriculum and staff development, as well as offering the ability to better manage fluctuations in demand. A 2fe primary school will have 7 year groups of 60 pupils (420 in total), plus a Nursery class where offered.

Secondary schools have five year groups, from Year 7 through to Year 11, and Sixth Forms with lower and upper year groups. HCC has a preference for secondary schools of 6 to 10f.e. as this offers improved opportunities for the delivery of a broad education curriculum. A 6 fe school will have 5 year groups of 180 pupils (900 in total) plus a Sixth Form.

Pupil Yield

When undertaking high level school place planning related to new residential development, HCC determines child yield based on a ratio of 1f.e. per 500 dwellings to be 97.5% confident of not underestimating yield.

This is based on a study of 49 Hertfordshire developments undertaken by HCC's demographer (c. 2008). This work produced a yield range of 1f.e. per 500 dwellings (42 children per 100 dwellings / 97.5% confidence) to 1f.e. per 850 dwellings (24.7 children per 100 dwellings/50% confidence).

This range is referred to throughout this document. The County Council applies the upper end of the range, 1f.e.per 500 dwellings, in the first instance to ensure prudent planning.

When considering actual proposals or planning applications, the County Council uses specific development forecasting models to ascertain more tailored demographic profiles, including pupil yields.

Developer Contributions

When planning for new education infrastructure arising through development growth, HCC works to a number of consistent principles:

- That developer contributions will fund the relevant school infrastructure requirements arising from housing growth, in conjunction with an assessment of local circumstances
- That strategic housing sites will provide appropriate school infrastructure that is sufficient to meet the demand generated by the development, and that this should be through both the provision of school site(s) and the funding for school builds
- That in general, any current capacity is there for the existing community and the normal fluctuations in demand – HCC will seek contributions of some form from all developments for the purpose of prudent planning.

Site Size

School site standards have recently changed (School Premises Regulations, 2012) and provide a much less stringent approach to school site standards. The County Council has previously agreed to continue using the site areas that refer to Building Bulletin 98 (secondary) and 99 (primary) guidance, as these are deemed a suitable standard for school premises. In light of the new BB103 guidance however, the County Council is in the process of reviewing its current position. Until this review is complete it will continue to refer to BB98/99.

Detached Playing Fields

A school should have all of the facilities it requires, including playing fields, provided on a single site.

There may, however, be situations where in order to provide additional school place capacity at an existing site a detached playing field may be required.

For a primary school, this facility should ideally be located within 400 metres of the main school site and be appropriate to enable delivery of the PE curriculum.

Green Belt Boundaries

The removal of some school sites from the Green Belt is welcomed. However, HCC would seek a flexible approach to Green Belt boundaries which continue to fall within school sites. The inclusion of school sites within the Green Belt

can lead to potential difficulties in expanding these schools, and it is considered that a more flexible approach with regards to Green Belt policy and schools is required for the long term.

Types of School

There is a diverse range of schools within Hertfordshire, and HCC has the statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places within its area irrespective of how education is provided. HCC is only the admitting authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Hertfordshire. All other schools (Academies, Free Schools, Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Trust Schools) are their own admitting authorities, determining their own admissions policies and over-subscription criteria.

All admitting authorities' admissions rules and policies must abide by the Admissions Code but HCC, in its role as commissioner of places rather than a provider, has no power to direct schools that are their own admitting authority to provide additional places.

CS response by settlement

Primary

In relation to primary provision, having considered the current forecast, assessed the proposed urban growth and impact of proposed strategic green belt sites, our view of each settlement as follows:

St Albans

Limited capacity to expand at existing schools.

Continued pressure on school places, particularly in and around the city centre.

Requirement for 2 x 2 f.e. school sites plus 1 x 3 f.e. sites

East of Hemel

New large scale development.

Requirement for 3 x 2 f.e. sites

Harpenden

Limited capacity to expand in existing schools

Requirement for 1 x 2f.e. site (with potential for a further requirements following release of information about further green belt release as part of the DLP)

Wheathampstead

Very difficult to expand existing schools further, so require:

Helpful planning policies on expansion of schools

Identification of potential DPF to assist in any further expansion

Opportunity to review, in light of DLP, how additional places could be provided in the village should they be required

Bricket Wood

Potential to expand the existing primary school

Helpful planning policies to enable expansion of existing school

Park Street/How Wood/Chiswell Green

Very difficult to expand existing schools, so require:

Helpful spatial planning policies on expansion of schools
Opportunity to review, in light of DLP, how additional places could be provided in the area should they be required
The provision of a 2 f.e. school site should any further development be brought forward in this locality

London Colney

Limited capacity to expand existing schools.
1 x 2 f.e. school site

Sandridge

Additional demand should be accommodated within existing provision

Colney Heath

Helpful policies to expand the school in the event it is required

Redbourn

Potentially challenging to expand existing schools further, so require:
Helpful spatial planning policies on expansion of schools
Identification of potential DPF
Opportunity to review, in light of the DLP, how additional places could be provided in the village should they be required

Secondary

Secondary school places are forecast using education planning areas. In St Albans District this includes the St Albans and Harpenden planning areas (although these include settlements from other districts including Dacorum, North Herts and Hertsmere). The most recent forecast indicates a peak demand which equates to a deficit of around 10 f.e. across both these areas. Applying a margin of 5 to 10% (to allow for fluctuations in numbers and development beyond the available forecast to the end of the plan period) suggests that we should plan for an additional 14.5 f.e. to 18.5 f.e. of secondary capacity.

Having taken account of the current forecast, and also considered the proposed location for urban development and green belt release for housing, the following is considered an appropriate strategy for meeting secondary capacity across the planned period in the District:

Harpenden Education Planning Area

The forecast across this area (allowing for a surplus of 5-10%) indicates the potential demand for between 9.5 to 11 f.e.

Harpenden

Requirement: the allocation of a new 6 to 8 f.e. secondary school site. This school is required to accommodate the existing growth in primary population locally, and the additional pupil yield from housing. There is no capacity within existing schools in the town to meet the requirement for additional places.

East of Hemel Hempstead

Requirement: the allocation of a new 6 to 8 f.e. secondary school site. This will primarily accommodate the large scale development proposed at this location by SADC. However, it could also potentially support delivery of additional places to serve Hemel Hempstead, where there is a forecast deficit of places from 2019/20. Further discussion with SADC and DBC would be welcome.

St Albans Education Planning Area

St Albans

The forecast in St Albans (allowing for a surplus of 5-10%) indicates the potential demand for between 5 to 7.5 f.e.

The DfE has agreed to open Harperbury Free School; a 4 f.e. secondary school to the south of St Albans. It is unlikely that all these places will be allocated to St Albans residents, given its relative proximity to settlements in Hertsmere, so it seems reasonable to assume around 2 f.e. of capacity would be provided by this school.

Previous work in St Albans indicates that there may be some potential to expand existing schools, but that there are constraints relating to most school sites which mean that this is by no means certain.

Taking these factors in to account, the following approach appears prudent: Flexible planning policies relating to the expansion of existing secondary schools in St Albans

Allocation of one of the previously identified sites as an education reserve site, in order to help accommodate either expansion of existing schools (by the provision of a detached playing field, for example) or the provision of a further new school, should demand rise to the point where it is required.

Free Early Education & Childcare Provision

Lead agency

Hertfordshire County Council

Evidence base

Liaison with Hertfordshire County Council

Meeting the Rising Demand for School Places, HCC, 2009

Childcare Sufficiency Report, Hertfordshire County Council March 2014

Current situation and Context

3.42 Section 6 of the childcare act 2006 places a duty on all local authorities to secure sufficient childcare for working parents or parent who are studying or training for employment for children aged 0-14 (19 for disabled children)The county council has also a statutory responsibility to provide universal Free Early Education (FEE) for 3 and 4 year olds. From September 2013 the county council also has a statutory responsibility to provide 15hrs free early education (FEE) to eligible vulnerable 2 year old children across Hertfordshire. Consequently demand for these services is forecast to increase, in addition to the increasing population of young children in the county. Provision for these services may be within schools preschools and day nurseries and childminders.

In addition to free early education places, the county council also has a duty to ensure there are sufficient childcare places for 0 -14 years children (19 for children with S.E.N.D.). in Pre Schools , Day Nurseries and Out of School clubs which can run either from school locations or other community facilities .

The local authority also has a duty to deliver Children's Centres in every community, each providing for 800 children (0-5 years). These will provide 'one-stop shop' integrated facilities (e.g. childcare, early years, health and parenting services) for parents and children of 0-14 year olds. (has this been agreed by Bruce?)

There are 10 such centres in St Albans , which serve a defined geographical area. The Children's Centre Areas are numbered SA1 to SA10 and their geography is used for the purpose of planning early years provision (the different types of early years provision including Children's Centres are more fully explained in Appendix 1).

The county council RAG (Red, Amber Green) rates the sufficiency levels for 2, 3, and 4 free early education places in all Children's Centre Areas:

The key data is measured as follows:

Green = Sufficient Places Available (Provision largely matches families needs)

Amber = Near Sufficient Places Available (A gap exists which may give families difficulties in accessing provision)

Red = Insufficient Places Available (A gap exists which may prevent families from accessing provision)

The latest information held by Hertfordshire County Council in the districts ten children's centres is shown in the RAG table below

Children's Centre	FEE for 2, 3 & 4 yrs old places required* 2014 / 2015
SA1 Wheathampstead & Kimpton	GREEN (+ 27 Places)
SA2 Harpenden & Batford	GREEN (+ 214 Places)
SA3 Harpenden & Southdown	RED (+ 39 Places)**
SA 4 Redbourn Rural	GREEN (+ 127 Places)
SA 5 Marshalwick	RED (- 87 Places)
SA 6 Batchwood & St Peters	RED (- 51)
SA7 Sopwell & Verulam	RED (+ 34) **
SA8 Ashley & Colney Heath	RED (- 59)
SA9 Park Street	GREEN (+12)
SA 10 London Colney	GREEN (- 147)***

* Will be updated January 2015

FEE – Free Early Education

** Data suggests that there are sufficient places in the given area – however local knowledge from stakeholders and parents indicate a shortage of places in this area

*** Data suggests that there are insufficient places in the given area – however local knowledge from stakeholders and parents indicate that parents do not have a problem finding places in this area.

3.45 The rating for any area can quickly change for example, a preschool or nursery was to reduce the number of children it could accommodate or if a preschool or nursery were to close. Future requirements will depend on a number of factors, including changes in birth rate, level of provision and changes in regulations and new government initiatives relating to the sector.

Identified infrastructure requirements

3.46 The County Council have informed us that additional early education provision will be required in those areas identified as insufficient or near to sufficient to support housing growth options. This includes all of the Children's Centre Areas within the district council. Already in five children's centres area there is a significant shortfall in early education places for these areas.

3.47 In addition to this, the Government has recently announced that 40% of the country's 2 year olds will be entitled to a free early education place by 2014/15. This percentage is likely to vary area by area, and the percentage for Hertfordshire that will receive this entitlement is not yet known.

3.48 One of the ten children's centre areas in St Albans fall into the 30% most disadvantaged within the County. As the 2 year old free early education scheme is only available for disadvantaged children, this indicates that the need for these places will be higher in these areas than the rest of the County.

3.49 Five of the ten children's centres areas have free early education places to meet this proposed demand. The pressure on these places would increase if more social housing was developed in these areas, as families who meet the eligibility criteria do not tend to be home owners.

Appendix 1

Early Years and Types of Provision

The County Council has a duty to secure sufficient free early education and childcare places. Annually the County Council publishes a Childcare Sufficiency Report which details where places are required across the county. The County Council works with the PVI sector and schools to ensure adequate places. It also assists and enables the provision of day nurseries, play schemes and after school clubs, making sure there are sufficient places for parents to access across the county. The 15 hours of free early education can be provided in maintained provision (e.g. school) or the PVI (private, voluntary and independent) sector.

Free Early Education Free early education is a central government funded scheme whereby all children from the term after which they are 3 until they reach school age are eligible for a free place for a maximum of 15 hours per week (max 38 weeks or a total of 570 hours per year) This free place can be offered in a state maintained school or in a private, voluntary or independent (PVI) provision such as a preschool, day nursery or childminder. Where new primary school sites are identified, Early education (nursery) provision will usually be sought as part of the on site provision. From September 2013 the county council also has a statutory responsibility to provide 15hrs early education to eligible 2 year old children across Hertfordshire.

Maintained Nursery School These are funded by the state where only children aged 3 and 4 receive their free early education entitlement before attending primary school. There are 15 such schools in Hertfordshire.

Maintained nursery classes

Maintained nursery classes are classes based in primary schools where children aged 3 and 4 received their free early education entitlement until they move up to reception.

Preschool/Playgroup This provision usually educates children between the ages of 2 and school age. These settings are often able to offer free early education to eligible 2 year olds as well as all 3 and 4 year olds. These settings are run by private, voluntary or independent (PVI) providers in local communities and some children attending will be accessing their free early education place and others will be accessing additional services for which parents pay. These settings will usually be set up in community buildings or schools and will usually be open term time only.

Day Nurseries Day nurseries offer childcare and early education for children from 0 to 5. These settings are used predominately by working parents for childcare purposes. They also usually offer free early education for eligible children but with most children accessing additional services which parents pay for. This provision is market led.

Childcare The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure there is sufficient childcare for working parents, this duty cover 0 – 14 years (19 for children with S.E.N.D.). Childcare can take place in preschools, day nurseries, and childminders and out of school provision such as holiday clubs and after school clubs depending on the age of the child and therefore can take place in school buildings or community use buildings. New schools should be designed to be able to offer FEE/childcare to children (aged 2 years upwards)

Hertfordshire Sure Start Children's Centres

Legislation about children's centres is contained in the Childcare Act 2006. The Act places a duty on local authorities to improve the well-being of young children in their area and reduce inequalities between them. Specifically they must:

- ensure there are sufficient children's centres to meet local need
- ensure each children's centre is within the remit of an Advisory Board
- ensure there is consultation before any significant changes are made to children's centre provision in their area
- ensure that the local authority, local commissioners of health services and Jobcentre Plus jointly consider whether the early childhood services they provide should be provided through children's centres in the area
- ensure that after receiving a report from Ofsted following the inspection of a children's centre an Action plan is prepared and published.

The core purpose of children's centres, as defined by the Department for Education, is to improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on those families in greatest need of support. Centres are expected to support:

- **Child development and school readiness** - supporting personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language from pre-birth to age 5, so children develop as confident and curious learners and are able to take full advantage of the learning opportunities presented to them in school.
- **Parenting aspirations and parenting skills** - building on strengths and supporting aspirations, so that parents and carers are able to give their child the best start in life.
- **Child and family health and life chances** - promoting good physical and mental health for both children and their family; safeguarding; supporting parents to improve the skills that enable them to access education, training and employment; and addressing risk factors so that children and their families are safe, free from poverty and able to improve both their immediate wellbeing and their future life chances.

Number of Hertfordshire Centres There are 82 children's centres in Hertfordshire of which there are 10 in St Albans which were developed in three phases between 2004 and 2010. At that time, each centre covered a geographical area containing an average of 800 children aged 0-4 years (0-4s means all children under the age of 5).

Population The population of children aged 0-4 in Hertfordshire is 74,492 (Mid Year Estimate 2011). 81% of children aged 0-4 are currently registered with a children's centre. The population of 0-4's has increased by 10,000 children from approximately 64,000 in 2005 when the programme of centres was being planned. As population has grown, the average catchment for each children centre area is now 1000 children.

Children's Centre Premises There are 73 children's centre buildings which received DfE capital funding for extensions/refurbishment. The terms of the DfE grant mean that the premises must be used for delivery of children's centre/early years services and that DfE reserves a right to claw back the capital funding if the premises are no longer used for these purposes. Some provision is delivered through shared use of community buildings where no dedicated location was identified. All Children's Centre utilise some community buildings to deliver their wide range of services and make them accessible to the whole community.

How Centre Services Are Delivered All centres are commissioned. Contracts are in place between Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and 50 lead agencies to manage the centres.

Children's centres offer access to a range of early childhood services aimed at supporting parents-to be, young children aged under five and their families. These include;

- Activities (e.g. stay and play sessions, toddler groups) and information (e.g. early education and childcare , pre-schools, day nurseries) for families
- Outreach and family support
- Evidence-based parenting programmes
- (Family Links Nurturing Programme is delivered by some centres in Hertfordshire)
- Access to adult learning and employment support -
- (this may include language, literacy and numeracy support, family learning, access to apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities as steps toward employment and links to Jobcentre Plus)
- Child and family health services
- (delivered by community midwives and health visitors).

Children's centres aim to meet the needs of their local families so services offered by centres will vary according to the population served by the centre.