

## **Spatial Strategy Workshop - 14 July 2010 – District Councillors and Parish Councils**

### **Urban Consolidation**

- Housing and jobs should be linked which could be seen as both a benefit and a drawback.
- Need infrastructure first and money to do it.
- Consider building above railway cuttings in urban areas e.g. Ronson Way. Viability issue?
- Consider underground parking to make better use of urban sites, higher building costs are recognised.
- There is more capacity in urban areas than shown on the map, but amount is limited.

Can only be part of the solution, given:

- Roads
- Buses
- Infrastructure
- Limited land supply

### **Pros**

- Relies on existing infrastructure.
- Less impact due to scale of sites.
- Does not impinge on Green Belt.
- Can be done piecemeal.
- Gaps between settlement maintained
- Can use higher/taller buildings to provide more homes
- Use basements for parking
- No sacrifice of GB
- Use of gardens – making more efficient use of urban land
- The walkability to the majority facilities would be a great advantage particularly for elderly.
- An 'urban buzz', particularly in St. Albans would be seen creating a more vibrant and leisurely feel.
- Good transport

### **Cons**

- Lack of school places.
- Control height of any development.
- Limited number of places to do it.
- Result in cramming and increased densities
- Limited supply of land
- Constraints on type of dwellings possible – i.e. more flats
- Use of gardens – changes character of an area
- Traffic congestion would worsen with the nature of the scenario
- Height is an issue for St Albans. Would need to consider changes to the existing policy which limits building height. Iconic tall building in the district might be ok but not necessarily in the city centre.
- Concerns about possible town cramming issues for e.g. loss of urban green spaces and loss of employment land.
- New urban development can make use of existing facilities, but for schools in the city centre it would stretch services beyond capacity.

### **Growth of Smaller Settlements**

- The scenario was seen as being site specific (BRE.) and this could be an advantage in terms of having strong focused objectives, or a disadvantage in terms of how particular areas in the District would receive higher consideration than others.
- The use of low quality green space would help to ensure efficient use of land and distinguish stronger boundaries between GB and urban area.
- There would be potential community benefits for local residents to enjoy.
- There would be a need for major growth in smaller settlements before any new schools could be built placing huge pressure on current establishments.
- Growth not 'swamp'.
- Transport issues. De – regulate public transport to allow infrastructure development for growth in small settlements.
- Can bring education concerns but this is balanced by in-availability of potential school sites to match urban consolidation.
- Local flooding issues for Redbourn.
- Local issues in Chiswell Green relating to Butterfly World and Gardens of the Rose.
- Broadly supported in principle but some local concerns for Redbourn and Chiswell Green
- Each village will have its own issues

### **Pros**

- Scenario may make businesses, shops and infrastructure more viable.
- Could provide opportunity for affordable housing.
- Possibility of better design – you can plan a development better
- Will help retain more employment areas that could be used for residential in the urban consolidation scenario
- Can improve viability and sustainability of villages – needs to be designed well
- Will we be able to direct type of dwelling – need more family homes, not footballers' houses.

### **Cons**

- Changes the dynamics in a village.
- Erosion of Green Belt.
- Lack of local school places.
- Increased traffic movement.
- Can't meet all shopping needs in a village.
- Need to travel further (to town/city) for other services, employment etc
- Concentrated to the south of the district
- Creates urban sprawl – uses GB
- Where are the limits/where do you stop?
- Leaves people isolated
- Changes character of villages
- Southern villages already suffer congestion.

## **Eco Village**

- The volume of housing the project would provide (650 homes) was seen as a massive plus as well as the improvements to transport links and roads.
- The opportunity for Harperbury patients to be integrated into the local population creates the potential for a well-balanced community.
- The use of cheaper land at Harperbury as opposed to the North of the District would make the project more viable.
- The isolation from the rest of St Albans due to location was seen as a significant setback and access to the site is limited due to a weak bridge close to the entrance.
- Secondary pupils would have to travel out to potentially far locations to get to school which undermines the 'eco-friendly' purpose of the scenario.
- Is it a village or a commune?
- Transport issue. Poor public transport. Road infrastructure limited and junctions need to be improved.
- On site sustainable benefits are good.
- Broadly supported
- Would it be large enough to generate a school (Napsbury didn't)
- Why not do something similar on rail freight site – rail link.

## **Pros**

- Brownfield site in a Greenfield setting.
- Planned as a small settlement which means size will dictate facilities / infrastructure gain.
- "Eco", "live-work", "local crafts" all positive
- Less impact on the rest of the district (fewer residents impacted)
- Sustainability principles need to apply across the district both in terms of building standards and in the wider sense of location, travelling to work, being close to services and facilities

## **Cons**

- Children may not like it as they grow up.
- Serious traffic issue at Harper Lane.
- M25 is a barrier with limited crossing points.
- Could alienate other parts of the community
- Seems like a tick box exercise to supply houses
- Not a sustainable development in terms of location – isolated and disconnected
- Green Herring
- Urban sprawl
- Travel to school and work will be by road. Already congested and widening of M25 with ramp metering holding back local traffic will make things worse.

## **Urban small extensions**

- This scenario would help to provide key workers with affordable housing which is currently a major issue in the District; however this could result in certain types of accommodation being stigmatized.

- A wide range of housing types and tenure would be deliverable catering for all needs and in addition to this; the shortage of 2-bed properties in the district would be rectified.
- The centre of St. Albans could thrive under this scenario creating a pull to the area which would benefit the local economy.
- The loss of GB area would be the biggest negative; however the boundaries in place are 20 years old and potentially need updating to allow for current and future development.
- The likely remoteness of the extensions may cause residents in these areas to use other places for their needs rather than St. Albans.
- Improvements to the centre of St. Albans may result in inwards migration which would lead to immediate further need for expansion and development.
- Need schools to the south of Harpenden.
- Exacerbates disproportion of suburban development vis a vis town centres.
- Concern at loss of woodland/green space next to Hemel Hempstead which is used for recreation
- Green belt issues - Where do you stop?
- Broadly speaking not supported
- Harpenden has fears of Luton expanding south.
- Even if 1,500 homes result from this scenario, it will not meet the full requirement.
- Surface water flooding issues, given clay cap over much of District.

#### **Pros**

- Planning gain will help improvements in infrastructure – tariff approach
- More efficient and better layouts of development can be achieved
- Must have balance/mix of dwellings
- GB can contribute to sustainable development
- May help bring in facilities and employment

#### **Cons**

- Once you start taking Green Belt, how and when do you stop?
- May deliver affordable housing, but will be on the edges of settlements, further away from services.
- Nimbyism associated with this approach
- Urban sprawl/takes GB
- Longer travel distances and further from services in the centres

#### **Post 2021**

- There was a support for the centre of Redbourn and its need for High street shops.
- Oaklands campus' plan to expand should be greatly supported as it would greatly increase the volume and quality of higher education in the district.
- Napsbury was also seen as a good potential candidate for expansion.
- It was seen that Maylands should have nothing to do with SADC and does not add to the economy or quality of life in this district.
- The issues addressed in this scenario should be rectified before 2021.
- It is seen that this scenario lacks ambition which would not contribute to the aims and objectives of the District.
- Redbourn may get some much needed infrastructure at the scale of

growth shown, but the dynamics of the village will change.

- Hemel Hempstead growth will eventually result in infill right up to the M1.
- Consider larger growth post 2021 as there are benefits for infrastructure improvement but caveats on location.
- Concern about impact on Redbourn. Large development would affect village character and is not supported.
- Concern about expansion at Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn around the M1. These locations are close to each other and it would result in too much development in north-west sector of District.
- Strategic rail freight depot site could be considered for possible long term housing, although concern that it would mean the loss of open countryside/greenbelt.
- Redbourn – worth considering now, good transport links, near M1
- Napsbury expansion not favoured by local parish councillor.
- North east Hemel Hempstead – has the advantage of proximity to Maylands employment area.

### **Other Comments**

- Housing mix: Developer want versus growth data. Building a row of terraced or semi-detached houses instead of 5 bedroom detached as a solution.
- High need for amenity / community space.
- Need to be more assertive in dealing with our borders.
- Existing infrastructure deficit – not designed for aspirational capacity.
- The District has to import so many essentials. There is a need to improve resilience and self-sufficiency.
- Use Green Belt more proactively e.g. reduce flood risk and increase water supply by creating a new reservoir.
- Employment site next to Maylands - boundary issue, long term query on allocation as there is a lot of vacant land & building sites within existing Maylands. Concern at loss of agricultural land. Employment in this location should reduce our out-commuting from district.
- Concern that the development next to Hemel Hempstead may result in a boundary change and that housing will count towards Dacorum's housing numbers.
- Need to get the right balance between affordable housing and full price market housing.
- Not all indicative sites on the maps will be needed.
- Planning gain should link to gain in value of land from development, this will pay for schools and infrastructure
- No point building homes that people don't want – do we know who wants to move into SADC area and what their priorities are
- Make interior of homes more flexible – do not need to be stereotype needs i.e. 3/4 beds when family changes (children leave home). Owner could convert spare bedrooms then rent out.
- Schools – there is an imbalance: most areas have a shortage of places, but London Colney and Francis Bacon have spare capacity.
- Employment – the Council's priorities are for new jobs in science and eco technology and tourism.