

Spatial Strategy Workshop - 13 July 2010 – Stakeholders

Urban Consolidation

- Consensus that it would be a small element of another scenario as some development in urban areas is always needed for regeneration purposes.
- Does 410 include all options – it seems likely that there will be more capacity than this in central areas.
- This scenario is the first priority.
- Main potential is for social housing/single person households.
- Scope to use upper floors above shops.
- Need to retain access to green areas.

Pros

- Common sense approach
- Forms part of a bigger package
- This is a sustainable option that will exert less pressure on the GB
- It caters to the current and likely continued property demand for 2-bed flats

Cons

- Not a strategy on its own as it generates so few numbers,
- Not a strategic approach
- Many of the sites could come forward as planning apps any way, they do not necessarily need to be dealt with as part of the core strategy
- Scenario does not have capacity to meet need on its own.
- It is very difficult at the moment to get finance to fund apartment development.
- A mixture of housing types can not be delivered.
- Concerns over the loss of allotments and green spaces, whilst increasing pressure on existing.
- Will put great pressure on schools, and there is not the space to create/expand schools in the city centre.
- Urban consolidation tends to work better in larger cities, not St Albans.
- Loss of existing small urban employment sites
- There could be a loss of cheap, flexible employment in the major settlement centres
- Developer finding opportunities reduced
- The sites would mainly be small-scale and will struggle to provide sufficient levels of affordable housing
- Pressure on existing infrastructure
- Limited scope for family friendly housing.
- Risk of 'ghettos'.

Growth of Smaller Settlements

- The capacity of settlements is limited by the number of places in local schools – can be viewed as both an advantage and disadvantage depending on perspective
- Residents of the smaller settlements in the south of the District, such as Bricket Wood, tend to use facilities outside of the District and therefore do not put back as much into the local economy

Pros

- Could enhance identity of settlement if on a larger scale
- Should be part of a bigger package
- Limited environmental impact
- Via the use of a tariff approach this scenario may be able to deliver infrastructure such as schools. Individually the scenarios do not have the scale to do so.
- The importance of a strong alliance with BRE is important which this scenario will help to maintain
- There would be a reasonably high provision of affordable housing as well as supplying appropriate levels of housing for the elderly

Cons

- Base level of community facilities should first be available e.g. primary school, health centre, shop, post office, bank, community space
- Will transport infrastructure support commuting needs of workforce and secondary schools
- People more likely to travel out of the district rather than to St Albans, e.g. to Watford from Bricket wood, to Hemel from Redbourn.
- Unsustainable, there will still be a need to travel large distances for higher order services in the main urban centres.
- Incompatible with sustainable development principles set out in national policy.
- Dispersed growth is inefficient for provision of services (e.g. policing)
- Need critical mass to guarantee improved transport and facilities. – Some blobs are too small; it will just create problems and will not improve.
- Not best location for affordable.
- No employment to match housing.
- The lack of public transport would continue to provide problems for residents in smaller settlements
- Limited scope – not sustainable.
- No transport improvements.

Eco Village

- Is it deliverable?
- Site might be an opportunity for doing something different.

Pros

- Opportunity to link with new business park or new business growth
- Utilising a site that has deteriorated and needs regeneration
- Would provide enough homes to support single entry primary school and additional bus service
- Could work if it were larger
- High eco-building credentials.
- As one major positive, the eco-village could be an exemplar development of its kind and may cause other local authorities to follow suit, thus helping to conserve the environment

Cons

- Not big enough to support a 2 form entry primary or secondary school
- Would need to be supported with better transport infrastructure

- There may be other sites which are more suitable – e.g. expand Smallford into a more self sufficient eco settlement
- Not a true eco village, just being dressed up as one, would need to be much larger in scale (eco town rather than eco village, needs to be more than twice the size) to be sustainable.
- Green principles better justified for urban extensions rather than a standalone development
- Not sustainable location – isolated
- Not viable – may be post-2021.
- Needs major infrastructure investment.
- Some building on Greenfield land (not all PDL).
- A “Green Herring”.
- Does not have the critical mass
- Poorly located to the rest of the district - other side of M25
- Poor links to infrastructure travel to health, leisure, secondary schools, work and shops.
- Out commuting out of district
- Safe anti-NIMBY option - but no benefit to the district as a whole.
- Due to its geographical location at the South-east of the district, the settlement would be isolated from other areas and there would be a lack of key facilities, including built leisure
- The eco village is too small to be truly sustainable across the range of needs, including retail and the lack of Secondary school provision would cause difficulties, possibly including difficulties with Hertsmere Council
- Many residents would experience a strong pull outside the District to nearby settlements such as Radlett, which would lower the connectivity to this District and possibly the community feel of the area
- Unsuitable location.
- Too small to provide infrastructure. Sufficient critical mass needed – must not be stranded in middle of nowhere, causing isolation.

Urban small extensions

- Each site needs to be assessed on merit
- There could be suitable locations for much needed elderly care residential facilities
- Should be re-named St Albans *Medium* Urban Extensions

Pros

- Relevant proximity to existing infrastructure
- Synergy with scenario 1
- Overall most sustainable and sensible option
- Will allow delivery of a mix of housing types and sizes
- easiest to deliver
- More likely to deliver housing need.
- Impact is more easily absorbed.
- Creates more affordable housing.
- More services are viable.
- Closer to transport, retail and employment opportunities.
- Mixed uses.
- Principle is fine. Economies of scale and close to existing and propose facilities which is the most sustainable approach.

- The town centres of St Albans and Harpenden would benefit from increased populations within walking/cycling distance
- The larger sites would provide very high levels of affordable housing and in addition, may help to provide housing for key workers e.g. teachers
- Potential for affordable housing.
- Infrastructure possibilities.

Cons

- Selection process for sites needs to be clarified
- Individual extensions may not be big enough to support improvements to schools health and transport, should be slightly larger
- Lots of small sites provoke lots of “NIMBY” objections.
- The extension of urban areas could result in new and/or improved schools within the District
- The loss of GB areas is the major disadvantage and new build would also be relatively remote to the town centre of St Albans or Harpenden
- New housing means that added pressure would be exerted on school places
- Doesn't help villages.

Post 2021

- How do you reconcile the post 2021 locations with the pre 2021 sites?
- Principles should remain the same.
- The sites identified could be candidates before 2021.
- 2021 is an arbitrary marker and should not influence the planning approach.
- All proposals must be viable business propositions if private sector is to be engaged.
- Overall mixed response
- There could be cross-boundary issues with Dacorum which would need to be resolved with joint working
- There is debate as to whether the proposal on the West side of the District bordering with Dacorum would actively contribute more to this District or to Hemel
- North East Hemel Hempstead: housing should come forward with Maylands employment development

Pro

- Bigger scale development which will support delivery of more services
- Larger developments will 'buy' infrastructure options.

Con

- Why delay suitable sites until 2021? Larger sites which deliver infrastructure should be taken forward now.
- Redbourn would lose its village character and become a 'residential dormitory'
- Just shifts 'AOSs' away from the city to try again.

Additional Comments

- Needs to have a clear employment strategy. If we do not have a strategy we will get more of the same.
- Need for new employment opportunities to be distributed throughout the area.
- Need Lifetime Homes, to enable older people to remain in their own homes.