

**Statement on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council services to
the Examination of the St Albans Draft Local Plan to 2041**



Matter 6: Hemel Garden Communities

1. Background

- 1.1.1. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) is the upper tier authority covering the area of St Albans City and District Council (SACDC) and Dacorum Borough Council (DBC). HCC has statutory responsibility for multiple local government services, including transport, school place planning, adult and children's social care, and advising on surface water drainage.
- 1.1.2. HCC has made representations to the most recent Regulation 18 and 19 consultations to the SACDC and DBC local plans. HCC also has two agreed Statements of Common Ground with SACDC [SADC/ED3, and another SOCG that is not yet referenced].
- 1.1.3. HCC is also a partner to the Hemel Garden Communities programme.

2. Issue 1: Justification for Strategic Growth

2.1. ***Question 2: To be effective, should both Local Plans include a breakdown, in policy, which sets out the component parts of HGC and what is expected from each parcel?***

- 2.1.1. HCC's position in general terms on the need for both plans to set out clearly what infrastructure each parcel is expected to deliver and/or make a financial contribution towards is set out at issue 3 question 4 and issue 4 question 3 and therefore not repeated here. There are several development components that are to be delivered across the HGC site allocations (HM01, H1, H2, H3 and H4) which would benefit from site specific allocations. These are set out in turn below.

Household Waste Recycling Centre

- 2.1.2. The status of the recycling centre in policy remains an individual area of uncertainty that requires resolution.
- 2.1.3. Both the DBC and SACDC submission plans include aligned policy (Policy LG3 - Hemel Garden Communities Growth Areas Place Principles in the SACDC submission local plan and Strategic Policy HGC2 - Hemel Garden Communities Place Principles in the Dacorum submission local plan) that relates to the Hemel Garden Communities Growth Area and/or Programme Area.
- 2.1.4. SACDC policy Pillar 2 criterion g) (policy Pillar 2 criterion f) in the DBC plan) requires the 'delivery of Key Projects including a Household Waste Recycling Centre and Local Authorities Depot facilities to meet the needs of new and existing communities. Key Projects are identified in the Hemel Garden Communities Delivery Statement [HGC 2.01] and includes the new Household Waste Recycling Centre as a Key Project at page 27. The recycling centre is listed within the emerging HGC IDP.
- 2.1.5. It therefore follows that the Hemel Garden Communities Growth Area and/or Programme Area should deliver a new recycling centre in accordance with

the evidence base for both local plans and the aspirations of the plans themselves.

- 2.1.6. The policy does not, however specify, which part of the Hemel Garden Communities Growth Area and/or Programme Area. Nor is any corresponding allocation made in the SACDC or DBC site allocation within the Hemel Garden Communities Growth Area and/or Programme Area.
- 2.1.7. Similarly, the evidence base does not allocate a location, beyond the Hemel Garden Communities Delivery Statement [HGC 2.01] at Figure 8, which states that it could in principle be provided anywhere within a yellow dashed line and shaded area that coincides with the entire HGC Growth Area – ‘subject to further work’.
- 2.1.8. At development management stage the decision maker would not know which parcel of land is required to deliver a recycling centre and therefore which application to determine against this requirement. The plan therefore has no means to secure the delivery of an item of infrastructure, which is listed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and identified as a Key Project both in the plan and the plan evidence base, precisely because the plan does not set out, in policy, which parcel of land is expected to deliver the new Recycling Centre.
- 2.1.9. Moreover, the absence of a formal allocation means that, if a site were to come forward, HCC has no knowledge of when this will be in the build out of the Hemel Garden Communities programme, as HCC has no knowledge of whether this would be delivered by the first or last site to commence build out, or any in between.
- 2.1.10. The facility at Eastman Way is over capacity both in terms of the raw number of users and its ability to serve the required number of waste streams now. The matter of when this facility will be delivered is therefore material to HCC and failure to identify a location (and implicitly a delivery timescale aligned to that parcel) has denied HCC the opportunity to identify a location that would deliver a new recycling centre sufficiently early in the build out.
- 2.1.11. The plans are therefore not effective, at least in relation the delivery of the Recycling Centre.
- 2.1.12. To be found effective and therefore sound, the plan should be modified to either allocate a site for the recycling centre within the site allocations or, if the inspectors feel that another mechanism is necessary which sets out the component parts of HGC and what is expected from each parcel, include a recycling centre within that mechanism.
- 2.1.13. HCC has appended to this statement further work to identify a number of potentially suitable locations withing the HGC programme area.

Specialist Housing

- 2.1.14. As outlined in HCC's Regulation 19 response to the emerging plans, Strategic Policy H2 of the DBC Plan - Mix of Housing and Strategic Policy SP4 - Housing of the SADC Plan requires that all developments will be required to provide a mix of housing types and sizes as guided by the latest Local Housing Needs Assessment, with the mix dependant on scale and location of the development. To be considered effective both local plans need to provide clarity on what specifically, in terms of specialist housing, is to be delivered at each site allocation, including the HGC site allocations.
- 2.1.15. The South West Herts Housing Needs Assessment [Dacorum reference HOU01.1, SACDC reference HOU 02.01] has identified a need for both specialist housing for older people and children's homes within both authorities. Opportunities to deliver specialist housing for older people and children's homes are limited, and the plans identify that typically only larger allocations will be of a sufficient size to deliver a wider mix of housing. Therefore, to be considered sound, the required quantum of specialist housing for older people and children's homes needs to be secured in site specific allocation policies in order to ensure delivery. Without this, it is not considered sufficiently clear to the decision maker at development management stage what is expected to be secured. HCC has suggested modification wording in the Regulation 19 response to both Plans.
- 2.1.16. As outlined in the second Statement of Common Ground between HCC and SACDC, it has been agreed that appropriate modifications will be proposed to overcome HCC objections made at Regulation 19 stage [not yet published and referenced]. HCC and DBC have accepted that the local plan should provide the quantum and types of specialist housing, however, modifications to ensure effective delivery is still under discussion.
- 2.1.17. Sites across the HGC Programme Area in require a specific policy allocation to make clear the specialist housing that is required to be delivered in the allocation. Or, if the inspectors feel that another mechanism is necessary which sets out the component parts of HGC and what is expected from each parcel, include children's homes and specialist accommodation for older people within that mechanism.

3. Issue 3: Highways and Transport

3.1. *Question 1: Is the strategic modelling an appropriate tool for assessing likely impacts of growth at HGC on the strategic road network, and, for determining necessary mitigation?*

- 3.1.1. A strategic transport model is the most appropriate tool for assessing the strategic impacts of local plans and large local plan sites such as HGC. Using a strategic transport model for this purpose is standard practice for a local plan. Strategic transport modelling has been undertaken using COMET, HCC's countywide transport model. This model covers the Strategic Road Network (SRN) of motorways and trunk roads (operated by National Highways) and all A, B and C roads in Hertfordshire as well as adjoining areas such as Luton, Aylesbury and North London.

- 3.1.2. Technical Note: COMET 2014 Base Year Model Review SRN FINAL [SADC/ED42] and Technical Note DRAFT COMET 2014 Base Year Model Review-SRNAddendum [SADC/ED43] demonstrated that the model meets the required criteria when comparing the modelled flows with observed flows. National Highways subsequently confirmed that they were satisfied with the performance of the model to be used for Local Plan forecasting.
- 3.1.3. The COMET model has been used to assess the impacts of growth in HGC across SACDC and DBC districts and also the wider strategic road network. The model has enabled a joint Dacorum and SACDC Local Plan test in 2041 (including HGC growth at that time) along with forward testing of the full build out of HGC growth in 2050 [SADC/ED76A and SADC/ED76B.i]. It enables the estimation of changes in traffic volumes at junctions and flags up potential delays and impacts of mitigation measures.
- 3.1.4. It is recognised that further detailed operational modelling is required to test detailed design options at the planning application stage. The Hemel Hempstead Paramics model developed originally on behalf of HCC provides a more detailed analysis of traffic movements within the Hemel Hempstead area and the ability to do this. This has been used by SLR Vectos to demonstrate the impacts of combined growth in more detail in the vicinity of M1 Junction 8 [see SADC/ED76A.ii] as part of the ongoing planning application process.

3.2. *Question 2: What are the implications of the growth proposed at HGC on the strategic road network, having particular regard to Junction 8 of the M1?*

- 3.2.1. The SLR Vectos combined study [SADC/ED76A] reports the impacts of the combined local plans on the road network. Section 7.6 of that report specifically covers the impact on the SRN and indicates that there are increases in traffic flow on the SRN resulting in some increases in delay at M1 Junction 8, M1 Junction 9, M25 junction 20 and M25 junction 22.
- 3.2.2. A scenario has been undertaken of HGC growth to the end of the plan periods in 2041. At M1 junction 8 the combined SADC and DBC 2041 local plan growth test (COMET 2041 test Option 4a, which includes the emerging IDP infrastructure and an element of mode shift but without any changes to M1 Junction 8 itself) demonstrates that the initial phases of HGC growth coming forward during the Local Plan period result in increases in delay on the westbound approach to the A414/Green Lanes junction and some queuing back towards the M1 northbound off slip at junction 8 [SADC/ED76A, paragraph 7.6.4]. However, this does not blockback to the main motorway carriageway and the rest of junction 8 continues to operate satisfactorily.
- 3.2.3. A scenario has also been undertaken of the full build out the HGC in 2050 [SADC/ED76B.i]. This indicates that an upgrade of M1 junction 8 is required. This scheme involves a new roundabout junction to the east of the M1, directly linked linking the M1 southbound offslip and on slip with a new road over the M1 to link to the new East Hemel Spine Road. This layout is

illustrated in Figure 6.2 of the combined study [SADC/ED76A] but does require further adjustment to allow two circulatory lanes around the roundabout.

3.3. Question 3: Can any significant highways impacts (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree, consistent with paragraph 114 of the Framework? How have the need for highways improvements been costed, and will the sites proposed for allocation at HGC remain viable?

- 3.3.1. The Infrastructure scenario presented within the emerging HGC IDP and tested through Modelling scenarios [SADC ED76 to SADC/ED76C] demonstrates that 1500 homes can be accommodated in the plan period. Additional work is required to demonstrate that the full 5000 can be accommodated without a residual severe impact on the highway network.
- 3.3.2. This is, however, subject to modifications to the Dacorum plan to ensure that allocation HM01 can mitigate the impacts of development, as the details of the impacts beyond the end of the plan period and the required mitigation are not yet known. Modelling indicates that there are no residual severe impacts in 2041 when 1,500 homes are expected to be delivered in HM01 [SADC/ED76A]. However between 2041 and 2050 modelling indicates there will be a severe impact on the local highway network in northern Hemel Hempstead [SADC/ED76B.i]. The emerging IDP does not contain the details of mitigations needed to make this development acceptable.
- 3.3.3. Therefore the plan must contain a mechanism to ensure that development at HM01 does not come forward before there is an opportunity for the impacts of development to be assessed and mitigations agreed, either at the next plan review or at development management stage as part of a comprehensive masterplanning exercise.
- 3.3.4. Proposed policy wording to secure this is as follows:
- 3.3.5. *Before any planning application for part or all of Site HM01 is submitted, a comprehensive Transport Assessment must be provided to, and approved by, the Local Planning and Highway Authorities. This must demonstrate that the cumulative transport impacts of Site HM01, in combination with planned growth in the Dacorum and St Albans Local Plans, can be fully accommodated without residual, unacceptable impacts on the wider highway network. All necessary mitigation measures must be secured and incorporated into the relevant Infrastructure Delivery Plan(s).*

3.4. Question 4: Where mitigation is required, is it sufficiently clear to users of the Plan what is required, and where and when it will be delivered as required by policy?

- 3.4.1. Mitigations for the impact of development at Hemel Garden Communities are set out in several locations. This includes the evidence base [HGC 2.01], the

emerging HGC IDP, the SACDC IDP [INF 01.01 and 01.02], the DBC IDP [IDV 01.1, 01.2, 02.01, and 02.2], and within the plans themselves at SACDC policy LG2 and DBC policy HGC1.

- 3.4.2. As per HCC's response to issue 4 question 1, the production of the HGC IDP has been continuing through the regulation 19 consultation, submission, and examination of both plans.
- 3.4.3. HCC will need to secure transport infrastructure by a variety of different routes, including direct delivery of infrastructure via s278 agreements under a planning condition, financial contributions via a planning obligation, or the reservation and transfer of land. The plan should therefore need to be clear as to what sites are responsible to deliver a specific piece of infrastructure. Where this infrastructure meets a cumulative need rather than to make an individual site acceptable, it needs to provide evidence to support a planning obligation under the requirements of the CIL regulations.
- 3.4.4. Different documents also have different purposes and different weight at development management stage, and therefore to ensure clarity following the agreement of the IDP the opportunity should be taken to ensure that the different infrastructure requirements referred to above are secured in the most appropriate parts of the local plans and evidence bases.
- 3.4.5. Infrastructure requiring land to be reserved or used for a particular infrastructure purpose or requiring a site to deliver a single piece of off site infrastructure in its entirety, whether it is mitigating one or multiple sites, should be included in the site allocations within the local plans. This secures the provision of infrastructure or land at development management stage as local plan policy will have full weight in decision making.
- 3.4.6. The wider funding strategy for that infrastructure, including the requirement for sites to fund infrastructure for which there is a cumulative requirement, is referenced in the emerging HGC IDP. It is not necessary for site allocations to explicitly refer to the need for sites to pay developer contributions as other generic policies within the plans, such as SACDC policy SP14 - Delivery of Infrastructure and DBC policy ID1 - Delivering the Infrastructure to Support Growth, among others, provide the appropriate policy to support a financial obligation.
- 3.4.7. Financial obligations must also be evidenced and justified separately at development management stage under the CIL Regulations. In addition to providing evidence of deliverability at local plan stage, the HGC IDP can form part of the package of evidence at development management stage to support a planning obligation to deliver a scheme or fund a proportionate part of a cumulative scheme. Moreover, individual applications must also be found to be compliant with transport policies on an individual basis, which can require a more flexible approach to which site delivers what proportion of which scheme, so long as the total quantum of infrastructure is delivered overall. This makes the IDP, which can be updated and considered as a wider package of evidence at development management stage, a more

appropriate forum for evidence to support what sites need to deliver in financial terms.

- 3.4.8. Once the HGC IDP is submitted to the examination, and assuming it remains acceptable to HCC, the infrastructure identified in the HGC IDP requiring the provision of land or direct delivery on or off site should be included within the site allocations in the local plans. Or, as per issue 1 question 2, if the inspectors feel that another mechanism is necessary which sets out the component parts of HGC and what is expected from each parcel, this infrastructure could be included in this mechanism.

3.5. *Question 5: What is the justification for the sensitivity testing which looks at a reduced number of jobs at East Hemel Hempstead (Central)? How does this correlate to the allocation in the St Albans Local Plan and the mix of uses proposed?*

- 3.5.1. The SADC local plan allocation originally assumes around 8,000 jobs on the East Hemel Central employment zone (H3) and the 2041 combined option tests were based on this number. There is considerable uncertainty about likely future job numbers. Recent work led by Hertfordshire Futures (formerly the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership) has assessed recent employment growth in the Maylands area and revised future employment projections. Changes in the type of employment (away from office / business uses) and increasing automation in warehouses and distribution facilities suggest a lower number of jobs in the area and future projections suggest this trend will continue.
- 3.5.2. It was therefore agreed to undertake sensitivity testing with provision of half of the number of jobs (4,000) in the Central employment zone. The testing indicated that in 2041 with a lower level of employment growth there was a significant reduction in delays on the approach to the A414/Green Lanes junction from M1 junction 8 and traffic queues could be easily accommodated without affecting the operation of the M1 off slip. Further detail can be found in document HGC Trigger Point Technical Note [SADC/ED76A.i].

3.6. *Question 6: What are the implications of the growth proposed at HGC on the local road network, having particular regard to the consequences of additional congestion and delays on the M1?*

- 3.6.1. The combined joint test of the Local Plans in 2041 without changes to M1 junction 8 (option 4a) includes the early stages of HGC growth. Detail of the housing and employment assumptions is contained in Appendices B- E of the report [SADC/ED76A]. Section 7.2 of the report shows that the combined impact of growth results in an overall increase in travel time of 10-11% in the peak hours and a small decrease in average speed. This modelling work predicts that even without the local plans and HGC growth (Option 0A based on committed growth already in the planning system) by 2041 there are a number of key roads experiencing a high level of traffic stress within Hemel

Hempstead, including the A41 junction, around Maylands Avenue and the A414/Green Lane junction [SADC/ED76A pages 54-60].

- 3.6.2. Adding in the combined local plans growth (option 4a) adds additional pressure to the section of the A414 between the Green Lanes roundabout and M1 junction 8, although as previously noted this does not block back to the main motorway [see SADC/ED76A, paragraph 7.6.4]. There is additional delay and congestion at junctions along Redbourn Road in North Hemel Hempstead, around Leverstock Green Road and the A414/Two Waters Road roundabout (Plough roundabout) [SADC/ED76A pages 61-65 and Table 7.7 and 7.8].
- 3.6.3. The M1 remains within capacity [see SADC/ED76A Figures 7.15 and 7.16]. Some increases in delay are forecast on the M1 northbound and southbound onslips at junction 8 [see SADC/ED76A para 7.6.4].
- 3.6.4. Further information on impacts is given in Chapter 7 of the 2041 modelling report [SADC/ED76A].
- 3.6.5. With full buildout of HGC in 2050, assuming that the mode shift targets from the HGC Transport Vision and Strategy (HGC 05.04) are achieved (60% sustainable mode share in the Hemel Garden Communities Growth areas and 40% sustainable mode share in the rest of the town), total travel time is predicted to increase by 9% in the AM and 12% in the pm with the additional growth. There is increased delay on the network including around Redbourn Road, Leighton Buzzard Road, Two Waters Road and M1 Junction 8. If the proposed improvement at M1 junction 8 is implemented along with two lanes on the circulatory carriageway then then the 2050 growth can be accommodated [SADC/ED76B.i].
- 3.6.6. Changes in average delay per vehicle at key junctions in Hemel Hempstead are predicted to be less than 30 seconds (compared with 2050 without the additional growth) [SADC/ED76B.i].

3.7. *Question 7: In assessing the impacts of cumulative growth at HGC, how does the evidence take into account the likelihood of modal shift away from private car use? Has this been applied consistently and is it justified?*

- 3.7.1. The cumulative impacts of growth at HGC have been assessed within the COMET strategic transport model for two future years 2041 (the end of the Local Plan period) [SADC/ED76A/ DBC/ED8] and 2050 (HGC full build out) [SADC/ED76B.i/DBC/ED9].
- 3.7.2. As part of the individual SACDC and DBC Local Plan's WSP's Opportunity to Shift Mode tool has been used to develop specific assumptions regarding potential modal shift for different movements within the study area based on journey distance, the availability of alternative modes and the propensity of residents to walk, cycle or use public transport. The full details of the Opportunity to Shift Modes (OTSM) work for SACDC can be found in St Albans & HCC LP Modelling Report [SADC/ED76C.vii, appendix D] and for

Dacorum can be found in Dacorum Local Plan Traffic Modelling Report [TRA04.1, appendix D].

- 3.7.3. In the 2041 Combined Local Plan assessment within the COMET strategic model the mode shift assumptions are the same as those applied within both of the individual Local Plan assessments [SADC/ED76A or DBC/ED8 section 5.7]. It estimates approximately a 30% reduction in car trips across the two the districts.
- 3.7.4. Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision [SACDC HGC 03.01/DBC - HGC13.1] sets out ambitious model shift targets which aims to achieve the following mode share targets by 2050, section 5.8 of the local plan assessments [SADC/ED76A/DBC/ED8]:
- 40% of all trips starting and/or ending in the existing settlement area of Hemel Hempstead should be by active and sustainable travel modes, and
 - 60% of all trips starting and/or ending in the new development of HGC growth area should be by active and sustainable travel modes.
- 3.7.5. WSP undertook a comprehensive HGC Mode Shift Study for both 2041 and 2050, [Appendix D of TRA04.1] to derive specific assumptions regarding potential mode shift for different movements within the study area. The study identified that by 2050 there is more potential to achieve the mode shift targets set out in the Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision. Inline, with the outcomes of the OTSM study within the strategic transport model in 2050 a sustainable mode share of 60% is applied to trips within and going to and from HGC [section 5.8 Table 5.5 pdf page 51 of SADC/ED76A/ DBC/ED8]. For trips originating in Hemel Hempstead (and not HGC) a sustainable mode share of 40% was assumed [section 5.8 Table 5.5 pdf page 51 of SADC/ED76A/ DBC/ED8].

4. Issue 4: Infrastructure Provision

4.1. *Question 1: Is there sufficient certainty regarding the total quantum, timing and cost of infrastructure necessary to facilitate the HGC in line with the Councils' expectations?*

- 4.1.1. The infrastructure evidence for the HGC programme is set out in the emerging HGC IDP. The infrastructure schedule lists the infrastructure, the cost of that infrastructure, and an apportionment of the cost of that infrastructure to sites. It also identifies the relevant delivery partner and body with overall responsibility.
- 4.1.2. The emerging HGC IDP has been drafted with input from HCC as a body responsible for a number of service areas and HCC has provided comments on the September 2025 draft., .
- 4.1.3. While HCC broadly supports the emerging IDP as drafted and as last seen by HCC, the IDP continues to list HCC as the responsible authority for securing contributions towards and developer delivery of SANGs. This is

contrary to the Dacorum Chiltern Beechwoods Mitigation Strategy set out as evidence to the draft plan [CSN01.1] which recognises the role of the Local Planning Authority under the Habitats Regulations, not HCC, for securing mitigations to European protected sites. The IDP should therefore be amended to reflect this reality.

- 4.1.4. However, the emerging HGC IDP is not, at time of submission, before the examination. Cognisant of the representations HCC made at Regulation 19 stage, local plans must be formally accompanied by an IDP, agreed to by HCC, to be considered justified and effective and subsequently sound. Subject to the amendment referred to above, the emerging IDP September 2025 draft should therefore be submitted to the examination as evidence.
- 4.1.5. Similarly, if a version of the emerging HGC IDP that differed from the September 2025 version as last seen by HCC (subject to the amendment referred to above) were to be placed before the examination between the submission of this statement and the date of the hearings, or the IDP further altered after submission as part of the examination process, HCC would have to consider whether these amendments reflect HCC's expectations and evidence as to the quantum, cost, and liability for HCC infrastructure. If this were to differ from HCC's evidence and expectations, which are broadly met in the versions seen to date, HCC would be required to reconsider the plans' reliance on it as suitable infrastructure evidence.

4.2. *Question 2: Is there appropriate evidence as to how different forms of infrastructure (including schools and open space) have been apportioned to different HGC allocations?*

- 4.2.1. Transport infrastructure has been apportioned with engagement from HCC. Site-specific items are identified and attributed to single site on the basis that it is reasonable for sites reliant on a single piece of infrastructure to deliver it. Infrastructure that mitigates multiple sites (referred to as 'strategic infrastructure') in the emerging IDP is apportioned in accordance with a five step methodology. This allocates town wide infrastructure (such as upgrades to Hemel Hempstead railway station) to all sites, residential and commercial, in proportion to their scale. Key network schemes are apportioned to schemes in accordance with their level of transport impact. Other schemes are apportioned to nearby sites based on location, unless there are no nearby sites, in which case they are apportioned to all sites.
- 4.2.2. The emerging HGC IDP, as last seen by HCC, apportions education contributions in two ways. Mainstream schools that are mitigating the impact of development on a single site within the HGC Growth Area are apportioned solely to that individual site). This reflects the reality that these schools in their entirety are necessary to make these sites acceptable in planning terms. Schools that are serving a cumulative need from multiple sites across the HGC Programme Area are apportioned in proportion to their respective number of units.
- 4.2.3. It is right in principle that schools that are serving a cumulative need are apportioned between the sites against which they are providing mitigation

proportionately. The expected pupil yield between different sites can vary significantly based on their typology: greenfield sites delivering predominantly family homes will yield substantially more pupils than predominantly flatted development in town centres. At development management stage the CIL Regulations require development to be related in scale and in kind to development, and must therefore incorporate the pupil yield and therefore the typology of the development to some extent. It is therefore reasonable that, where there is evidence to do so, the costs of schools are apportioned in proportion to their anticipated pupil yield rather than the number of units themselves.

- 4.2.4. HCC uses Strategic Planning Ratios (SPRs) to determine a sufficiently reasonable expectation of demand that is anticipated to originate from the HGC allocations. The SPRs are based on three broad types or tiers of development accounting for the more urban or greenfield developments. This approach is derived from and underpinned by observed pupil yield data from the HCC Pupil Yield Study, which tracks the actual number of new pupils arising in Hertfordshire schools from new developments within Hertfordshire over time.
- 4.2.5. The emerging HGC IDP, as last seen by HCC, apportions those cumulative education costs in proportion to anticipated pupil yield as determined by the SPRs.

4.3. *Question 3: What is the justification for requiring accordance with the IDP, which is a non-statutory document intended to be updated regularly by each Council?*

- 4.3.1. SACDC policies LG2 and DBC policies HGC1 requires, at paragraph 3, all development within the HGC Programme Area to 'accord' with the HGC IDP, which as per issue 4 question 1, is an emerging document.
- 4.3.2. The HGC Spatial Vision [HGC 03.01], Delivery Statement [HGC 02.01] and other HGC evidence base documents, SACDC policies LG2 and DBC policies HGC1 and other policies in the draft plan, and in the 2024 NPPF, which will be material consideration at development management stage, set out the ambitions for the HGC Programme Area. To achieve these ambitions, and to avoid harms in planning terms, there will need to be significant investment in supporting infrastructure. If this is not delivered there is a risk that harms, in planning terms, will not be mitigated or the cost burden of that mitigation will unduly fall on service providers.
- 4.3.3. HCC, and other service providers, have been engaged in the development of the emerging HGC IDP. The emerging HGC IDP builds on the individual IDPs, prepared by each district in support of their local plans, to identify the comprehensive suite of infrastructure mitigations HCC requires as mitigation across the HGC programme area. The plan therefore needs to provide the right policy wording to ensure that the infrastructure, identified in this evidence base document, is delivered and the right evidence is in place to support planning obligations and relevant conditions where appropriate. HCC welcomes the incorporation of the HGC IDP through the local plans'

examination in public so that effective policies to ensure this outcome can be secured.

- 4.3.4. A complexity due to the scale of the HGC programme area, covering two LPA areas and development sites that will deliver beyond the plan period, is the challenge service providers face when programming infrastructure and securing contributions. The funding and delivery of infrastructure projects required to make the HGC programme as a whole acceptable, such as secondary schools and significant highways investments, will require the assembly of contributions and works from many sites on a cumulative basis over a significant period of time. In some cases HCC may need to forward fund infrastructure to make one site acceptable in planning terms which the other remaining sites in the HGC programme will rely on in future. For such a programme to be deliverable HCC will need to have confidence that multiple sites within the HGC Programme Area will all pay a justifiable contribution and potentially many years into the future.
- 4.3.5. The purpose of including the HGC IDP within the local plan evidence base is, in part, to illustrate that the HGC programme is deliverable because the infrastructure mitigates the impact of development and can be assembled through developer contributions and direct delivery across multiple sites over the lifetime of the delivery of the programme. Under a plan-led system it is therefore appropriate that when applications are made for development within the HGC area that the IDP is considered the most up to date evidenced and agreed position on the need for and contributions towards supporting infrastructure.
- 4.3.6. On this basis HCC supports the principle that the infrastructure listed in the HGC IDP, once agreed, should be secured in policy. HCC considers the emerging HGC IDP as the appropriate evidence basis for a policy, or policies, that will ensure sites required to deliver infrastructure do so. Allocating infrastructure in site specific policy will ensure key mitigations are delivered and give HCC an evidence to begin to be able to demonstrate the necessity of planning obligations towards infrastructure that has a cumulative need.
- 4.3.7. The inspectors' attention are drawn to HCC's response to issue 1 question 2, as the recycling centre and a number of children's homes and specialist accommodation for older people are identified in the emerging HGC IDP, but not in policy. As the emerging HGC IDP is not yet finalised, this exercise has not been undertaken comprehensively, but these examples illustrate the need for such an exercise to be undertaken to ensure that the infrastructure listed in the infrastructure evidence is deliverable at development management stage for all infrastructure types and providers.
- 4.3.8. If the inspectors are minded that requiring applications in the HGC to 'accord' with the HGC IDP is not justified, the plan should be modified to ensure that, where appropriate, all of the required infrastructure listed in the HGC IDP is included within an allocation. Or, as per issue 1 question 2, if the inspectors feel that another mechanism is necessary which sets out the

component parts of HGC and what is expected from each parcel, this infrastructure could be included in this mechanism.

5. Issue 6: Viability and Deliverability

5.1. *Question 6: Has adequate viability testing been carried out to assess the cumulative costs associated with bringing forward the proposals at HGC? Are the component parts of the HGC viable, taking into account all likely costs, including strategic highways and infrastructure costs?*

- 5.1.1. The HGC IDP schedule of infrastructure sets out the infrastructure mitigations that are required to make the growth, proposed across the HGC programme area, in DBC and SACDC local plans. The accompanying report, drafted by Ove Arup & Partners Limited, sets out that collectively the viability assessment and the HGC IDP to 2050 processes complement one another as linked elements of the Local Plan evidence base to demonstrate that the site assessments, and the Plan as a whole, are deliverable.
- 5.1.2. HCC, as a body with responsibility for securing infrastructure, is content that the likely costs (as known at this moment in time) as set out and identified in the HGC IDP reflect those that can be reasonably required to deliver the mitigations that are needed to make growth in the local plans acceptable. The HGC IDP has, as set out above undertaken an apportionment of those costs where relevant.
- 5.1.3. NPPF paragraph 58 broadly states that development conforming with contributions found viable at local plan examination should be considered viable at development management stage, so long as those policies remain up to date, and that the weight to give to a viability appraisal sits with the decision maker irrespective of the weight given to the HGC IDP in policy (as per question two) it is HCC's position that, once agreed by HCC, it will broadly 'set out' the level of contributions expected from sites – subject to indexation – for the purpose of viability testing as per NPPF paragraph 58.
- 5.1.4. Therefore, there may be a benefit to those with responsibilities for service provision, for the outputs of the HGC IDP work to be incorporated into further viability work for the HGC sites should the local planning authorities deem that necessary.

6. Issue 7: North Hemel Hempstead (H1)

6.1. *Is Policy H1 justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy? If not, what modifications are required to make the Plan sound?*

- 6.1.1. HCC's position in relation to this question is broadly as outlined at issue 1 question 2. An allocation within the HGC Programme Area is required to

secure the recycling centre referred to in the emerging HGC IDP, the HGC Delivery Statement [HGC 02.01], and policy LG3.

7. Issue 8: East Hemel Hempstead (North) (H2)

7.1. *Is Policy H2 justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy? If not, what modifications are required to make the Plan sound?*

- 7.1.1. HCC's position in relation to this question is broadly as outlined at issue 1 question 2. An allocation within the HGC Programme Area is required to secure the recycling centre referred to in the emerging HGC IDP, the HGC Delivery Statement [HGC 02.01], and policy LG3.

8. Issue 9: East Hemel Hempstead (Central) (H3)

8.1. *Is Policy H3 justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy? If not, what modifications are required to make the Plan sound?*

- 8.1.1. HCC's position in relation to this question is broadly as outlined at issue 1 question 2. As per the attached statement, the extension to the Maylands employment site is a potentially suitable site for a recycling centre and therefore an allocation should be made here, if not in another location within the Hemel Garden Communities Programme Area.

9. Issue 8: East Hemel Hempstead (North) (H4)

9.1. *Is Policy H4 justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy? If not, what modifications are required to make the Plan sound?*

- 9.1.1. HCC's position in relation to this question is broadly as outlined at issue 1 question 2. An allocation within the HGC Programme Area is required to secure the recycling centre referred to in the emerging HGC IDP, the HGC Delivery Statement [HGC 02.01], and policy LG3.