



*Basingstoke
and Deane*



Basingstoke and Deane Local Development Framework Core Strategy – Issues & Options Consultation



Our Future Starts Now!

January 2008

Why are we consulting now?

The Borough Council currently has a Local Plan which covers the period up to 2011 and which guides the development of the Borough. The way that we plan for the future has changed and we have now started work on a Local Development Framework (LDF), which we are developing together with our partners and our communities. We're not starting with a blank sheet. We have to take account of both Government and Regional guidance as well as the outcomes of our evidence gathering and the initial work that we have already undertaken to raise awareness. This has helped us to identify a number of key issues. The Core Strategy is a key part of the LDF and will provide the long term vision for the future of the Borough up to 2026. At this stage we are not putting forward any proposals, but we want to make sure that the vision, policies and objectives are the right ones to make the neighbourhoods and communities of Basingstoke and Deane even more attractive places in which to live, work and enjoy leisure time. To do this we are now exploring what issues we need to address in the Core Strategy and what approaches we can use to help us achieve our long-term vision. To help us do this we are now asking.....

Where do you want Basingstoke and Deane to be in 2026?

How long will the consultation last?

Six weeks from **28 January 2008 to 10 March 2008**

How can you comment?

You can either:

- e-mail your comments to us at: ldf@basingstoke.gov.uk
- fill in a questionnaire which is both available online, from the Council Offices, and local libraries. Copies can also be sent to you on request.
- or write to us at:
The Forward Planning and Transport Team
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council,
FREEPOST BZ97/1, Basingstoke, RG21 4GA.

What will happen to my comments?

A schedule of the comments received will be made available on the planning policy website <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/ldf> as soon as possible following the consultation period, along with information on how the Borough Council proposes to take these comments forward into the next stage of preparing the Core Strategy. Explanation of the future stages can be found on the website: www.basingstoke.gov.uk/ldf.

If you would like to be added to our Local Development Framework database, in order to be kept informed of community involvement events, progress on the Core Strategy and other documents in the Local Development Framework, please contact the Forward Planning and Transport Team on 01256 845532 or 01256 845796 or email ldf@basingstoke.gov.uk.

If you would like this document in an alternative format, please contact the Borough Council on (01256) 844844

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1. Introduction

Our Borough: The Past, Present and Future

Past

- 1.1** The Borough has seen large physical changes over the last 20 years – for example new residential areas including Chineham and Hatch Warren, new leisure and community facilities including Festival Place and the Leisure Park, infrastructure improvements such as the dualling of Ringway North together with the establishment of new public transport services. These physical changes have been accompanied by big changes in the way that we live and work – for example home computers were introduced in the early 1980s – now 71% of households have them and the internet and technology such as mobile phones have revolutionised the way that we carry out our day to day lives.

Present

- 1.2** The Borough of Basingstoke and Deane is one of the most prosperous and dynamic places to live in the country. It has a high quality rural and urban environment and excellent accessibility in terms of road and rail connections. Quality of life in the Borough is good with relatively high levels of prosperity and well-being. The economy is strong and diverse with low levels of unemployment. The Borough is also the focus for substantial development pressure and part of our challenge is to accommodate this development in such a way that it does not put undue pressure on the area's environment, infrastructure and services and have a negative effect on existing communities.

Future

- 1.3** We can predict some parts of the Borough's future with some certainty – for example we have some indications of how much housing we need to provide to 2026. But there is much less certainty about the scale of external changes and trends. We've commissioned some work to help us to understand the factors which could influence the way in which we live work and play in the years to 2026. This has come up with some key 'drivers of change', grouped under 3 headings: social, environmental and economic.

Social

- ***Changing family and household structures***

The proportion of single person households is increasing: average household size in Basingstoke and Deane is projected to fall from 2.45 people per household in 2001 (census) to 2.15 by 2026.

- ***Population Growth***

Our local population is forecast to increase from 158,700 in 2006 to 177,000 in 2026.

- ***Age Profile***

Most population growth within the Borough is expected to occur within the over 45's, over 60's and over 75's age groups

- ***Fear of crime***

Basingstoke and Deane has just 93 crimes per 1,000 of the population- lower than the national average and that of Hampshire with 98% of residents feeling either very or fairly safe at home during the day

- ***Social Involvement***

Many community organisations are underpinned by the voluntary sector and feedback from consultation events has informed us that there is increasing difficulty in recruiting appropriate people to lead and manage community groups and sports clubs.

Environmental

- ***Climate change***

Climate change is expected to lead to increased frequency of abnormal weather conditions, which in turn may have an impact on the economy and on people's day to day lives. Actions to combat climate change may affect attitudes to, for example, commuting and business travel.

- ***Pressure for development***

The pressure for development may impact on the countryside, particularly since rural areas make up 92% of Basingstoke and Deane.

- ***Increasing energy costs***

Rising energy costs and limited energy supplies mean an increased focus on renewables, with the Government planning to source 10% of electricity from renewable sources by 2010.

Economic

- ***Globalisation***

There is an increase in the level of connection between places resulting in wider competition in the supply of goods and services.

- ***Blurring of the physical and virtual worlds***

The rise of the internet has changed the way businesses operate and people live, with more people conducting an increasing proportion of their lives in the virtual world.

- ***Increasingly empowered consumers***

There is greater expectation amongst consumers for services which are speedy, efficient and personalised.

- ***Skills Shortages***

There are growing concerns over the availability of individuals with key skills, with 21% of adults within Basingstoke and Deane reported as having difficulties with literacy and numeracy, while higher education opportunities in the area are limited.

- ***Retail as leisure***

Shopping is one of the most popular ways to spend free time in the UK. Within Basingstoke and Deane, 42% of residents believe that shopping facilities contribute to a good quality of life.

- 1.4 The Core Strategy has to be flexible enough to respond and adapt to these issues and other issues that emerge over time. We must take this into consideration when looking at the issues and options for the Borough for the next 20 years.

A Vision for the Borough's Future

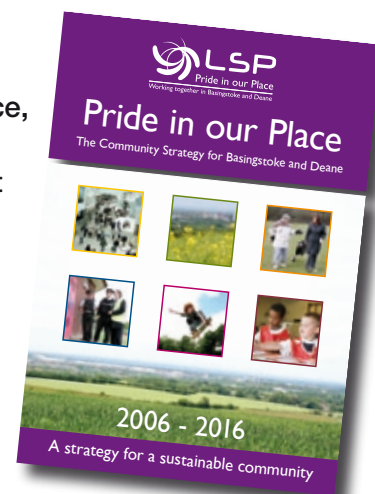
- 1.5 There is already a Vision for the borough which was developed through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), and which lies at the heart of the Community Strategy. The new planning system enables much greater links between the Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy should take forward the 'spatial' elements of the Community Strategy so that a co-ordinated approach can be taken to shaping the Borough's communities in the longer term. This means looking at not just how land is used and developed but how this affects and supports wider social, economic and environmental objectives.

- 1.6 The Core Strategy should take forward and implement the Community Strategy vision and set out what parts of it can be achieved through the Local Development Framework and what will need to be delivered through other strategies and the actions of partners. The Core Strategy should also help to inform the development of subsequent reviews of the Community Strategy.

- 1.7 The Community Strategy Vision for the borough is that:
'Basingstoke and Deane will become famous for social justice, well-being and prosperity for all; alert to its heritage and its responsibility to improve the built and natural environment, it will be held up as a beacon for others to see what can be achieved with courage and ambition by talented, welcoming and confident people working together.'

- 1.8 This vision is to be delivered by achieving a number of outcomes linked to the following six themes in the Community Strategy:

- i. **An economically prosperous Borough** where people can and will want to work, and a variety of urban and rural businesses thrive
- ii. **An environment that's good to live in** where people have high quality, affordable homes and value our Borough as a clean, attractive and varied place to live
- iii. **An inclusive Borough with strong communities** where everyone has the opportunity to lead their lives the way they want, feel they belong to the Borough's communities and can influence decision-making that affects their lives
- iv. **A learning and creative Borough** where learning opportunities exist for everyone and creativity is encouraged
- v. **A safe Borough** where people feel safe and at ease
- vi. **A healthy Borough** where everyone takes a role in improving and maintaining good health; and healthy lifestyles are promoted



- 1.9** To help ensure that the Core Strategy does take forward the Community Strategy, early engagement work already undertaken focused around the six themes of the Community Strategy. All of the themes are relevant to the Core Strategy and have been used as the basis for the development of the Issues and Options to ensure that when developing the Core Strategy itself all of the social, economic and environmental issues within the Borough will be considered. Each theme, with its desired outcomes has been considered in terms of its links to the spatial planning of the Borough, the issues surrounding the theme and possible ways to tackle these issues. Through early awareness raising work the close inter-relationship between two of the themes - 'a safe Borough' and 'a healthy Borough' - has become apparent, so these two themes have been merged.
- 1.10** Just as the Community Strategy provides a basis for thinking through the needs of the Local Development Framework, so in turn the work on the LDF, both evidence gathering and consultation, provides an opportunity to review and enhance the community strategy.

Objectives

- 1.11** To help expand and achieve the Community Strategy vision through the Core Strategy and guide the Borough's future over the next 20 years a set of objectives have been drafted for discussion and comment. The purpose of the objectives is to create thriving, vibrant and sustainable communities and neighbourhoods throughout the Borough where people want to live and stay. The Borough Council is working with the Local Strategic Partnership to improve particular areas of the Borough through a Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, which has identified the priority communities of the Popley Wards, Norden, South Ham, and Buckskin for action. The Core Strategy should build upon this to secure the creation of successful places in the future.
- 1.12** Based on government guidance and from what we have learned from earlier engagement with a range of groups, below are some examples of elements that could contribute towards sustainable communities and neighbourhoods:
- Decent affordable homes with an appropriate range of sizes, types and tenures
 - Good access by a range of modes of transport
 - An appropriate range and mix of services and facilities such as schools and doctors, shops, youth facilities, village halls, leisure centres and open space
 - the right infrastructure in terms of water supply and sewerage, reliable electricity supplies, gas and broadband.
 - A safe, clean environment
 - A range of employment opportunities
 - A sense of place with local distinctiveness and a strong sense of community
 - Integration and linkages with other communities

- Is there anything that we have missed?
- What do you think makes your community or neighbourhood special? Does this differ between the urban and the rural communities of the Borough and between different sizes of communities?
- Are there differences between new and existing communities?

Implementing the vision

1.13 Through working in partnership there are opportunities to maximise the potential of Basingstoke and Deane as a prosperous, vibrant, well-planned, attractive and accessible Borough, which enhances the well-being of everyone that lives and works within it.

1.14 Set out below are some opportunities for the Borough to 2026.

- The regeneration of one of Basingstoke town's key commercial areas, Basing View, as a 21st Century economic hub
- Enhancing the range of learning opportunities to support economic prosperity and maximise the potential of the working age population
- The creation of an integrated transport network
- Providing a wide range of housing that meets the needs of all the community through the ongoing development of existing commitments and planned development including large housing sites and brownfield regeneration
- Continuing to develop and improve shopping, leisure, sporting and cultural facilities to make the Borough a good place to live, work and visit

The following draft objectives seek to expand the Community Strategy in a way which will guide the future of the Borough, including shaping new and existing communities and neighbourhoods. It should be noted that their order does not indicate any priority or ranking of the objective.

1. To create safe, strong and diverse communities that meet the needs of all age groups.
2. Continued sustainable and diverse economic growth that optimises work opportunities for the existing residents of the Borough and encourages inward investment
3. Development whose scale and characteristics provides all residents with the opportunity to live in a high quality, affordable and accessible home in a safe and healthy neighbourhood
4. To promote and enhance the vitality and viability of the retail centres of the Borough including Basingstoke town centre, reflecting the outcome of the Central Area Vision, together with the smaller centres in the Borough
5. To improve the efficiency of resource use and ensure that all new development makes optimum use of the principles and techniques of sustainable design and construction
6. To reduce significantly emissions of greenhouse gases and mitigate the impacts of climate change
7. To protect and enhance the diversity and quality of the natural and built environments
8. To secure the delivery of high quality accessible services and facilities across the Borough, including health, education, training, retail, leisure, sport, crime prevention and community facilities
9. The provision of sustainable and fully accessible transport opportunities to meet the needs of all residents, workers and visitors, including facilitating increased use of public transport, walking and cycling
10. To ensure that existing communities and new developments are supported by appropriate physical and community support infrastructure, including transport, water, community facilities, power, telecommunications and green spaces.

- 1.15** The final Core Strategy policies will be based on the set of objectives that will be developed following your comments and input.

**Are these the right objectives to help shape the Borough's communities to 2026?
Which of these objectives do you think are the most important?
What other objectives would help us to do this?**

What does the Core Strategy need to cover?

- 1.16** We're not starting with a blank sheet. As part of the initial work already undertaken to raise awareness, a number of key issues have already been identified. At this stage of the process we are not putting forward any proposals – that will come later.
- 1.17** The Core Strategy will set out some very important guidance for the future of the Borough. However there are some things, such as the amount of housing to be built in the Borough that will be affected by the regional spatial strategy (the South East Plan). Our approach will be expected to conform to regional and national policies.

National Context

- 1.18** In order to be approved as 'sound' at the Examination stage, all Local Development Documents in the LDF need to be consistent with national planning policy and be in general conformity with the regional spatial strategy. This is particularly important for the Core Strategy which will provide the framework and guiding principles for subsequent LDF documents.
- 1.19** National priorities affecting the Borough include housing provision and delivery to meet existing/anticipated needs and an emphasis on creating sustainable communities and development. We must focus on sustainable development which makes the most efficient use of land, minimises the need to travel and gives a priority to the use of previously developed land ('brownfield') in development.

Regional Context

- 1.20** Basingstoke Town has been identified in the draft South East Plan and the Regional Economic Strategy as:
- a regional transport hub which should provide a highly accessible focus for employment and services
 - a 'diamond' for investment and economic growth
 - part of the Western Corridor/Blackwater Valley (WCBV) sub-region
- 1.21** In addition, Basingstoke has been identified as a growth point with a focus on maximising economic potential. Further information on what this means is picked up in section 2 on strategic issues facing the Borough.

Increasing our knowledge

1.22 To understand the issues and options facing the Borough, a programme of studies and research is being undertaken to inform the Core Strategy and other documents in the LDF. Further details are set out in a background paper entitled 'Evidence Base Background Paper', available on the Council's website. The programme includes:

- economic profiling / employment issues / employment land review
- housing land availability assessment
- strategic housing market assessment
- landscape capacity study
- leisure assessment / open space audit
- retail study
- hotels study
- strategic flood risk assessment
- transport study
- water cycle study

What do the results of the studies so far tell us?

1.23 The initial outcomes of those studies that have been completed have informed the production of this document and will continue to support the development of the Strategy in addition to other documents of the LDF. It should be noted that it is not necessary for the evidence base to be complete whilst preparing the Issues and Options document. It is however, important that this is finalised in moving towards the Preferred Option stage, since this will help to inform decisions at this stage. The consideration of the Issues and Options may also highlight other areas of work that we need to undertake.

Other strategies

1.24 The themes also relate to other plans and strategies which have implications for the development and use of land; details of these are picked up within each theme. A number of specific Council strategies, frameworks and consultations have informed the development of this paper. These include, for example, the extensive Central Area Vision consultation. Further details of these are set out in the 'Evidence Base Background Paper'.

What have you told us so far?

- 1.25** In March 2007 we began discussions and awareness raising with a number of different groups in the Borough to develop a better understanding of our partners' and communities' views on the key issues to be addressed by the Core Strategy and what sort of place the Borough should be in 2026. In summary this work included:
- Informal workshops with Borough Councillors and key stakeholders such as the business community, environmental organisations, the water companies and the Highways Agency.
 - Visits to primary and secondary schools to gather information on what the youth of Basingstoke and Deane like and dislike about the Borough and to identify what kind of place they think it should be in 20 years time
 - The annual conference of the LSP was devoted to assisting with the development of this paper by identifying the longer term issues that need to be considered in the Core Strategy, and how the Borough could change and adapt to these issues.
 - Workshops with Parish Councils and community/residents groups
 - Letters to interested individuals and organisations asking their views on what key issues need to be considered in planning up to 2026
- 1.26** The issues raised have been a key part of the development of this paper, and the key messages are picked up within the individual themes.

How to use this document

- 1.27** As set out already, in order to reflect the priorities of the Community Strategy the issues and options within this document have been explored using the six Community Strategy themes. This is a different approach to using the traditional topic areas, and we would like your views on whether you think this structure is appropriate and understandable.
- 1.28** The first section of the paper sets out the strategic issues facing the Borough and potential approaches to addressing these. More detailed policy related issues are then discussed in the remainder of the paper, using the themes as a general structure. The key issues and messages identified from our work with partners and Council Members are set out, along with some potential approaches to how we achieve our overall vision.
- 1.29** For each issue we would like you to keep the following three questions in mind.

Have we identified the right issues and influences that need to be taken into account?
Which approaches or combination of approaches do you consider to be most suitable?
Are there other approaches that should be considered?

2. The Borough's Strategic Issues

- 2.1** This consultation document is largely structured around the Community Strategy themes, reflecting the need for the Core Strategy to take forward the spatial elements of the Community Strategy. However, some of the key strategic issues that have to be covered in the Core Strategy are best considered in the round, bringing together aspects of a number of the themes and particularly those relating to the future economic prosperity of the Borough and the broad scale and location of new development. This chapter deals with those key strategic issues and identifies possible approaches that could be taken in the Core Strategy.

Economy

Economic growth

- 2.2** The economic potential of Basingstoke town and its contribution to the regional and sub-regional economy has been recognised in both the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) (<http://www.seeda.co.uk/res/>) and through the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (South East Plan). As outlined on Section 1.21 Basingstoke Town and its surrounding area is described as a 'Diamond for Investment and Economic Growth' and has been identified as both a Regional Transport Hub and a 'Growth Point' with the potential to stimulate prosperity.
- 2.3** The current and future needs of our businesses are of key importance to our future prosperity. The Borough has a strong and diverse economy with a mixture of jobs in the service sector and in manufacturing which can be seen in the provision of employment land and premises across the Borough, particularly in Basingstoke. However, the diamond status of Basingstoke also reflects its potential for further sustainable economic growth which could be unlocked through targeted investment in infrastructure.
- 2.4** The diversity of the economy is also reflected in the relatively high level of 'self containment' of the Borough (i.e. the proportion of residents of the Borough who also work within the Borough area). The 2001 Census showed that 67% of the Borough's residents work within the Borough; making Basingstoke and Deane the most self contained of all districts in Hampshire. However, the Hampshire Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2) notes that this level of self-containment is beginning to decline, with more work journeys into and out of the Borough particularly across the Borough's boundaries with Reading and West Berkshire as well as Hart and Winchester.
- 2.5** Another of Basingstoke's strengths is the town's range of well located and sustainable employment sites. The older employment areas are generally close to the centre of Basingstoke town and these tend to provide a mix of industrial, warehousing and business premises; some of these areas are in need of regeneration and further investment. The newer employment areas can be found on the edge of Basingstoke and tend to provide a higher proportion of office and business park premises.

2.6 We need to ensure that we can continue to provide a range and type of locations and premises for our future economic prosperity in terms of enabling the start-up of new businesses, the growth of existing businesses within the Borough and accommodating inward investment. The draft South East Plan recommends that further employment land may be needed in Basingstoke and particularly to provide strategic employment sites. However the scale of employment land requirement has not yet been agreed, and will depend on the outcome of further work to forecast future economic growth in the Borough, taking into account factors such as the impact of 'smart growth' (i.e. growth that involves high productivity and high economic activity and encouraging the more efficient use of existing and proposed employment sites) and changing work practices such as flexible working patterns and working from home. The draft South East Plan places emphasis on making more efficient use of land already in employment use, primarily in established employment areas. Where new employment land is needed it should be provided in locations with high accessibility by sustainable transport modes avoiding land with key environmental or policy constraints.

2.7 As well as the forecasting work, we are also preparing studies on the available supply of employment floorspace (including its quality) and developing a profile of the Borough's economy, its future opportunities and how it fits in to the wider economy of the region and sub-region. In addition, we are collecting more up to date information on travel and commuting patterns to better understand how many of the Borough's residents work in the Borough, how many commute to jobs in London and elsewhere and how many workers commute in to the Borough.



How much employment land should be provided?

2.8 In deciding how much employment land should be provided in the future it will be necessary to take into account the growth forecasts for the Borough's economy and the studies into the employment land required to accommodate that growth, including the extent to which 'smart growth' approaches can influence the levels of space and physical activity needed for a given level of prosperity.

2.9 In considering the amount of employment land to be provided in the Borough we need to be aware of the relationship between the number of jobs in the Borough and the number of workers who live in the Borough (as reflected in the level of self-containment). The future number of resident workers in the Borough will be influenced by a number of factors, such as the proportion of the working age population that are economically active, but particularly the levels and locations of future housing development in the Borough. For example, additional housing concentrated in and around Basingstoke Town could lead to significant increases in commuter travel and congestion unless a high proportion of the occupants also have jobs in or close to the town. Conversely, housing development close to our borders with Reading or West Berkshire would be more likely to be occupied by residents with jobs outside the Borough but with relatively short journeys to work.

2.10 In this context, the possible **approaches** regarding the provision of employment land are:

Issue 1

- 1** Broadly maintain the current balance between the number of workers in the borough and the number of jobs – i.e. seek to match the growth in the number of workers in the Borough with the growth in the number of jobs. This would help to maintain existing levels of self-containment in the Borough
- 2** Provide for an increase in the number of jobs in the Borough that is higher than the growth in the number of resident workers. This could result in higher economic and employment growth than the option of maintaining the current balance of jobs and workers but would also be likely to increase the number of workers who commute into the Borough with implications for traffic generation and congestion depending on the location of the new jobs. It may also mean benefits for those workers living outside the Borough
- 3** Provide for an increase in the number of jobs in the Borough that is lower than the growth in the number of resident workers. This could result in a lower rate of economic and employment growth than the option of maintaining the current balance potentially limiting traffic and congestion in the area. However, it would also be likely to increase the number of residents who have to commute out of the Borough to work and/or higher unemployment.

The location of future employment development

- 2.11** As described above the Borough has a range of employment areas concentrated in Basingstoke Town. In the past the approach to the location of employment development has been one of balancing redevelopment of the older more centrally located employment sites with development on the newer employment areas further away from the centre.
- 2.12** We know that some of the town's employment areas are in need of further investment. It is estimated that 64% of recent office occupation in Basingstoke is in out-of-centre locations (i.e. business parks) compared to an average of 39% across other major office locations in the sub-region. The regeneration of certain parts of the town's employment portfolio such as Basing View could make sure that these areas remain suitable for and attractive to modern businesses to help reverse this trend and focus business activity in the most sustainable and accessible parts of the town. However, there is also evidence that some potential inward investors prefer out of centre campus style business park accommodation that is well provided with car parking and would chose such premises in other areas rather than a central location in Basingstoke. It is clear from initial engagement work that good transport links and access are important considerations of business.

- 2.13** A further issue with regard to the location of future employment development is its relationship to future housing development. Later in this chapter it is described how part of the Borough's housing requirement will have to be met by one or more greenfield urban extensions. One of the possible approaches to the planning of these urban extensions is to include employment land as well as land for housing so that they achieve a balance between jobs and workers and provide opportunities for the residents of the new houses to work close to home. In practice this approach would be likely to involve a larger extension to provide a sufficient scale of development to support employment development. We also need to bear in mind the increasing mobility of work and workers - it cannot be assumed that people will take up employment that happens to be close to their home rather than employment further away that is better suited to their talents, skills and experience or offers a better mix of rewards and job satisfaction.
- 2.14** The main possible **approaches** with regard to the location of future employment development are:

Issue 2

- 1** Maintain the current balance between employment locations at the centre and elsewhere including allowing additional development in locations on the periphery of Basingstoke in the form of extensions to existing business parks
- 2** Shift the balance of development towards the central employment areas and restrict further development in out of centre business parks
- 3** Shift the balance of development in favour of the more peripheral employment areas whilst seeking to ensure development is as sustainable as possible (in terms of links to public transport improvements and housing development) and releasing existing land at the centre for other uses such as housing.
- 4** Secure new employment land as a part of major development areas so that a broad balance is achieved between the increase in workers due to the additional housing and the increase in jobs due to the additional employment land.

Housing

Locating housing development in the most sustainable places

- 2.15** The Core Strategy will set out how the Council will deliver the housing targets that will ultimately be set in the South East Plan. The draft Plan recommends a level of 825 new homes per annum for the Borough, whilst the Panel Report recommends a higher level of 895 new homes per annum. However, the Borough Council made submissions on the basis that 740 homes a year would provide for our own local needs both in terms of our residents and our economy (this being the number agreed in Council and supported by further research). There are choices to be made about how much detail is included in the Core Strategy on individual sites and how we provide the flexibility to deal with changing circumstances.

What approach should we take to meeting our housing needs?

2.16 In terms of general location, the draft South East Plan states that development should be located within and around the main urban area of Basingstoke, to support its role as a regional hub and centre for investment and economic growth. It also supports the Government's aim of developing in sustainable locations which offer a range of community facilities and have good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure. Options that would clearly not comply with regional and national guidance (such as seeking to spread new development evenly across the Borough or developing a stand alone new settlement) are therefore not included in this document as their adoption would result in the Core Strategy being found unsound at the examination stage. It should be noted that in preparing the South East Plan, consideration has already been given to the potential for locating a new settlement in this area. However it was decided that, at a strategic level, this was not an appropriate approach.

2.17 The focus for housing provision in terms of the number of new homes lies within the Western Corridor / Blackwater Valley sub-regional area, as defined in the South East Plan. This sub-regional area includes the town of Basingstoke as well as Tadley,



Bramley, Kingsclere and Oakley. However, some more limited development will also need to take place in the parts of the Borough which fall outside the Western Corridor/ Blackwater sub-region in order to meet local housing need and maintain the vitality and viability of these areas.

Settlements which fall outside the sub-regional area include Overton and Whitchurch as well as a number of smaller parishes and hamlets. It should be noted that for the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the Borough's housing market position was assessed as part of a

'Central Hampshire and New Forest' area, though the assessment report recognises that this is not a single coherent housing market. More information on this is available in the 'Evidence Base Background Paper'.

2.18 As set out in the draft South East Plan, the starting point is to look to the built up area of Basingstoke but also the built up areas of other settlements to accommodate new homes. We have previously sought to maximise the use of previously developed or 'brownfield' land in existing urban areas and we are currently undertaking a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to assess the potential for future development within such areas as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy.

2.19 Whilst, in accordance with Government guidance, we must maximise suitable brownfield development, we know that there are concerns that this could lead to excessive infilling in established residential areas, harming the quality of life of existing residents. We are also looking at the potential for some housing to be provided through the redevelopment of land in other uses, such as employment. However there is also a need to ensure that sufficient land is available for employment to support the local economy, unless the strategy accepts the idea of increasing numbers of people travelling out of the Borough to work.

2.20 There may also be opportunities to provide housing on areas of open land within the urban area that could be better used to meet development needs.

- 2.21** However we know that there will still be a requirement for new greenfield sites so we also need to consider the next priority in the sequence of areas of search for new development. This means considering the development of greenfield land as urban extensions to Basingstoke. The draft South East Plan states that greenfield development is likely to consist of one or more urban extensions to Basingstoke.
- 2.22** We also need to think about how new homes will be delivered. The nature and scale of development will be an important consideration. For example, should we have 'all our eggs in one basket' and focus our greenfield development in one location, or should we have a number of sites. Focusing development in one location may help to secure new infrastructure with benefits for the wider community, whereas developing a larger number of sites may help with delivery issues, has the potential to make better use of existing facilities and would provide a wider choice for home buyers. Having a clear understanding of what infrastructure will be needed and the lengthy timescales that can be involved in infrastructure delivery will also be an issue we need to consider.
- 2.23** The following list sets out potential strategic approaches to future development in the Borough. These have been grouped under three different subject areas for convenience. It is likely that any optimal solution will be a combination of these approaches. These approaches are broken down into more detail in the following section.

Issue 3

Approaches to existing built up areas

- 1** Locate development within built up areas as far as reasonable, which may include reusing land currently in other uses, such as employment land and areas of open space
- 2** Take a more managed approach to development within built up areas, for example in order to reduce the impact on existing residents, recognising that this will increase the extent of greenfield development necessary

Issue 4

Location of greenfield development

- 1** Seek to locate all major greenfield development on the edge of Basingstoke
- 2** Alternatively, or in addition, seek to locate greenfield development at Basingstoke and also some other main settlements in the Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley sub-region, such as Bramley or Tadley
- 3** In addition, seek to locate some limited greenfield development around other settlements, including those outside the Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley sub-region, such as Overton or Whitchurch

Issue 5

Approach to greenfield development

- 1 Seek to locate all greenfield development in one major development area at Basingstoke
- 2 Seek to locate major greenfield development in more one development area
- 3 Seek to develop a larger number of smaller greenfield locations

Where should development be located?

2.24 We are not proposing to identify sites at this stage but we do need to think about greenfield development and understand what this would mean on a whole range of issues including waste water infrastructure, transport infrastructure, environmental impacts, access to services and so on. The general areas of search are shown on the map on page 25. This is not intended to identify specific sites but to show the full range of locations around Basingstoke that need to be explored.

2.25 In being able to demonstrate the soundness of our approach we will need to show that we have undertaken a comprehensive review of potential locations for development. The greenfield options that we have identified mainly comprise a number of possible directions for extension to the urban area of Basingstoke, including east and west of Basingstoke, both of which are referred to in the South East Plan Panel Report. We also need to take into consideration Basingstoke's role as a regional hub and the importance of being able to access the town centre and employment areas. This means looking at land around the whole of the town of Basingstoke's boundaries. We will also need to think about the scale and function of any extensions that may be proposed and how they would support and be supported by the core urban area of Basingstoke.

2.26 There are a number of issues that need to be considered when looking at areas of search for strategic housing locations. Which of the following factors do you think should be given most weight in making choices about the location of sites?

- The ability to take advantage of existing infrastructure capacity and facilities and either integrate with existing built up areas or build new communities in their own right
- Impacts on quality of life in existing residential areas and in new ones including the needs for usable open space
- The impacts on valued landscapes, the natural environment and wildlife habitats
- The impacts on conservation areas or heritage areas and retaining the separate identities of existing villages
- The potential to take account of and to mitigate the impacts of climate change

- Certainty that the required levels of housing will be delivered
- Opportunities for regeneration
- Encouraging people to walk, cycle and use public transport rather than the private car
- The need to support local prosperity in terms of the balance between appropriate employment land and providing attractive new residential areas
- Making efficient use of land, for example, through higher density development
- The relative costs and sustainability of providing the necessary physical and community infrastructure

2.27 Further detail on each of the strategic approaches outlined under issue 3 is provided under issues 4 and 5 below. These sections provide further information and alternative approaches which need to be considered if we pursue any of the approaches outlined under issue 3, e.g. if a major greenfield development is required on the edge of Basingstoke. It should be emphasised that our 'areas of search' need to be comprehensive and therefore inclusion in the list does not signify an intention to select, only the need to appraise all potential options. The optimal solution may well be a combination of some, or possibly all of these.

Future approaches to existing built-up areas

Issue 6

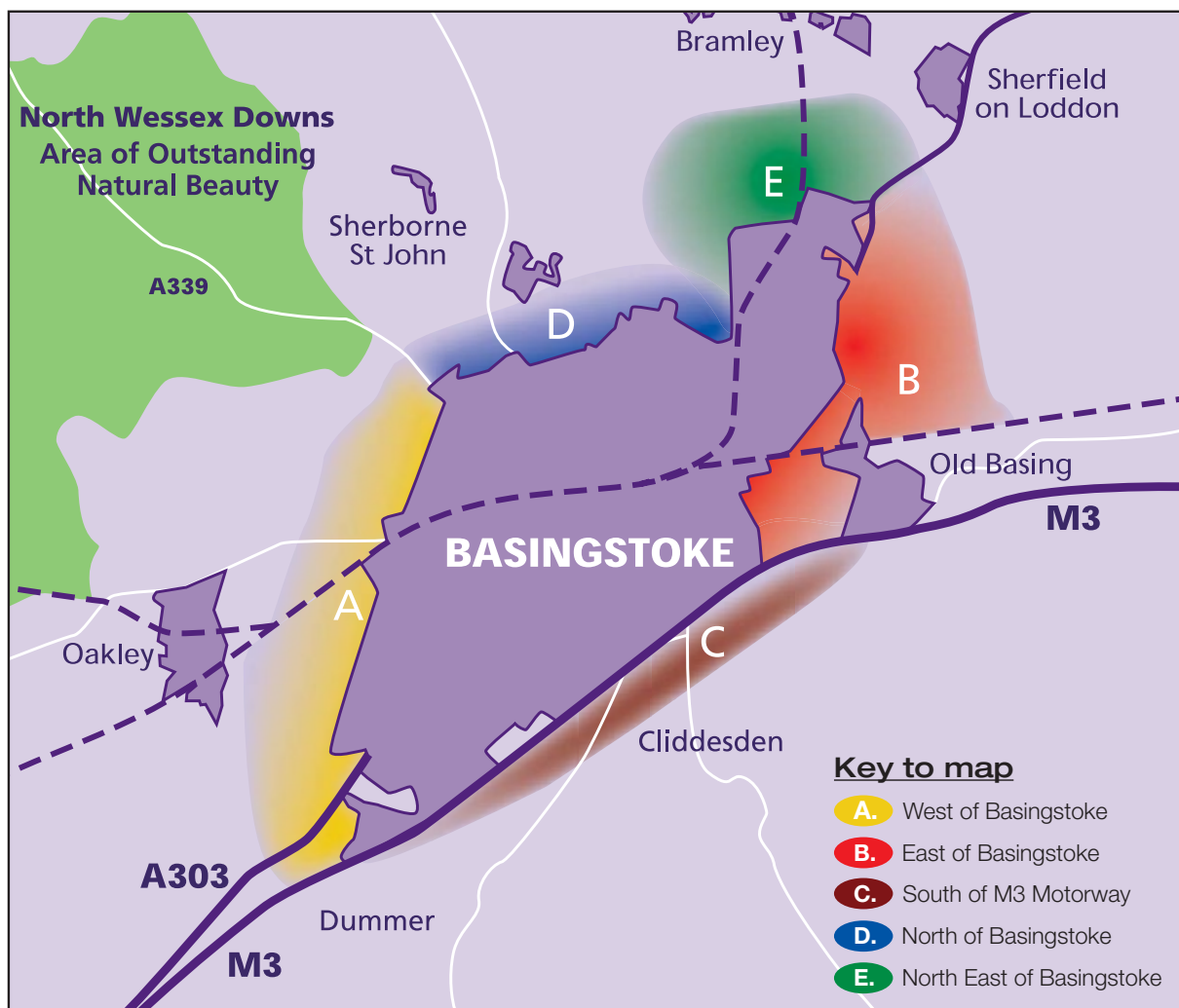
- 1** Maximise use of regeneration opportunities to provide new housing within existing built up area
- 2** Seek to intensify residential development along transport corridors
- 3** Redevelop underused areas of open space
- 4** Re-use vacant/under-used employment land for residential development
- 5** Seek to intensify development across all existing residential areas
- 6** Adopt a character-based area approach which could limit new development in certain built-up areas

Future approaches to greenfield development in the Borough

Issue 7

- 1 Develop south of the M3 motorway
- 2 Westward extension of Basingstoke
- 3 Eastward extension of Basingstoke
- 4 Northward extension of Basingstoke
- 5 North-east extension of Basingstoke
- 6 A range of smaller sites around Basingstoke
- 7 Further growth around other settlements within the Western Corridor and Blackwater valley sub-region such as Tadley and Bramley
- 8 Further growth around settlements outside the Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley sub-region such as Overton and Whitchurch

The map below shows the areas of search around Basingstoke Town



As part of this consultation we would like you to tell us if there are any areas of land that you are aware of that might be suitable for housing. If so, please provide us with details of the site by completing the form which can be found on our website at www.basingstoke.gov.uk/LDF.

What level of detail should be included in the Core Strategy on locations for housing?

2.28 A further issue is the level of detail that should be provided in the Core Strategy in relation to key development locations. What scale of development should be included and how specific should the strategy be about individual locations? Recent Government advice is that strategic allocations could be considered through Core Strategies. An alternative is that only broad locations and approaches to locating development are set out and specific sites are allocated separately.

2.29 Possible approaches that have been identified are:

Issue 8

- 1** Only identify broad development locations in the Borough
- 2** Identify specific strategic development sites

How do we build in Flexibility?

2.30 How can the strategy for new development include flexibility to cope with changing circumstances? At this stage there is uncertainty over the level of housing that the Borough will be expected to provide during the period of the Core Strategy. Even when the figure is known there will remain a need for a flexible approach that is able to accommodate changing circumstances. Issues include avoid blighting land by identifying more than is necessary and ensuring that there is a robust mechanism for delivering the land required to meet the Borough's housing target. Potential **approaches** include:

Issue 9

- 1** Only identify land required to meet the Borough's housing target
- 2** Identify reserve sites / locations to be brought forward if identified sources do not provide the required numbers
- 3** Establish a criteria based approach to the identification of additional development land over the regional requirement should the need arise during the period of the Core Strategy

What approaches to development are suitable for the rural parts of the Borough?

2.31 In addition to locations for strategic development, the Core Strategy should also give guidance on the development needs in other settlements outside Basingstoke. The Strategy will therefore need to establish what are the roles and needs of our other settlements.

2.32 This reflects government guidance that planning authorities should identify local service centres. It also recognises that there are housing needs in some smaller settlements that need to be provided for, to ensure their communities are vibrant and viable by providing opportunities for local residents to enter the housing market.

2.33 Planning for the future of our settlements raises a number of issues including:

- The need for a robust and consistent basis for taking decisions on individual planning applications
- The need to ensure that the approach is not over-prescriptive and can take account of the particular needs and aspirations of individual settlements including a recognition of the relationship of some of the settlements with areas outside of the Borough such as Andover, Winchester and Newbury.
- The need to ensure that the relative sustainability of developing in different locations, including their transport links and accessibility to services, is properly considered

2.34 The approaches identified so far are:

Issue 10

- 1 Group settlements by size and role and identify different policy approaches for each type of settlement, e.g. restricted development or development to meet identified local needs.
- 2 Identify all settlements where development would contribute to their sustainability (such as supporting local shops, schools and services) and establish criteria for the drawing of Settlement Policy Boundaries (SPBs)
- 3 Identify all settlements where development could contribute to their sustainability in terms of supporting local services and facilities and establish a criteria-based policy for development without defining rigid SPBs
- 4 have criteria-based policies covering all possible development locations in the Borough without identifying settlements or SPBs

Infrastructure Provision

2.35 In light of the projected economic and housing growth within the Borough, the provision and timing of associated infrastructure, such as public utilities, transport, health, education and community facilities is fundamental to creating sustainable communities and we know, through consultation feedback, that this is an issue that concerns everyone. We know that there are two critical strategic infrastructure issues relating to water quality and the strategic road network which will need to be addressed. In particular the Draft South East Plan report (August 2007) acknowledges that the precise extent to which water quality and ecology should be seen as a future barrier to development in Basingstoke is not known. Further work with partners including the Environment Agency and Natural England is being undertaken to examine this in more detail.

2.36 The Council will work in partnership to identify and secure delivery of physical and community infrastructure required to support the overall prosperity and sustainability goals, and to support and deliver new development. The Government is proposing that the use of a statutory planning charge ('tariff') will be introduced to increase investment in new infrastructure and housing, both at a strategic and local level. This will be in addition to Section 106 contributions, which is the current method of providing infrastructure to meet the immediate local needs of new developments.

2.38 The following list outlines the main physical and community infrastructure requirements both at the strategic and the local level that we have identified:

- Public utilities – including water and sewerage infrastructure, electricity and gas
- Transport Infrastructure – including public transport, improvements to the road network, and community transport and improved access to the countryside (rights of way, walking and cycling routes)
- Environmental protection and enhancement
- Waste management and recycling facilities
- Education and learning facilities – to improve existing or provide new accommodation, childcare provision
- ICT infrastructure – including wireless and high-speed broadband
- Community infrastructure – including village halls, community safety schemes and support for the voluntary sector
- Youth facilities
- Cultural and sporting facilities – including new facilities and art in the community
- Open space, leisure and recreation – funding could improve the quality of existing, or provide new facilities
- Health and social care facilities including emergency services
- Affordable housing – it is usually required that affordable housing is provided within the development site, but there may be occasions where it would be more appropriate to accept off-site contributions. It may also be appropriate for a contribution to be made to the provision of affordable housing for all new housing developments (regardless of size).

Although the infrastructure requirements will vary with each development, we would like to know which of these you think are the most important, and if there are any additional requirements that you think should be considered.

3. Community Strategy Themes

- 3.1** In this section we consider issues and options in the light of the Community Strategy and the vision it sets out for the Borough under a series of themes.

4 Theme 1: A Prosperous Borough

The Vision

- 4.1** In 2026 the Borough should be optimising its economic potential and be a prosperous place to live and work. The successful urban and rural economies and range of job opportunities for all of our residents should contribute to our positive internal and external image and help us to attract inward investment. Our residents should receive the right training opportunities to help us to meet the ongoing economic challenges of the future. Our towns and larger villages should have thriving retail centres and leisure and visitor facilities that cater for the needs of residents and also attract people into the Borough. We should be responding positively to issues such as congestion and infrastructure concerns to ensure that these do not have an adverse affect on our future prosperity.
- 4.2** This reflects the vision in the Community Strategy, which sets out 5 outcomes with regard to a prosperous borough that the Core Strategy will need to help deliver:

- P1** Individual and workforce skills are increased
- P2** Key workers are attracted to, and retained in, the area
- P3** The wider world has a positive image of Basingstoke
- P4** Barriers to employment and investment are reduced
- P5** The Borough has thriving town centres which contribute to a broad economic base

- 4.3** What we've learned so far – key issues to help us achieve a prosperous Borough

- infrastructure requirements
- housing should be flexible and affordable
- the need to ensure a viable rural economy
- improve the skills and aspirations of children and parents
- improve our image by promoting what we've got to attract investment

4.4 The prosperous borough theme covers the following areas:

- Accommodating Business
- Rural Economy
- Accessibility and Commuting
- Training and Education
- Image
- Maintaining Vitality and Viability

4.5 This section sets out the key issues for these areas and provides options on how we can address them.

Approach to existing employment areas

4.6 Our current approach to employment land in Basingstoke has been to allocate and protect particular areas for employment purposes, with some of these employment areas designated specifically for office uses. The aim of this has been to ensure that sufficient land is available to support the local economy for existing and new firms and to protect these areas from other competing uses, such as house-building.

4.7 The strategic approaches chapter deals with the issues and possible approaches to the broad balance and location of employment development across the Borough. The approach to the Borough's existing employment sites will be based on the conclusions of current studies examining their quality and potential future role and will be informed by regular monitoring of the state of our employment areas. Reflecting the principles of 'smart' growth, the Council will seek to apply design principles that ensure employment use buildings can be used more flexibly to take account of changing needs and opportunities.

4.8 Potential **approaches** to the Borough's existing employment areas include:

Issue 11

- 1 Identify those employment areas which are 'strategic' in terms of their accessibility and sustainability, for example Basing View. Focus on a programme of regeneration of these areas to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose' for the Borough's existing businesses and to attract new investors to the area.
- 2 Provide for a more flexible approach to the protection of parts of the Borough's stock of employment land, which would allow the identification of those existing employment sites which may have the potential to be developed for alternative uses if they are no longer needed solely for their original economic use.
- 3 Allocate existing sites either for specific uses e.g. office/industrial or for different types of premises e.g. start-up/move-on units or larger premises and seeking to develop other areas as 'local enterprise hubs' so as to provide a range of different types of locations for a wide range of economic activities.

Rural Economy

- 4.9 We have a significant number of rural businesses, which are important to the local economy and play a key role in creating local job opportunities and in reducing commuting distances. These range from farming to service based or creative industries in buildings that have been converted from their previous uses. Tourism also plays a role in the rural economy, with a number of tourism attractions around the Borough.
- 4.10 Job opportunities in rural areas have been in decline for a number of years and this can impact on the viability of local services and create greater isolation for those without access to a car. This issue is looked at in more detail under the 'Inclusive Borough' theme. However, in terms of the economy, it is important that our approach to encouraging jobs in rural areas is balanced with the possible impacts on the environment, particularly the potential of long-distance car commuting.
- 4.11 Our approach to the rural economy has been to retain employment opportunities and generally protect buildings used for employment purposes. There is also support for the re-use of buildings for employment purposes and for opportunities to help farmers diversify. This can help to protect attractive rural buildings and provide local jobs. Rural tourism, including accommodation, is supported through positive policies to enable this type of development.
- 4.12 In the future this approach could be continued or it could be enhanced by the identification of additional suitable sites for economic development within the rural area as well as taking advantage of opportunities for technology to support employment opportunities.

- 4.13** Possible approaches to facilitate a healthy and diverse economy in the Borough's rural areas are:

Issue 12

- 1** A continuation of the current approach including supporting farm diversification, the re-use of suitable rural buildings for employment and retaining all existing employment sites in rural areas
- 2** Extend the current approach by identifying additional employment sites within the rural area to be a focus for future economic activity and developing a digital approach in terms of wireless and broadband, including emerging technologies, to support more flexible working and allowing for greater provision of employment opportunities in rural areas

Accessibility and Commuting

- 4.14** The Borough benefits from excellent accessibility in the form of good strategic road and rail links and the town is designated as a Regional Transport Hub in the Regional Transport Strategy.

- 4.15** The way in which Basingstoke town was developed, with generous provision of public car parks and a good road network means it has suffered relatively little congestion compared to nearby centres, such as Reading and Winchester. A number of companies have chosen to locate here due to the good accessibility.

- 4.16** There are emerging concerns that rising traffic levels are impacting on the capacity of some key parts of the network, leading to congestion hotspots as well as noise and air pollution. There are frequent problems at certain points, such as on the M3 at Junction



6 as traffic exits the motorway for Basingstoke, particularly during the morning peak period, and on the approaches to junction 6 at the evening peak. This raises safety issues and is a problem identified by the Highways Agency which could be a barrier to securing the prosperity of the Borough if not addressed. There are also several locations on the Ring Road and in the centre of the Town where congestion and accessibility may affect longer term prosperity and this will be a key consideration in securing new development and regeneration.

- 4.17** As discussed in the strategy section, the extent to which 'self-containment' (the proportion of people who both live and work within the Borough) can be maintained is another factor affecting our transport infrastructure needs.
- 4.18** Although the road infrastructure and availability of either free or relatively low cost car parking has helped to support economic growth in the past, it can also encourage car use as compared with non-car modes of travel. This means that there are high levels of car use for short trips (less than 2km and 2km to 5km), especially for cross-town movements. However, people will only reduce their use of cars where there are public transport facilities that are attractive, cost-competitive and provide a realistic alternative.

- 4.19** To support the economy, issues of congestion and accessibility need to be overcome alongside the maintenance and improvement of levels of self-containment. We are working with the Highways Agency and Hampshire County Council to resolve the issue of infrastructure capacity and will be looking to secure investment in increased junction capacity in order to reduce congestion on the strategic and local road network and manage the network efficiently. The issue of self containment, the implications for the location and type of new housing that is built to minimise the need to commute long distances and that local facilities are available to create sustainable communities are covered in the strategic approaches chapter.
- 4.20** With our partners we are undertaking the detailed work to understand and improve the local transport network. This includes the development of a transport model which allows modelling of various housing and employment land options to enable a strategic framework for transport in the Borough to be assessed. It also includes the preparation of a comprehensive transport assessment and updated transport strategy, to examine the impacts of new development in different locations in the Borough and prepare a complementary transport strategy.
- 4.21** **Approaches** to matching transport infrastructure and provision with the long-term prosperity of the Borough's economy could include:

Issue 13

- 1** Continuation of the current approach of seeking to manage congestion, together with minor junction improvements to address safety and capacity, and minor improvements to assist public transport, cycling and walking.
- 2** Significant infrastructure provisions (new roads, major junction improvements, park and ride) to address existing problems and accommodate anticipated growth)
- 3** Actively seek to reduce congestion through demand management measures such as revised parking standards, increased parking charges, and improvements to encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling
- 4** The use of 'soft' measures such as travel planning, promotion of alternative travel through personalised travel planning, wider availability of travel information in paper and electronic formats.
- 5** Actions and policies to accelerate take-up and use of 'alternatives to travel', such as flexible working, teleconferencing etc
- 6** A proactive approach to 'smart growth', seeking to optimise the development of types of employment that generate high added value and lower levels of commuting and business travel

Training and Education

- 4.22** To support the long term prosperity of the Borough, while reducing the need for employers to recruit staff from outside the Borough, and raise the income levels of local residents, requires a workforce suitably trained and educated to meet the future needs of local businesses and potential investors in the area. A particular issue identified by SEEDA is the absence of a large base of new graduates and other highly skilled workers in the Borough. Alongside this are relatively low levels of business investment and innovation.
- 4.23** To help overcome this, we are working closely with SEEDA and other partners on the provision of a 'learning campus'. This and other educational aspects of the support that will underpin economic prosperity, is considered in more detail in the theme 'A Learning and Creative Borough' theme.



Image

- 4.24** Closely linked to the objective of maintaining a prosperous economy are the image and the promotion of the borough, to increase awareness of what the Borough has to offer and to attract inward investment. A series of actions is being developed through a steering group of key local organisations and some of these actions may need to be delivered through the Core Strategy.

Maintaining Vitality and Viability

- 4.25** Town centres play a key role in maintaining and enhancing our prosperity, particularly retail and leisure activities. The emphasis in this section on prosperity is on the main centres of Basingstoke, Whitchurch and Tadley for retail and leisure, while other, more localised shopping opportunities are considered under the theme of 'An Inclusive Borough' and other leisure / cultural facilities under the themes of 'A Healthy Borough' and 'A Learning and Creative Borough'.
- 4.26** Basingstoke itself is recognised as a primary retail centre in the draft South East Plan and is the main shopping destination in the Borough. We are in the process of undertaking further work to better understand the retail role of Basingstoke Town and its future opportunities.
- 4.27** Government guidance tells us that town centres should be the key areas to locate retail and major leisure, entertainment and arts and cultural facilities. This is intended to provide a mix of uses and to locate facilities where they are most accessible. In line with this guidance the overall approach to the Borough's main centres will be one of continuing to retain their viability and vitality by encouraging new retail, leisure and visitor attractions to locate there.
- 4.28** In Basingstoke, the town centre consists of several areas which include Festival Place; the older Malls; and the historic Top of Town Area, which includes the twice weekly market. The main town centre activity is retail, but this is supplemented by bars and restaurants, together with the cinema as a part of Festival Place, the Anvil the Haymarket Theatre, the library and office uses.

- 4.29** There are certain obvious issues that the Core Strategy needs to address. In comparison with Festival Place, The Malls has become a dated shopping centre, and does not make an attractive and welcoming environment for visitors arriving at the town from the railway station. The area needs investment to create a more welcoming feel and to overcome the problem of rising shop vacancy levels, and we are working with the landowners to address these problems.
- 4.30** The Top of Town area also includes some vacant shop units and contains a number of bars that can create anti-social behaviour problems during the evenings. We are addressing this through the Night Time Economy strategy, which is looked at in more detail in the theme on 'A Safe and Healthy Borough'. We are also preparing a 'Central Area Vision' which sets out a clear Masterplan of how the different areas within the central area should link and fit together in the future, and how it can support the wider area, including Basing View.
- 4.31** Another issue is the threat to the retail centres by competition from out-of-centre locations, such as the large retail parks further away from the centre of town as well as from alternative centres such as Reading, Southampton, Winchester and Guildford.
- 4.32** The centres of Whitchurch and Tadley perform a more local function, and work has been undertaken to understand and to assist the local economies of these two settlements through the Whitchurch Health Check and Town Action Plan and, in Tadley, the preparation of a development brief to create a more vibrant district centre. The local parades throughout the Borough perform an important community retail function, complimenting facilities within the defined retail areas.
- 4.33** Services which support businesses and tourism, such as hotels are important to sustaining and enhancing prosperity. The need for additional overnight accommodation in the Borough has been recognised in a study undertaken on behalf of the Borough Council, and Tourism South East, which we are now updating. Government guidance advises that major new hotels should generally be located in town centres, but we currently are experiencing pressure for new hotels outside of the town centre.
- 4.34** Some possible approaches to support retail centres include:

Issue 14

- 1** Continue with the current boundary of Basingstoke Town to concentrate new development and investment on those areas in need of regeneration
- 2** Expand the boundary of Basingstoke Town Centre (in a way that is consistent with the Central Area Masterplan) to incorporate land and uses that can support and link to Basing View
- 3** Define those parts of the town centre which would be suitable for specific uses, e.g. retail, restaurants, cafes
- 4** Permit new hotels in peripheral areas where they serve a particular local tourism and business travel markets

5 Theme 2: An Environment that's good to live in

The Vision

5.1 In 2026 the Borough should be a place that provides a good quality of life and community well being and where the Borough's high quality rural and urban environment continues to be an essential ingredient in supporting quality of life and attracting investment. This will involve balancing our changing community's needs in terms of housing, employment and other infrastructure with the protection and enhancement of the Borough's special character, its rich heritage and biodiversity. In addition, we will need to respond effectively to climate change issues, reducing our carbon footprint and managing the Borough's scarce resources.

5.2 This reflects the vision in the Community Strategy which sets out 6 outcomes with regard to the environment, which the Core Strategy will need to help deliver:

- E1** The variety and quality of the built environment is protected, enhanced and well designed.
- E2** The diversity and quality of the natural environment is protected and enhanced
- E3** Access to affordable and appropriate housing is improved
- E4** Residents can access the services they need without the use of a car
- E5** We are effectively using our natural resources and minimising waste and pollution
- E6** Access to the countryside and public open spaces is improved

5.3 What we've learned so far – key issues to consider in helping us achieve an environment that's good to live in.

- Concerns over planning to address climate change
- Household waste production and recycling
- Implications of being a growth area
- Concerns over high density development

5.4 Environmental considerations generally overlap with many other topics, but have been divided here for convenience only. This theme covers the following areas:

- Climate change
- Protecting our environment
- Locating growth in the most sustainable places
- Protecting and enhancing our natural environment
- Maintaining and enhancing our built environment

Protecting our environment

5.5 Environmental protection is largely concerned with limiting threats to the global environment, protecting human health and safety and protecting environmental assets. It includes such issues as managing the impacts of climate change and reducing waste and pollution.

What measures should be taken to reduce our carbon footprint and adapt to climate change?

5.6 Managing the impacts of climate change and reducing our greenhouse emissions are among the key issues facing our Borough and one which affects all aspects of the Core Strategy. The climate is already changing and will continue to change. It is predicted that summers generally will be warmer and drier and winters will be milder and wetter. Climate change is also likely to bring more extreme weather events like high winds, heavy rainstorms and associated flooding. These changes may have major implications for the way people live and the local economy.

5.7 We have signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change. This includes committing the Council to contribute at a local level to national programmes and targets and working with partners to address the causes and impacts of climate change. A Climate Change Strategy is being produced to coordinate our actions.

5.8 Buildings and new development have an important role in helping to address some of the causes of climate change. Recent Government guidance establishes key targets for the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions in the UK and includes a proposal that all new homes should be zero carbon by 2016. The Code for Sustainable Homes establishes a national standard for the sustainable construction of homes. The UK also has a binding target to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases.

- 5.9** The Core Strategy will have a role in helping to meet these targets but should we be trying to exceed them? Potential policy approaches are outlined below but please note that other issues relating to climate change, such as flooding, are addressed in other sections of this document:

Issue 15

- 1** Continue our current approach which focuses upon improving the environmental performance of new development, for example by requiring a 'Construction Statement' from developers. Other mechanisms such as Building Regulations will be used to achieve energy and resource efficiency.
- 2** Introduce a higher local target than that set by Government to increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources in the Borough. This will include building in mechanisms to encourage and motivate state of the art building, methods and environmental outcomes. For example, we could require a viability assessment of Combined Heat and Power installations for developments greater than a given number of dwellings or level of employment.

How can we reduce waste and pollution?

- 5.10** Construction, demolition and excavation produces large amounts of waste and the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework sets out policies and design principles which aim to minimise the use of new materials and maximise the re-use and recycling of existing materials. The Core Strategy needs to support these aims.
- 5.11** Household waste also creates significant environmental impacts, both nationally and locally. Effective recycling can significantly reduce the amount that goes for landfill and incineration and enables waste to be productively re-used. All local authorities within Hampshire work together in a partnership to increase the amount of waste that is recycled and a target has been set to increase Hampshire's recycling and composting rate from 32% to 60% by 2020. We currently perform relatively poorly compared to Hampshire as a whole although measures already in place have started to improve our performance. This includes the production of guidance on designing new developments to enable the effective collection of waste and recyclable materials and greater education and awareness raising around recycling.
- 5.12** The control and minimisation of pollution is a key element of sustainable development. Any consideration of the quality of land, air or water and potential impacts arising from development, possibly leading to an impact on health is capable of being a material planning consideration. The location of development and the resulting traffic generation has implications for pollution.



- 5.13** Possible policy **approaches** relating to addressing the issues concerned with waste and pollution include the following:

Issue 16

- 1** Continue to work closely with our partners to facilitate and encourage the minimisation of waste and reduce the levels of pollution associated with new development.
- 2** Encourage increased levels of recycling through close-working with the waste planning authorities to bring forward additional recycling centres and seek improved standards for household waste recycling and resource use through the higher levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Protecting and Enhancing Our Natural Environment

- 5.14** How can we ensure that the high quality natural and built environment of the Borough and its biodiversity is effectively protected and enhanced? The quality of the Borough's natural environment and its rich diversity of habitats and wildlife are among our key assets, contributing towards quality of life and social, economic and environmental well-being. Over 90% of the Borough is countryside, and it is home to approximately 40% of our residents,
- 5.15** About one third of the Borough lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, an area of landscape of national importance. Other important areas include the valley of the River Test and the valleys of the Loddon and Lyde Rivers. There are also a number of sites of archaeological interest, as well as semi-natural historic features and designed landscapes. In addition to an attractive landscape, we also have important wildlife, ecological and nature conservation sites, many of which are subject to national and local designations.
- 5.16** There are a number of key issues which are likely to affect our landscape and biodiversity over the next 20 years. These include a continuing loss of habitats as a result of development pressures, disturbance from some farming practices, increasing recreational pressures, and increased habitat fragmentation and isolation. The land around our built up areas is particularly under pressure from increased recreational use but also misuse including fly-tipping, littering and vandalism. On a larger scale, climate change is likely to have a major impact on our rural areas, resulting in decreases in suitable conditions for some species and increases in suitable conditions for others.
- 5.17** Building on work undertaken on landscape character assessments, we are currently completing a Landscape Capacity Study which will look at the potential capacity of different landscape character areas to accommodate different types of potential development and enable the formation of more area-specific landscape protection and mitigation policies.

- 5.18** Possible approaches for protecting and enhancing our natural environment are outlined below. This will be in addition to the work that we will continue to undertake with partners to protect and enhance our landscape and biodiversity. This includes carrying out mapping and research into habitats and species for use in land use planning and developing biodiversity indicators to measure change.

Issue 17

- 1** Continue our current approach to protecting and enhancing our landscape and biodiversity, including using planning conditions and obligations when granting planning permission and ensuring that such considerations are fully considered in planning briefs and other initiatives and projects
- 2** Take a more stringent approach to the protection of landscape and biodiversity. This could include the introduction of local gaps between settlements and greater policy protection for locally designated areas such as Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINCs)

The Water environment

- 5.19** The Borough lies on the watershed between the River Test and River Loddon catchments. The River Loddon is a high quality watercourse and is subject to a range of environmental objectives, including the EU Freshwater Fish Directive, and is an EU designated Salmonid River. Increased water abstraction for a growing population has to be balanced with environmental considerations. Demand management measures and water supply infrastructure must be properly planned to ensure adequate provision is maintained.
- 5.20** Wastewater from Basingstoke is presently treated at the sewage treatment works at Chineham before discharge to the River Loddon. There are serious concerns about the future impact of increased discharges on the water quality and ecology of the river which need to be taken into account when assessing locations for future growth.
- 5.21** To inform the Core Strategy, a water cycle study is being carried out. Phase 1 of the study assessed the capacity of Basingstoke to accommodate further development. Whilst it concluded that strategic development at Basingstoke is not constrained by either flood risk or water resource issues over the period of the Core Strategy, a number of uncertainties remain. These uncertainties particularly relate to water quality and will be the focus for Phase 2 of the study, which is due to be completed in December 2008. The importance of this local issue was recognised in the draft South East Plan panel report which acknowledged the uncertainty about waste water treatment at Basingstoke and recommended a footnote to the housing figures making them subject to the findings from phase 2 of the Water Cycle Study.
- 5.22** Potential future policy approaches to water supply and demand issues are outlined below. In addition, we will continue to work with the water authorities to find a long term technological solution to water issues in the Borough.

Issue 18

- 1 Ensure improved water efficiency and demand management measures such as rainwater harvesting or grey water recycling are used in new developments. This would need to be supported with enabling mechanisms and incentives, potentially supported by changes in legislation
- 2 Identify and implement solutions to issues such as large scale sustainable urban drainage systems and attenuation ponds within developments

Flooding

- 5.23** Whilst parts of the Borough are at risk of flooding from rivers, groundwater; surface water/overland flows and sewers, phase 1 of the Basingstoke and Deane Water Cycle Study did not highlight flooding as being a significant issue. However we need to recognise area specific issues, for example, much of the Borough to the south is underlain by a major chalk aquifer. This type of aquifer accounts for the majority of flooding events since chalk is able to soak up and hold water until saturation is reached. New development can also lead to increased flooding as unless specific measures are taken, the volume of water that runs off a site and the peak run-off rate will increase. Any future development must identify both structural and non-structural options that reduce flood risk e.g. sustainable urban drainage systems
- 5.24** In line with national guidance we will generally apply a sequential approach to site development, matching land uses with the level of flood risk. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is currently being undertaken to give us robust information on the areas that may flood, taking into account the potential impacts of climate change. This includes assessing the current sewage network within the borough.

Maintaining and Enhancing Our Built Environment

- 5.25** Protecting and enhancing the quality of our built environment is as important as it is for the natural environment, being home to the majority of the Borough's residents and also the place where they work and shop. The quality of the buildings and spaces in which we live play a major part in our quality of life.
- 5.26** Many of the older settlements in the Borough are identified as conservation areas, recognising their architectural and historic character. Each of these areas has a Conservation Area Appraisal which is used to ensure appropriate development. The Borough also has 1800 listed buildings, 69 scheduled ancient monuments and 10 historic parks. These have statutory protection and it is important that their quality and setting is enhanced.

- 5.27** Good design is integral to delivering safe, inclusive and successful communities and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Each of the Borough's communities has its own character and identity and we want to ensure that these are respected. When considering new development this includes not only taking account of local buildings themselves but also how they relate to one another, the spaces between them and local ecology. In order to deliver high quality design we have already developed best practise guidance and undertaken studies of local character. Locally developed guidelines, such as those within Village Design Statements are also used to guide the design of development. Nationally, new tools, such as design codes for large developments are also being developed. The Core Strategy should also encourage diversity in the built environment, where suitable, rather than restrict it.
- 5.28** Using urban land efficiently is a key objective of national planning policy. Whilst it is appropriate to build at higher densities in some locations where there are high levels of accessibility and good proximity to infrastructure and facilities, there may be parts of the Borough where lower density of development may be appropriate. The Core Strategy will also need to explore the future role of high rise development in the Borough.
- 5.29** Provision and protection of appropriate levels and characteristics of open space within the urban context are also important aspects of the built environment. Pressure to intensify development in and around urban areas must be balanced against the need for ready access to open space by residents of all ages for informal as well as organised leisure pursuits and activities.
- 5.30** Possible ways to address the issues facing the built environment are outlined below.

Issue 19

- 1** Continue to use local design policies and guidance to influence design
- 2** Set a stricter framework to guide design. This could include the use of the design coding approach for development on larger sites and using planning conditions and obligations to implement this
- 3** Develop specific design policies for particular parts of the Borough and its settlements
- 4** Set an average density standard for the Borough based on national and regional advice
- 5** Develop a set of density standards which will vary between and within settlements, based on such issues as local character.

6 Theme 3: An Inclusive Borough with Strong Communities

The Vision

- 6.1** In 2026, the Borough should be a diverse and inclusive place to live, work and visit, where people are able to live in decent homes that meet their particular needs. Access to shops, services and employment should be maximised through the provision of high quality alternatives to the private car and through access to localised services.
- 6.2** Whilst good design of the built environment and well-planned and designed provision of leisure facilities provide the essential foundation for sustainable communities, achievement of this objective can only be realised if we understand and respond to the dynamics that produce strong communities. This is an area which has not hitherto been explored in any great detail in spatial planning terms.
- 6.3** Strong communities also depend on ‘neighbourliness’ and the extent to which people meet on an ‘incidental’ basis, for example at a neighbourhood shop or school. The nature of the local built environment can act as a facilitator or an inhibitor to positive informal engagement between neighbours and amongst communities. This becomes even more important when considering the greater mobility of the population, which often brings regular change in local communities as residents move in and out.
- 6.4** This vision reflects the Borough’s Community Strategy, which sets out 6 outcomes with regard to inclusivity which the Core Strategy should help to deliver:

- C1** Levels of deprivation and poor housing at a neighbourhood level are reduced
- C2** Communities and individuals are routinely involved in the planning of both the physical environment and services that affect their lives
- C3** Signposting and access to support agencies is improved
- C4** Neighbourhoods have strong networks which are accessible to all residents and help them take responsibility for their communities
- C5** There is a thriving voluntary and community sector that benefits the community
- C6** Diversity is celebrated and discrimination is eliminated

- 6.5** This theme includes the issues of housing and accessibility to services, which are recognised under the Community Strategy theme ‘An Environment that’s good to live in’, and in particular, (3) ‘access to affordable and appropriate housing is improved’ and (4) ‘residents can access the services they need without the use of a car.’

6.6 What we've learned so far – key messages to consider in helping us achieve an inclusive Borough with strong communities

- Public transport provision
- House prices
- Type of housing
- Provision of community facilities
- Social exclusion and deprivation

6.7 There are a number of different considerations relating to inclusive and strong communities which overlap to some extent and have therefore been divided here for convenience only:

- Housing growth (affordable housing, housing mix, specific housing needs)
- Deprivation, social inclusion, regeneration and renewal
- Diversity
- Community Engagement
- Accessibility - access to services/community infrastructure - access to public transport

Housing development – housing mix affordable housing and specific housing needs

6.8 The Core Strategy must ensure that the right amount of housing is provided in the right location (which is considered under the 'Environment' theme). We also need to ensure that the housing being provided meets the needs of the Borough in terms of its type, size, and tenure.

6.9 Although a considerable number of affordable homes have been provided within the Borough over the last few years, the number of people on the Housing Register is significant, and has been rising in recent years. House price increases have resulted in difficulties for new households trying to access market housing across the Borough and we must continue to maximise the provision of affordable housing

6.10 It is important that developments comprise a balanced mix of dwelling types and sizes to provide opportunities to rent or buy and to help create balanced and sustainable mixed communities. There is a continued demand in the Borough for cheaper homes for those trying to access the housing market. Social changes and financial pressures could result in the need for houses with annexes to provide for children or elderly relatives. An increasing amount of 'home-working' could increase demand for live/work units or houses with a spare room, likewise increasing numbers of fragmented



families require dwellings which can accommodate children to allow for dual parental care. The Housing Market Assessment will inform policies on the present and future housing requirements in terms of house size, type and tenure.

6.11 There may also be specific housing needs that should be addressed in the Core Strategy such as:

- The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment has identified a need for permanent and transit accommodation within north Hampshire.
- The provision of rural affordable housing to provide for local needs.
- An increasing proportion of the population will become elderly over the next 20 years, and there may be specific implications for housing provision as a result of, for example, downsizing, or an increased need for social or medical support.
- 15% of the population have mobility difficulties, and with an ageing population this is likely to increase. We must therefore consider the accessibility and adaptability of new housing.
- Emerging types of housing that provide independent living for mature and elderly people.

6.12 Potential **alternatives** for the provision of a range of house sizes and tenures to meet specific needs are outlined below:

Issue 20

Affordable Housing

- 1** Establish a Borough-wide target for the proportion of affordable housing to be provided on new sites, taking into account national guidance, and including thresholds for implementation to meet needs.
- 2** Develop a flexible framework for the provision of affordable housing to be provided, based on site characteristics and location, including thresholds for implementation.

Issue 21

Rural exceptions

- 1** Enable the provision of 'rural exception' sites to provide new housing in rural settlements, where a need has been recognised.
- 2** Provide a framework for the allocation of a rural exceptions site to meet an identified need in a particular area and enable the provision of 'rural exception' sites where need is recognised.

Issue 22

Housing Mix

- 1** Specify a Borough-wide housing mix with thresholds for implementation in order to establish a mix of dwelling types and sizes.
- 2** Establish the overall house size target for the Borough, based on different types of households likely to require housing, and specify the mix of dwelling types and sizes that should be provided. This could include targets for specific parts of the Borough or individual sites and responding to specific needs of the community, such as the elderly or single people and taking into the Government requirements in respect of sites for gypsies and travellers.
- 3** Do not have a policy on housing mix and leave this to be determined by the free market, in response to demand and supply.

Deprivation, social inclusion, regeneration and renewal

- 6.13** Deprivation can seriously affect quality of life and contribute to social exclusion. The indicators used in the Indices of Deprivation cover factors such as income, employment, health, education, and barriers to housing services, crime, and the living environment. Although the Borough experiences relatively little deprivation in the national context (12 areas fall within the top 1% least deprived areas in England), the overall figures mask pockets of deprivation that should be addressed. Six areas of the Borough (within the Basingstoke Wards of Buckskin, Norden, Popley East and South Ham) fall within the 40% most deprived in England.
- 6.14** The Council Plan has a priority to enhance local community well-being and create an inclusive Borough. The Council's Housing Strategy also has a priority to improve quality of life in the Borough, particularly within the most deprived areas and contains a number of actions aimed at regenerating areas of deprivation. The LSP has developed a Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, which identifies the priority communities of the Popley Wards, Norden, South Ham, and Buckskin. It also identifies two main issues to be addressed: ensuring learning opportunities and attainment for all; and ensuring access to affordable housing and key services. The Core Strategy can influence both of these issues, as well as the wider economic, environmental and social influences on deprivation.

- 6.15** Potential alternative means of addressing deprivation, social inclusion, regeneration and renewal issues include:

Issue 23

- 1** Identify and targeting specific spatial areas or groups who are suffering deprivation
- 2** Commit to preparing further LDF documents to address the requirements for any regeneration and renewal projects, where a need is identified, to address issues of deprivation

Diversity

- 6.16** The population of the Borough is becoming increasingly diverse, particularly in terms of minority groups, but also in terms of the variety of faiths and cultures. Largely as a result of the expansion of the EU in 2004, there has been a significant increase in in-migration into the UK. Whilst both nationally and locally the difficulty of accurately quantifying in-migration is well recognised, the data available does show a marked increase in non-British EU citizens since 2005, particularly from Poland and the Slovak Republic. There is also considerable difficulty in establishing the extent to which the current patterns of in-migration include people who intend to stay in the UK as opposed to those who have come here with shorter term employment in mind. If the recent trend were to continue there may be issues to be addressed such as housing and education/skills needs, access to medical and other community facilities, and social cohesion. Those who have arrived recently may have different needs to those who have lived in the Borough for some time. We must recognise and address the needs of different individuals and communities whilst supporting integration, social inclusion and cohesion. These issues are expanded in the Council's equality statements and are also developed earlier within this section on access to housing and services. It appears unlikely that sufficiently robust evidence of current and recent trends, together with robust forecasts over the longer term planning horizon will be available in time to allow specific spatial implications of in-migration to significantly influence the Core Strategy.
- 6.17** The need to consider all parts of the community in making decisions is recognised in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which was adopted in June 2006. This sets out how we will consult and engage on all planning decisions, including local communities who may not normally become involved in planning matters.

Accessibility

- 6.18** As set out in the section on 'A Prosperous Borough' the Borough generally has good transport links, but there are issues of severance for pedestrians and cyclists. Issues of severance and community safety are also considered under the theme 'A Safe Borough'. One of the objectives of the Hampshire Local Transport Plan for North Hampshire is to improve local accessibility and self-containment within urban areas. Car ownership and usage levels are high within the Borough and, with future population growth, there is the potential for congestion, and consequently air pollution, to worsen. These issues are discussed in more detail within the theme of 'A Prosperous Borough'.

Access to services/community infrastructure

- 6.19** Access to services and facilities can be a particular issue for rural communities as a result of limited public transport and the availability of fewer services. Increased emphasis on sustainable development and the provision of new services and housing in accessible locations means there is a challenge in retaining existing rural services and maintaining the vitality and viability of rural communities. The role of the settlements within the Borough is considered under the environment theme, and this will be important in the context of maintaining the sustainability of settlements and the accessibility of facilities to the wider population. It is also referred to under a 'Healthy' theme, where consideration is given to community based primary care multi-centres. The Core Strategy has an important role in ensuring that settlements remain functional with necessary health, education and community facilities and access to local housing, employment and leisure opportunities.

- 6.20** Potential **alternatives** for improving access to services include:

Issue 24

- 1** Continue to resist the loss of facilities and support the provision of 'exception sites' in response to an identified need
- 2** Encourage the provision of additional services and facilities in key settlements (service centres) once identified, through a pro-active approach involving service providers and stakeholders
- 3** Do not intervene to protect services but let market and other forces dictate the level of service

Access to public and community transport

- 6.21** Enhanced public transport provision can reduce isolation and social exclusion for deprived sectors of the community, the elderly, and youths who may not have access to private transport, as well as for rural residents who do not have and cannot afford private cars. However, for some time there has been a decline in public transport provision (and falling patronage in rural areas), meaning that alternatives to the car are not always available. Therefore, providing affordable public transport that meets the need of these communities can be a challenge. In rural areas it is less easy to make walking and cycling a feasible (or safe) option, as there are fewer footpaths and cycle routes.
- 6.22** Within both the town and rural areas, community transport addresses parts of the gap left by inadequacies in the public transport network. For example, voluntary neighbourhood networks are active across most parts of the Borough, while Basingstoke town and some neighbouring areas are served by other forms of community transport.
- 6.23** Although the LDF can consider enhanced public transport services in principle, the Borough Council is not the Local Transport Planning Authority, and a Local Transport Plan (LTP) has already been produced by Hampshire County Council. Although the consultation does provide a opportunity to sense check the assumption underlying the LTP the baseline assumption for the Core Strategy must be to align with the LTP. A separate piece of work is examining the Borough Council's strategic role with respect to public and community transport.
- 6.24** Recent development in the cost of fossil fuels and energy generally, together with emerging automotive technologies and performance improvements may change the relationship between the car and other forms of transport during the LDF timeframe, but robust evidence supporting reliable forecasts is unlikely to be available in time to influence the Core Strategy. This is an example of where the Core Strategy needs to have flexibility to respond to change.
- 6.25** Potential alternative means of improving access by public transport and other non-car modes of transport include:

Issue 25

- 1** Continue to support the provision of community and public transport, alongside demand management to discourage car use.
- 2** Pro-actively work with operators, the community and the passenger transport options and to encourage new and innovative transport solutions

7. Theme 4: A Learning and Creative Borough

The Vision

7.1 In 2026, the Borough should be a place where educational attainment is high and lifelong learning opportunities are available to all, to encourage and inspire innovation and creativity. This will be based on meeting the needs of our community and its changing demands and characteristics through a range of cultural and educational facilities at both a local and borough-wide level. It will also respond to any skills shortages identified by local businesses to ensure that the local economy is able to prosper.

7.2 This vision reflects the Community Strategy which sets out 5 outcomes with regard to a learning and creative borough, which the Core Strategy must help to deliver:

- L1** Provision for quality early years activities and childcare is increased
- L2** Access to a wider range of opportunities for learning and creativity is increased through improved information, reduced costs and access via a wide range of locations
- L3** Support for adults to improve basic skills is increased
- L4** Support for young people is increased through good schools and colleges and other appropriate learning opportunities
- L5** There is an integrated approach to community learning in partnership with providers and the business community

7.3 What we've learned so far – key issues to address to help us achieve a Learning and Creative Borough

- Widening learning opportunities for all ages
- Lifelong learning
- Improve access to basic skills and vocational training
- Work in partnership with businesses and colleges
- Working with parents and communities to ensure a high level of learning motivation.

General Education Issues

- 7.4** Pupils within the Borough's schools are performing well at education key stages 1 and 2. However, at key stage 3 (those aged between 11 and 14), schools in neighbouring authorities are getting better results. Although the percentage of pupils within the Borough achieving 5 or more grades A*-C at GCSE over the last 4 years has continued to increase, attainment levels have fallen below the regional average and barely kept pace with the national average. It should be noted that these statistics do not include the fairly high numbers of secondary students who travel outside the borough to schools and colleges in neighbouring areas. There are also students from other areas who travel into schools within the Borough. Education levels also vary within the Borough and between wards. We are working in partnership with the Local Education Authority (Hampshire County Council) to improve examination results across the entire Borough, and particularly in those parts of the Borough where educational achievement levels are relatively low.
- 7.5** We need to recognise the need for additional schools, colleges, and high-quality pre-school provision at an early stage when major new development is planned. In light of the proposed development in the Borough up to 2026, the Core Strategy should provide a framework for the provision of educational infrastructure to meet the needs of all sections of the community (this is addressed under 'funding infrastructure' in the 'strategic section'). There is also an opportunity to make the greatest use of facilities by encouraging the provision of community facilities alongside formal education, so that schools become more active in the community.
- 7.6** Education and learning uses include more than just schools and there is a responsibility to ensure access to high quality education, not just for children and young people, but throughout people's lives. 'Extended services' provide a range of services and activities beyond schools to help meet the needs of the whole community. They include childcare, high quality crèches and 'early years' activities, youth clubs, community support groups, cafes and libraries, adult education and after-school activities.
- 7.7** There may be occasions when education or learning facilities will need to be closed, perhaps because of falling school roll numbers or viability/funding issues. However, we will work with the Local Education Authority to ensure that replacement or alternative facilities are provided. It is recognised that local schools and learning facilities can have an important community function, particularly in rural areas and we will therefore work with the County and local community to maintain local provision as far as possible.
- 7.8** The Borough also supports significant 'extramural' aspects of education, including for example schemes for children to connect directly with the countryside and the food chain through visits to working farms. This is of special importance for those whose main experience of food is pre-produced and pre-packaged.



Higher Education Opportunities and Lifelong Learning

- 7.9** Although our workforce is relatively well skilled, it lacks a large base of new graduates and highly skilled workers. This was highlighted in a recent Hampshire Economic Partnership report, 'Informing our Future' which identified a shortage of skills in technical and practical fields. This has also been raised as an issue in identifying the town as a 'Diamond for Investment and Economic Growth', which referred to a shortage of skills being a constraint to achieving long-term prosperity. The issue is linked to the relatively low levels of business investment and innovation, compared to other locations in the south east
- 7.10** Overcoming skills shortages is fully recognised by the Borough Council as a priority and we are working closely with SEEDA and other stakeholders, to investigate the provision of a 'learning campus' or 'multiversity'. This would combine Further and Higher Education, providing specialist post-graduate and professional courses on one site. The specialist courses would be employer demand-led, to ensure that they provide the necessary training to support local businesses. The proposal could also include an 'Enterprise Hub', containing incubator units for start-up companies, to assist in encouraging innovation and creativity.
- 7.11** The resource provided by Basingstoke library is also to be significantly improved through proposals for a 'discovery centre', which will include facilities such as meeting rooms, exhibition space and improved IT. Access to library services in other parts of the Borough is another key factor.
- 7.12** Approaches to these issues are discussed within the section on strategic issues in the Borough.



Creativity and culture

- 7.13** The Borough has a wide range of creative, cultural and community facilities that are more typical of a regional city. In 2003, the Audit Commission found that the Borough had the best provision of theatres, concert halls, museums and galleries when compared to other Hampshire districts and similar sized local authorities. Cultural and creative activity is not limited to the Borough's flagship facilities such as the Anvil and Haymarket, but includes the many community-based activities in the Borough's towns and villages. The Borough also hosts a number of cultural organisations and has an excellent range of public art, which is encouraged through the development process. It may be appropriate to seek the provision of new cultural facilities as part of development and regeneration proposals (this is addressed under 'funding infrastructure' in the 'strategic' section).
- 7.14** The Borough is also exceptional in its provision of nationally significant heritage sites including Basing House, Stratfield Saye, Highclere Castle and the Whitchurch silk mill.
- 7.15** Cultural activity, along with sporting, recreational and leisure pursuits, can contribute in a variety of ways to the well-being of the community and greater cohesion.

- 7.16** Creativity and culture also has a key economic dimension. In the South East region, creative and cultural industries provide 560,000 jobs (13.2% of the workforce) and contribute an annual turnover of some £46.5 billion. The importance of culture as an economic catalyst is recognised in the South East Regional Economic Strategy (RES), particularly for designated 'diamonds' such as Basingstoke. Within these areas, culture and creativity is seen as positively contributing to enterprise, innovation and creativity, skills and competition.
- 7.17** The Haymarket Theatre re-opened under new management in September 2007 and the Willis Museum is developing improvement plans for its main gallery and exhibition areas. We will continue to work closely with partner organisations on a number of cultural initiatives as they arise. These include, assessing the feasibility of creating a 'Cultural Hub' at the Willis Museum/ Haymarket to assist in the economic regeneration of the Top of Town, and improved interpretation and education facilities at Basing House.
- 7.18** The following approaches have been identified so far to ensure that cultural and creative facilities and opportunities are provided in line with people's needs and their changing lifestyles.

Issue 26

- 1** Introduce an audit of cultural, learning and heritage facilities including both publicly funded, subsidised and private sector contributions
- 2** Resist the loss of existing cultural facilities, recognising that there may be financial implications
- 3** Allow for the loss of cultural facilities, where they are to be replaced with alternative facilities of an equivalent value or it is demonstrated that there are other accessible facilities of a similar or superior quality
- 4** Define a cultural quarter in Basingstoke Town centre and encourage a concentration of cultural and creative activity within it
- 5** Encourage a more dispersed distribution of local cultural facilities in appropriate locations both throughout town and across the Borough

8. Themes 5 and 6: A Safe and Healthy Borough

The Vision

- 8.1** In 2026 the Borough should be a place where people feel safe and at ease, and the health of the Borough's population should be at its optimum level.
- 8.2** Neighbourhoods will provide access to safe and decent homes and be places where people can move around freely and safely. A key objective of the Core Strategy will therefore be to make Basingstoke and Deane a safe place to live, work and visit. Likewise, active and healthy lifestyles should be supported by access to healthcare services, open space and leisure facilities, which meet the communities' aspirations and reflect predicted lifestyles changes in the most effective and sustainable manner.
- 8.3** The Core Strategy should set a framework for reinvigorating our existing communities, and ensure that the design of future communities supports community safety and good health.
- 8.4** To achieve this we will need to take a holistic approach to addressing existing health inequalities and to delivering the necessary infrastructure that underpins safe, healthy and 'liveable' neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods would include decent and safe homes, well designed streets and spaces, accessible local facilities which people need in their daily lives, and safe environments. Healthy transport options such as walking and cycling would be promoted by ensuring there is a network of accessible and safe routes between residential areas, employment and community facilities.
- 8.5** Liveable neighbourhoods should improve access for local people to:
- adequate recreational space, including natural green open space
 - sports and recreational facilities
 - healthcare
 - cultural and artistic facilities
 - community and voluntary groups

8.6 These aims reflect the Community Strategy which sets out 10 outcomes with regard to a safe and healthy borough that the Core Strategy should help to deliver:

- S1** Residents have increased confidence in feeling safe
- S2** Levels of crime are reduced
- S3** Levels of antisocial behaviour are reduced
- S4** The Borough has a positive self image
- S5** Ways to prevent accidents and crime are routinely considered by all organisations
- H1** Access to good health and social care advice, treatment and facilities is improved for everyone
- H2** Homes and communities are improved in ways that reduce causes of poor health
- H3** Health and healthcare for older people is improved
- H4** Work-life balance is improved across the community
- H5** High levels of participation in cultural and leisure activities are maintained for all age groups

8.7 What we've learned so far – key issues to consider in helping us achieve a 'safe' and 'healthy borough'.

- accessible and affordable facilities in both urban and rural areas, particularly for young people
- through design, address the issues of crime and anti-social behaviour
- provision of open space accessible to all
- improved access to the countryside
- increasing demand for health services

Creating a safe and well designed local environment

8.8 Overall recorded crime rates in our Borough are lower than the county, regional and national average and are considerably lower than other major settlements in Hampshire, such as Southampton and Portsmouth. However there are significant differences in crime rates and perceptions of crime between rural and urban areas and within Basingstoke Town itself.

- 8.9** How can we create safe environments where crime and fear of crime do not undermine quality of life? Good design is one way of helping to promote a sense of place and reinforce civic pride, which in turn assists in combating crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. Whether through new development or the regeneration of existing areas, good quality design can help ensure that neighbourhoods are accessible, useable and easy to understand and that an appropriate mix of uses can be accommodated so as to contribute to the development of sustainable communities.

Safe and secure environments

- 8.10** Some parts of Basingstoke Town are laid out with alleyways and footpaths separating pedestrians from traffic. Whilst these alleyways and footpaths provide a high level of accessibility, natural surveillance can often be poor and lighting limited, thereby reducing people's perceptions of personal safety. Also, while a number of our housing estates contain a good amount of open space, some of these areas are isolated from housing and there is no natural surveillance of such areas. In some places, the separation of people and traffic has led to safety fears associated with crossing busy roads with either perceived excessive speeds or peak period congestion.
- 8.11** The Core Strategy will be a framework for ensuring that developments are located and designed to maximise visibility and promote casual surveillance. This may include ensuring that developments overlook open spaces, establishing clear sightlines through developments and maximising the visibility of high risk areas such as car parks, stairwells and underpasses.
- 8.12** In addition to the need to ensure that all relevant stakeholders, including the police, input into the design of major development proposals, applicants should ensure that 'secured by design' principles are applied to new developments.

Developing well planned environments

- 8.13** What are the best ways to ensure good road safety in new developments while ensuring they are still attractive? The design of a development affects the way it functions both in terms of the level of activity, movement and natural surveillance. The town of Basingstoke is largely dominated by roads, with their layout dictating patterns of movement. Pedestrians and cyclists can experience difficulty in finding safe and easy access to facilities by walking and cycling. This can discourage activity which in turn reduces opportunities for social interaction, natural surveillance and healthy lifestyles. Infrequently used routes can provide opportunities for anti-social behaviour and criminal activity which have a negative impact on the sense of safety.
- 8.14** Whilst the Borough does benefit from a great wealth of vegetation and landscaping, poorly positioned trees and shrubs which are not maintained can reduce visibility and increase the fear of crime. Within Basingstoke Town many of the highways are edged by areas of landscaping. Whilst this improves the visual quality of the area, by acting as a natural screen through concealment of built areas, it can also serve to hide from view the surrounding built areas and reduces the ability for people to orientate themselves easily using recognised landmarks.

Creating a suitable mix of uses

- 8.15** Ensuring an appropriate mix of land uses to meet the needs of the local community is fundamental to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities. A mix of uses not only reduces the need to travel but also increases the vitality and diversity of places, which is important in combating safety and security issues.
- 8.16** Some aspects of current land uses, particularly within the town centre of Basingstoke, are segregated into particular areas, for example with leisure facilities concentrated at the leisure park, retail facilities located within the town centre and offices based in surrounding employment areas. The separation of uses means that people cannot combine their journeys easily and results in a greater dependence on and use of the private car. It also means that different parts of the town are used at different times of the day and areas particularly associated with night time activities as well as areas that are deserted at night can be perceived to be unsafe.
- 8.17** We have developed a vision for the night time economy of Basingstoke Town Centre which aims to promote and enhance its environment. The development of the vision aims to ensure that those living, working and visiting the town centre at night will not only be safe but will feel safe and that homes and businesses, including pubs and clubs, can be successfully accommodated within the centre. Potential approaches could include, seeking the dispersal of activities, such as night time entertainment uses, to provide a mix of activities in an area

Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour

- 8.18** Both crime and anti-social behaviour reduce the feeling of safety and can break down communities through keeping people inside their homes and limiting use of public facilities and open space. The Core Strategy will need to support but also build upon the aims of our Community Safety Strategy. Within our Borough, anti-social behaviour rather than crime is the main concern in the public's experience of crime and disorder. Findings dismiss the common belief that anti-social behaviour is associated exclusively with young people and, in fact, the majority of anti-social behaviour relates to problems such as neighbour disputes. Tackling the perception that anti-social behaviour is youth related is therefore an important local issue. The Core Strategy needs to ensure that properties and spaces are well designed and maintained to prevent them from becoming targets for anti-social behaviour. Properties which lie empty can also become targets for vandalism and anti-social behaviour and the Core Strategy could assist in tackling this issue by assisting in bringing such properties back into use quickly.
- 8.19** Other ways that we can tackle the issue include attaching appropriate planning conditions when we grant planning permission to overcome some of the potential causes of crime and disorder. In addition, opportunities to regenerate and renew areas where crime is an issue will be considered, as set out in the 'Inclusive Borough' theme

Access to the countryside

- 8.20** Early consultation has highlighted the fact that despite our high quality countryside, access to the countryside is limited. The Borough contains a significant rights of way network and additional land has been opened for public access in recent years. However, a number of issues are preventing the maximum benefits being obtained. These include a demand for the greater connectivity of routes, the need for more off-road and utility routes for cyclists, and conflicts between different users of the countryside such as walkers, horse-riders and off-road vehicles. Opportunities should be taken to improve access where possible, in line with countryside access plans being developed by the County Council.



- 8.21** Potential approaches for achieving this include:

Issue 27

- 1** Allocate a country park or parks to serve Basingstoke's residents
- 2** Develop a useable network of accessible open spaces around Basingstoke and the Borough's settlements

Access to healthcare

- 8.22** The Core Strategy should help ensure that everyone, in both new and existing communities, has access to good health and social care facilities. Despite the health of the Borough being generally good when compared to the South East and the rest of England and Wales, there are variations both within Basingstoke Town and in rural parts of the Borough. Accordingly, the key focus should be on aiming to reduce the borough's health inequalities by ensuring that suitable facilities are located in the right place to meet the changing needs of the community.

- 8.23** As the community develops and changes in the Core Strategy period, certain health-related trends are likely to occur. These include:

- an increasingly elderly population
- an increase in people with long-term health conditions, specifically those associated with mental health
- increasing incidents of youth health issues, including obesity and alcoholism

- 8.24** Prior consultation with health and social care providers has identified that the way services are to be delivered will change. For example, there is likely to be a greater separation between services provided in a centralised location, such as the North Hampshire Hospital, and thanks in part to medical technology advances, more 'intermediate', locally-based services including those that can be provided 'closer to home'. This could result in new community-based primary care multi-centres and walk-in centres which include facilities such as minor injury units. Also, emerging technologies together with a demand for a greater level of personalised health care support have started to place a high emphasis on 'telemedicine' leading to an anticipated future demand for enhanced telecommunications performance to and from homes, especially in the case of elderly residents.
- 8.25** Accordingly, we will need to work in close partnership with all types of healthcare providers to identify sites and infrastructure able to deliver this new generation of service delivery facilities.

Access to community, cultural and leisure facilities

- 8.26** The Borough has a wide range of community-related facilities related to cultural, leisure, sport and voluntary activities, which individually and collectively make a significant contribution to its attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit. For example, the performing arts provision is at the level of a regional city and a number of new facilities have been introduced over recent years. However, we will need to continue to maintain and improve these facilities whilst also seeking to meet future needs.



- 8.27** The role of leisure and recreation in people's lives is already changing, and lifestyle and cultural changes will introduce new needs and aspirations relating to how people spend their leisure time. As part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy, we commissioned the Henley Centre to address the 'question, 'what will the environment of culture, leisure, recreation and participation look like in 2026?'.
- 8.28** In addition to those already identified, a number of potential key drivers for change were identified. These include:
- a growing divide between those who can and cannot access facilities based on personal finance
 - changing family and household structures, such as a growth in the number of people without children
 - the increasing desire and expectation for more bespoke leisure experiences
 - the lack of time and/or energy to participate in leisure activities
 - technological change, including that related to the internet

8.29 A more detailed leisure needs survey is presently being completed so that we fully understand the needs of our local communities. Issues that have been highlighted to date include:

- although the Borough is well-served with larger leisure facilities, they are concentrated in Basingstoke Town, and accordingly, there is a demand for more local provision outside Basingstoke
- as existing facilities begin to be used in more diverse ways there is a need for more flexible accommodation
- a need to identify the most appropriate way of providing for young people's needs, since the right facilities and worthwhile activities can support their personal growth and help divert them from anti-social behaviour

8.30 An emerging issue is the perceived difficulty of maintaining community facilities (such as, for example community and village halls) in terms of finding the voluntary effort and skills.

8.31 Covering a range of policy issues, the potential approaches relating to facilities include:

Issue 28

- 1** Retain and promote the introduction of appropriate local community services and facilities in the Borough's smaller towns and villages in addition to, or instead of, further new large-scale facilities in Basingstoke Town
- 2** Promote the flexible use of existing facilities and sites to facilitate both specific and multi-use functions
- 3** Seek dispersal of activities, such as night time entertainment uses, to provide a mix of activities in an area
- 4** Promote a more flexible approach to the provision of land in the countryside for specific leisure activities or allocate specific sites for such uses, to overcome urban fringe pressures

8.32 Recent consultation with school children both in Basingstoke Town and the Borough's rural areas has identified a desire for more youth facilities. In particular the children viewed one of the main disadvantages to the Borough as being a lack of youth clubs that can be adapted to meet the needs of different age groups. The provision of youth facilities and activities assists in ensuring the personal safety of the Borough's young people by making available somewhere safe for young people to meet and interact. Such provision can also assist in tackling anti-social behaviour problems. Therefore consideration needs to be given to whether specific provision needs to be made to cater for young people. However, when contemplating the provision of physical facilities, we need to be aware of the growing trend of a lack of sufficient volunteers and staff to manage such activities and facilities.

8.33 Possible policy approaches with regard to youth facilities include:**Issue 29**

- 1** Make best use of our current facilities.
- 2** Ensure that the appropriate youth facilities to meet local needs are provided in new development areas
- 3** Place greater emphasis on improving informal facilities and activities for young people, such as playing fields and cycleways
- 4** Identify ways in which the management infrastructure for community facilities might be supported in new developments, for example through inclusion of 'community management' companies on the lines of management companies typically associated with apartment complexes but with a broader remit.

Access to Open Spaces

8.33 Open space within Basingstoke Town and the Borough's larger settlements is generally well used and therefore in principal should not be lost to other forms of development. However, in light of the pressure for development, all urban land, including open space, is under significant development pressure. By working creatively with local communities it may be possible to deliver better quality open spaces while also enabling some development. Of foremost importance, is ensuring that community needs are met in the most sustainable way.

8.34 Potential future policy approaches to open spaces include:**Issue 30**

- 1** Blanket protection for all our areas of open space
- 2** Distinguish between open spaces of strategic value which have a higher level of protection and those where a more flexible approach can be taken
- 3** Continue the current approach to open space in new developments including specific requirements for informal recreation and equipped areas of play
- 4** Change the emphasis from the amount (or quantity) of provision to quality, value and accessibility. This may include securing improvements to the quality of existing areas of open space rather than seeking the provision of facilities in all new developments
- 5** Provide different types of open space to reflect specific local circumstances such as, community gardens, local parks and allotments

Glossary

Affordable Housing

Housing subsidised in some way for people unable to rent or buy on the open housing market.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

A statutory landscape designation which recognises that a particular landscape is of national importance. In the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane, this consists of the North Wessex Downs AONB which was designated in 1972.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of plant and animal life in a particular habitat.

Carbon footprint

A 'carbon footprint' is a measure of the impact human activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of green house gases produced, measured in units of carbon dioxide.

Code for Sustainable Homes

This is a new national standard for sustainable design and construction of new homes, which measures the sustainability of a new home against categories of sustainable design, rating the whole home as a complete package.

Combined Heat and Power

Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plants incorporate both power and heat from a single heat source.

Community Strategy

Document prepared by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which sets out a vision for the Borough and a framework for aligning our work and the work of partner organisations to achieve this.

Conservation Area

An area designated as being of special architectural or historic interest.

Diamond for Investment and Economic Growth

Diamonds for Investment and Economic Growth are cities and major towns defined within the Regional Economic Strategy as areas which, with their broader hinterlands, are major centres of economic activity and can act as catalysts to stimulate prosperity.

Evidence base

The Local Development Framework (LDF) Evidence Base supports the Development Plan Documents of the LDF. The Evidence Base consists of a range of studies which analyse particular social, environmental and economic factors across the Borough and help justify why certain approaches have been taken.

Greenfield

Land which has not been developed before.
Includes farmland and parks.

Hampshire Local Transport Plan

Sets out Hampshire County Council's transport strategy for the next five years.

Infrastructure

A collective term for services such as roads, electricity, sewerage, water, children's services, health facilities and recycling and refuse facilities

Listed Buildings

Buildings of special historic or architectural interest included at Grades I, II* or II in a statutory list

Local Development Framework (LDF)

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is a folder of documents that collectively provides a long-term vision for the Borough and a strategy for achieving the vision. The LDF can be thought of as a folder of several key components, including the following:

- **Development Plan Documents (DPD)** form the statutory development plan, including the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy sets out the key elements of the planning framework for the area. Once adopted, all other Development Plan Documents must be in conformity with it.
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)** amplify the policies of the statutory development plan
- The **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** sets out how we will involve the public and stakeholders in the preparation of the LDF and in determining planning applications. The SCI has been adopted as the Council's guideline for future consultation on all planning issues.
- The **Local Development Scheme (LDS)** sets out a 'project plan' for which documents are to be prepared and when
- The **Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)** assesses whether our policies are achieving their objectives.

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

The LSP is a group of public, private, voluntary and community organisations and individuals that is responsible for preparing the Community Strategy.

New Growth Point

A location which has been chosen by Central Government as a focus for future large scale and sustainable growth.

Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change

This is a framework through which Local Authorities can meet the challenge of reducing emissions and adapting to the potential climate change. Basingstoke and Deane signed up to the declaration in 2007.

Previously-developed land (PDL)

PDL or 'brownfield' land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agriculture or forestry buildings) and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development.

Regeneration

Regeneration is the process of working in partnership to reverse economic, physical and social decline in an area.

Regional Economic Strategy (RES)

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) prepared by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) is to shape the future economic development of the south-east. The role of SEEDA is to lead the development and overall implementation of the strategy on behalf of the region.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

RSS replaces regional planning guidance under the Planning and Compulsory Planning Act 2004. The RSS which includes the Borough of Basingstoke & Deane is the draft South East Plan. This is currently anticipated to be submitted to central government in 2006.

Regional Transport Hub

A Regional Transport Hub is an identified urban centre, such as Basingstoke Town, which through the focusing on the development of quality transport services, supports urban communities and urban renaissance.

Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)

The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) is the regional framework that will ensure that the investment programmes of local authorities, transport providers and other key stakeholders in the transport sector complement and support the wider regional objective of delivering a more sustainable pattern of development.

Section 106 agreements

Section 106 agreements are the process through which planning obligations (funds towards infrastructure projects) are negotiated.

Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB)

The SPB is a boundary surrounding a settlement which separates the main built-up area from the open countryside.

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

Sites within the Borough, which are identified by Hampshire County Council, that are particular importance for nature conservation, containing habitats or feature which are effectively irreplaceable (excluding statutorily designated sites).

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Areas notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, by English Nature. They are biological or geological sites considered being of national importance for nature conservation.

‘Smart’ Growth

Economic growth that minimises the demand for additional labour and the release of additional land for employment

South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA)

SEERA is the Regional Planning Body and is responsible for proposing strategic planning and transport policies to Government. SEERA also prepare, monitor and review Regional Spatial Strategy for South East England.

South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)

Lead body at the regional level, promoting wealth creation and social inclusion whilst protecting and enhancing the region’s environmental heritage. SEEDA is responsible for preparing and implementing the Regional Economic Strategy for South East England.

Spatial Planning

Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Sustainability appraisal is a systematic evaluation process, the purpose of which is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the strategies and policies in a Local Development Document from the outset of the preparation process. This will ensure that decisions are made that accord with sustainable development.

Tests of Soundness

Tests set by the Government which seek to assess whether the correct processes and procedures have been followed when producing a Development Plan Document (DPD).

Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley sub-region

The Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley sub-region is the area that includes Basingstoke Town and other parts of the Borough and has been identified within the Draft South East Plan as an area capable of accommodating additional growth in the period of the plan (up to 2026).