



North Hertfordshire District Council  
and  
Homes and Communities Agency

Local Investment Plan

2011- 2015

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- b) Nothing contained in or carried out pursuant to this Agreement and no consents given by the Agency or the Council will prejudice the Agency's or the Council's (as appropriate) rights, powers or duties and/or obligations in the exercise of its functions or under any statutes, byelaws, instruments, orders or regulations.
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Name: ..... Name: .....

Position: ..... Position: .....

For and on behalf of **HCA** For and on behalf of **NHDC**

Date: ..... Date: .....

## Foreword

This is the first Local Investment Plan for North Hertfordshire and it has been jointly prepared by North Hertfordshire District Council and the Homes and Communities Agency. The plan sets out our shared priorities for growth, regeneration and economic development.

The plan is based on robust analysis and a clear understanding of the evidence base that defines the district. The investment opportunities outlined in the plan flow directly from the strategic priorities and the needs identified.

The plan has been prepared in consultation with partners and is a 'live' document that will be updated periodically. This will ensure the plan retains its purpose whilst reflecting factors such as new local or government priorities or strategic opportunities that may arise.

The process of preparing this plan has been hugely beneficial as it sets out our shared priorities over the short and longer term, providing a framework for partnership development and decision making in the restricted public spending environment that we operate in.

The Council is committed to delivering growth, regeneration and economic growth for the places and people that make up the district, and the Local Investment Plan has a pivotal role to play in the delivery of these priorities.

[Photo 1 – Cllr Lovewell](#)

Cllr Bernard Lovewell  
Portfolio Holder and Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Health

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

The purpose of the Local Investment Plan (LIP) is to set out the principles and priorities for joint investment by North Hertfordshire District Council (the Council) and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to deliver the Council's overarching vision and related strategies for housing, regeneration and economic development.

### Strategic Priorities

The Sustainable Community Strategy, the Council's three Priorities (delivered through its Corporate Plan), the Housing Strategy and the LDF Core Strategy together provide a comprehensive picture of the vision for the district both current and future. The Council has identified four key, cross cutting ambitions that are particularly relevant to the LIP:

- A) Securing sustainable housing
- B) Delivering housing that meets the needs of excluded and vulnerable groups
- C) Housing led regeneration
- D) Support for the local economy

#### Priority A - Securing sustainable housing

Historically, demand for housing in the district has been high. The Council undertook a Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2010 and this confirmed the continuing demand for affordable housing across the district. It identified an annual need for 560 additional units of affordable housing and recommended a tenure mix balance of 65% social rent and 35% intermediate tenures.

Average house prices in the district are considerably higher than those experienced in England and Wales; more significantly, they are also higher than in the East of England region. Despite a drop in the house-price-to-income ratio, the limited supply of properties on the market and the tightening of lending criteria for mortgages has resulted in a 46% decline in the number of first time buyers coming into the market between 2008 and 2009.

The majority of new entrants to the housing market are, therefore, restricted to the private rental sector. However, almost a third of recently formed households cannot afford to access even the cheapest private rented properties in the district.

Clearly, the cost of housing in the district is beyond the reach of many, especially young adults. As a result, demand for affordable housing has risen

significantly: between April 2005 and April 2010 the number of households on the Council's housing register increased by 179%.

Therefore, notwithstanding the prosperity of the district, access to affordable housing is a significant issue for many residents. There are twenty Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the district that rank in the bottom 25% in the county for barriers to housing and services and twenty three LSOAs in the bottom 25% for living environment.

Aside from the four main towns in the district, there are 37 rural parishes. The Council, working in partnership with the Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire and local Registered Providers (RPs), has undertaken a programme of rural housing needs surveys and has been very successful in delivering affordable housing in rural parishes to meet identified housing need. The provision of affordable rural housing remains a priority for the Council.

The high priority potential housing schemes include:

- the town centre regeneration at Churchgate
- the Council owned sites at Lloyd Way Kimpton and Clothall Common Baldock
- the two rural schemes in Barkway to deliver housing to meet identified need
- the former Priory Cinema site for a flexi-care scheme which will release land elsewhere for the provision of general needs affordable housing

#### Priority B - Delivering housing that meets the needs of excluded and vulnerable groups

Although the Council has met the 2010 target to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by 50%, it is likely that temporary accommodation will always be required. The Council is working with its two main providers of temporary accommodation, NHH and Aldwyck Housing Group, on improving the standard and quality of these units.

An area of high priority is the management of rough sleepers and the street homeless. The latest estimate for rough sleepers in the district was 6 which is high for an area of the size and the relative prosperity of North Hertfordshire. The current provision of accommodation for this client group is under-developed. Present provision for single homeless persons is limited to a 17 bed night shelter owned and managed by a small charitable organisation in Hitchin.

The intention is to replace the night shelter with staged hostel accommodation that meets the objectives of the Places of Change Programme.

Priority C - Housing led regeneration

The Council is constantly reviewing opportunities to regenerate the deprived areas of the district and schemes have been outlined for two areas – Ivel Court (Letchworth Garden City) and Westmill (Hitchin).

The Ivel Court site lies within the Letchworth Garden City South East ward. This ward is the 50<sup>th</sup> most disadvantaged ward in Hertfordshire (199 wards) and the 6<sup>th</sup> most disadvantaged ward in the district of North Hertfordshire.

Issues of particular concern are:

- poor health;
- poor housing;
- high unemployment; and
- crime and the fear of crime.

The population of the Westmill estate is in the region of 4,952 with the highest deprivation levels of any estate in North Hertfordshire. The John Barker Place area of the Westmill estate is in the lowest 10 areas of deprivation in Hertfordshire.

The Key issues are:

- Community Safety;
- The lack of leisure and youth facilities; and
- Poor housing.

Priority D - Support for the local economy

The four town centres of Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Royston form a vital part of the economic, social and cultural life of the district.

Town centre strategies have been produced for each of the four towns. These guide and promote integrated development, seeking to enhance the town centre environment whilst maintaining and improving vitality and viability over the next 10 to 15 years. The town centres of both Baldock and Letchworth Garden City have recently been subject to major improvement works and a number of opportunity sites are being progressed in Royston.

Hitchin town centre has seen significant growth in terms of residential development over the last decade and the Council has recently appointed a development partner as the next step towards achieving the Council's long standing aim of redeveloping the Churchgate centre (an old 1960's retail development which does not reflect the character of the historic town) and the surrounding area. The brief requires significant investment in this important area of Hitchin, to ensure that there are opportunities to attract the right mix and types of shops to the town, and that it becomes more attractive whilst at the same time its historic character is retained.

### **Resourcing the delivery of the Local Investment Plan**

The viability assessment of any proposed development will include a review of current funding streams, however it is clear that funding will be generally limited for the life of this LIP.

In terms of social housing, the Council is in discussion with local RPs as regards their views on the new Affordable Rent model that is currently the subject of national consultation. RPs will need to review their corporate approach to development and decide whether they wish to commit to an agreement with the HCA in connection with their future delivery of social housing.

As the HCA's grant budget has been drastically reduced, new models for the delivery of affordable housing need to be identified. This will largely depend on the ability of individual RPs to provide viable schemes - this could be achieved by utilising existing resources, maximising the opportunities offered by new initiatives, such as the Affordable Rent model, and the development of new partnerships.

The Council could also consider working with RPs who provide a packaged approach to the delivery of affordable housing and will also review the opportunities, in conjunction with RPs, for cost reduction with a view to delivering more units for the same cost.

### **Monitoring the Plan and Governance**

The LIP will be jointly monitored by the HCA and the Council. The plan will also be monitored locally by the Council's Housing Development Group and the Local Strategic Partnership.



## **1. Introduction to the Local Investment Plan**

The purpose of the Local Investment Plan (LIP) is to set out the principles and priorities for joint investment by North Hertfordshire District Council (the Council) and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to deliver the Council's overarching vision and related strategies for housing, regeneration and economic development.

The plan identifies the strategic context and summarises the evidence base that will be used to direct investment and determine the outputs and outcomes expected by the Council, HCA and wider stakeholders.

The plan is not a standalone document and has been aligned with other local strategies, such as the local Sustainable Community Strategy, the Council's emerging Local Development Framework and its adopted Housing Strategy.

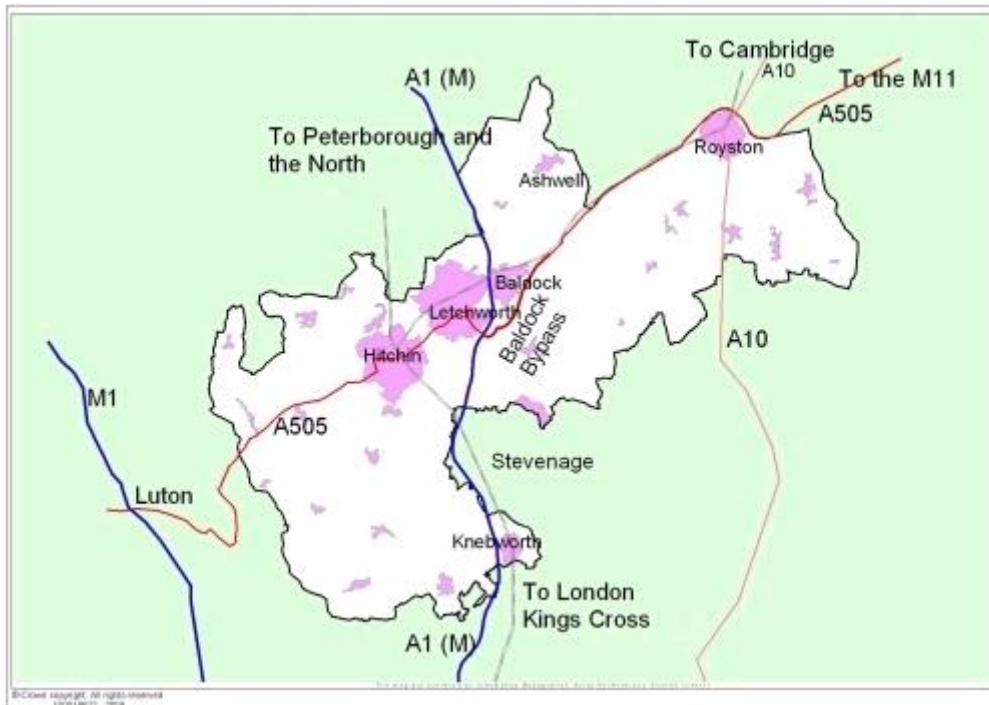
The LIP has been produced to cover the period 2011 – 2015, but it is a 'living' document that will be updated as necessary. Much of the national framework around housing and the local economy has changed significantly over the past few months and it is anticipated that the document will evolve as further details are established and new priorities emerge.

The LIP draws on adopted strategic documents and as such, consultation has already been undertaken with the public and key stakeholders on matters pertinent to it.

## 2. North Hertfordshire in Context

### Local Context

The district of North Hertfordshire is an attractive area in which to live and work. It is an area of 37,538 hectares (about 23% of the County of Hertfordshire in terms of land mass) located less than 40 miles from central London and has an estimated population of 124,700<sup>1</sup>.



The district has four main settlements: the historic market towns of Hitchin, Baldock and Royston and the world's first Garden City, Letchworth Garden City. It also includes most of the Great Ashby area, which is north of Stevenage, and numerous villages and hamlets.

The district has 35 civil parishes and two unparished areas (Hitchin and Baldock). All of the towns and many of the villages have historic areas and buildings; there are 40 conservation areas and approximately 2750 listed buildings.

The three towns of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Baldock are located very close to each other and between them account for a population of around 75,000 (approximately two-thirds of the district's population).

### Photo 2 - Royston

<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics; Resident Population Estimates, All Persons: June 2009

Royston is situated in the north-east of the district, being eight miles from Baldock, the next nearest town, and 10 miles from Letchworth Garden City. The town has a population of around 15,000 with a similar number living in rural areas within a five mile radius of the town.

## Population

The most recent resident population estimate for the district is 124,700<sup>2</sup> (Jun 2009) up 6.5% from 2001 (see Figure1) and is predicted to reach 137,600<sup>3</sup> (up 10.3% from 2001) by 2021. During the same period, 2001–21, the number of households is projected to rise by 31%. The variance between the percentage increase in population and increase in households is a result of reducing family size, changing domestic circumstances and people living longer. Most notably, a rise in the number of single person households is predicted to increase by 53% between 2008 and 2031 from 17,000 in 2008 to 26,000<sup>4</sup>.

At 20.2% of the overall population, the number of older people within the district is significantly above the national average of 16%. This includes around 23,000 people over the age of 65. It is predicted that between 2008 and 2021, with increased longevity, the number of people of 65 years and older will increase by around 50%.

The number of residents aged 30-59 years has also grown more rapidly than other parts of the population in recent years, and this is thought to reflect those moving into the district for both the convenience of local work and the ability to commute to central London.

There is a significant dip in the age profile of the district for 18–30 year olds, probably reflecting those who grow up here but leave the district for further or

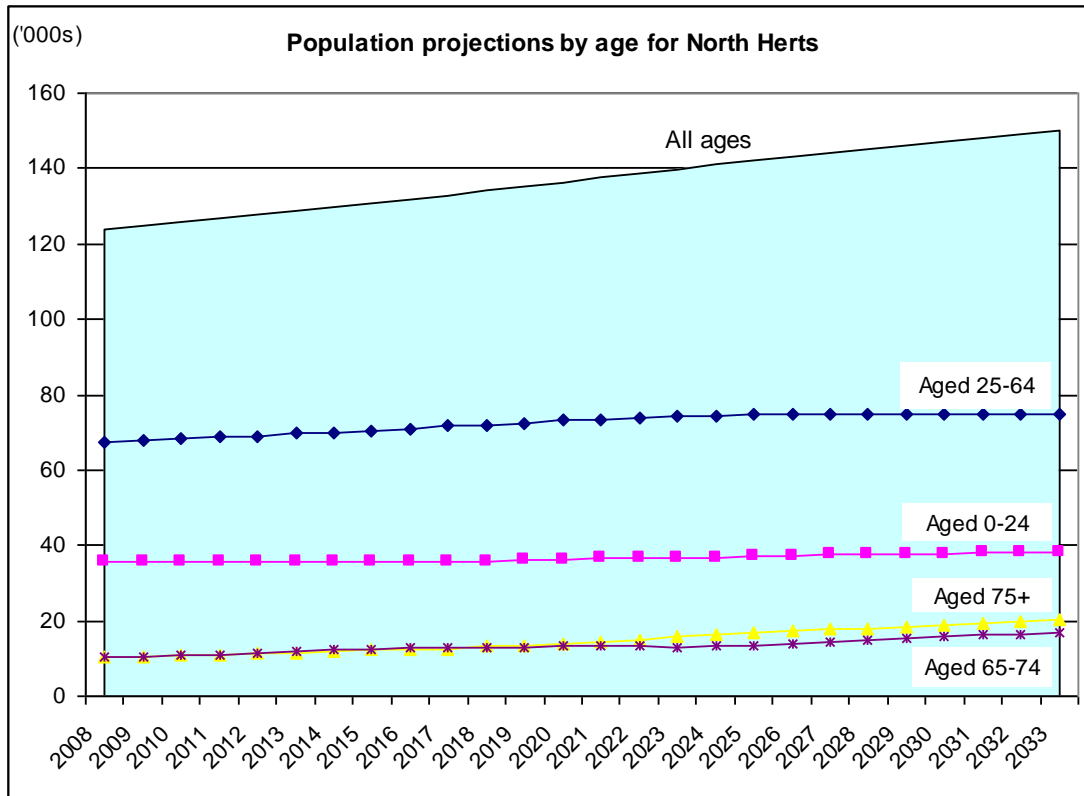
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<sup>2</sup> Resident Population Estimates, All Persons General Register Office for Scotland; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency; Office for National Statistics

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics; 2008-based Subnational Population Projections

<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics; Household projections by household type and district 2008 & 2033

**Figure 1 : Population projections (by age) for North Herts**



higher education or their first jobs. As mentioned above, they are replaced by people in their thirties many of whom have started families. This age profile is principally caused by two factors:

- The limited opportunities for further education in the area; and
- The high cost of housing, especially for young adults.

This 'dent' is predicted to get more pronounced and last longer, with people not returning until their late thirties or early forties. If people are unable to live in the district until *after* they have started families, it could significantly alter the make up of the local communities in North Hertfordshire.

**Ethnicity and Religion**

The population in North Hertfordshire is becoming more ethnically diverse. The most recent estimate (June 2007) is that 14% of the district's population belong to a minority ethnic group - this figure has risen from 10.7% in June 2001.

The most prevalent minority ethnic group in the district is 'other White' (i.e. not white British or Irish) at 3.7% of the population, followed by Indian, 2.6%, and Black Caribbean, 1.1% (see Table 1).

The breakdown of religious belief in the district broadly mirrors that of the region and the country as a whole. The only notable exceptions being for i) Sikh, 1.94% in North Hertfordshire as opposed to 0.25% in the Eastern

**Table 1: Resident population estimates by ethnic group (percentages) 2007**

Ethnicity	North Herts	East of England	England
All Persons	122,500	5,661,000	51,092,000
White: British	86	86.9	83.6
White: Irish	1.2	1.1	1.1
White: Other White	3.7	3.6	3.5
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	0.7	0.5	0.6
Mixed: White and Black African	0.2	0.2	0.2
Mixed: White and Asian	0.6	0.5	0.5
Mixed: Other Mixed	0.4	0.4	0.4
Asian or Asian British: Indian	2.6	1.6	2.6
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	0.5	1	1.8
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.5	0.5	0.7
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	0.5	0.5	0.7
Black or Black British: Caribbean	1.1	0.7	1.2
Black or Black British: African	0.7	1	1.4
Black or Black British: Other Black	0.2	0.2	0.2
Chinese	0.6	0.7	0.8
Other Ethnic Group	0.5	0.6	0.7

Source: Office of National Statistics

Region and 0.67% in England, and ii) Muslim, 0.73% in North Hertfordshire in comparison with 1.46% in the Eastern Region and 3.1% in England.

## Housing

There are approximately 55,000 dwellings in North Hertfordshire. Of these, around 80% are in the private sector and 20% in the social sector. In 2003 the Council transferred its housing stock to a new not-for-profit landlord, North Hertfordshire Homes (NHH). As a result, NHH is the largest of over 20 registered providers operating in the district.

The majority (71%) of the dwellings in the district were constructed post 1945. Around 84% are traditional house models (houses/bungalows) and the remaining 16% flat types<sup>5</sup>: this is similar to the regional (85% houses, 14% flats) and national (82% houses, 17% flats) positions<sup>6</sup>.

Over 99% of social rented housing meets the decent homes standard. At 20% non-decent, private sector housing is better than that of England as a whole (33%)<sup>7</sup>. Nevertheless, 40% of privately rented homes are non-decent with 30% of their tenants classified as being vulnerable.

## Homelessness

<sup>5</sup> NHDC Housing Stock Condition Survey 2006/07

<sup>6</sup> CLG Housing Statistics 2006

<sup>7</sup> NHDC Housing Stock Condition Survey 2006/07

While homelessness remains an issue in North Hertfordshire, successful prevention measures have helped to reduce the number of households experiencing homelessness significantly over the past few years. The numbers accepted as statutorily homeless fell by 16%<sup>8</sup> between 2008/9 and 2009/10 and the previous Government's target to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by 50% between 2005 and 2010 has been successfully met and sustained.

A variety of homelessness prevention initiatives have been introduced by the Council, and its partners, with the result that 278 cases of homelessness were prevented in 2009/10, considerably above the average (221) of the Council's 15 nearest neighbours<sup>9</sup>.

## **Transport**

The district has good rail and road links. Direct services for the district's railway stations run north to Peterborough, north east to Cambridge and Kings Lynn and south to London. However, there are no rail links to the west.

The A1 which runs from London to Edinburgh passes through the district and the A505 is the main east-west route, running from Leighton Buzzard to the A11 near Duxford. Although the opening of the A505 bypass has removed a major focus of traffic problems from the centre of the historic settlement of Baldock, the reduction in passing traffic through the town has brought its own challenges to the businesses and retailers there. To counteract this, the town centre has undergone extensive enhancement which has revitalised the town centre area.

Car usage and ownership in the district is relatively high. At the time of the last census, the proportion of households with a car at 81.15% was higher than that of the Eastern Region (80.2%) and England as a whole (73.16%). Predictably, the impact for those without a car living in our rural communities is more marked, as local bus and train services are variable and community transport schemes expensive.

As residential development is likely to be a significant factor for the district in the near future, it is important that appropriate investment is made to the local infrastructure to ensure that all developments demonstrate sustainability. Moreover, the ability of residents to 'out commute' presents another challenge for the district as the relative drop in footfall in our town centres at lunchtimes and weekdays has a negative impact on local retailers.

## **Economy**

Local employment within the district is centred on light industry, cleaning/service companies, distribution, hospitality, financial and business support services. The recent successful revival of the film industry in the south

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<sup>8</sup> CLG circular, P1E summary, June 2010

<sup>9</sup> CLG; P1E Section 10 2009/10 - all four quarters - reported data

of Hertfordshire has resulted in a number of specialist support companies being created in North Hertfordshire; these include set and costume design, robotics and catering companies.

One of the strengths of the economy of North Hertfordshire is the small average size of local businesses. Accordingly, the local economy is not over dependent on a small number of larger employers, although this does bring with it the challenge of providing services (such as cleaning, deliveries, etc.) across a larger number of business premises, many of which exist in rural areas.

**Table 2: Local Units by Employment Size Band: (Mar 2010)**

	North Hertfordshire Units (%)	East of England Units (%)	England Units (%)
All VAT and/or PAYE Based Local Units	6450	253120	2183840
All 0 to 4 persons Employed	4645 (72%)	176475 (69.7%)	1488895 (68.2%)
All 5 to 9 Persons Employed	905 (14%)	36375 (14.4%)	323815 (14.8%)
All 10 to 19 Persons Employed	440 (6.8%)	19310 (7.6%)	178315 (8.2%)
All 20 or More Persons Employed	460 (7.1%)	20960 (8.3%)	192815 (8.2%)

Source: ONS

An important dimension of the diverse local economy is the ability of small businesses to access start-up accommodation and for growing companies to locate into medium size units and remain in the district. This supports sustainable development by providing local sources of employment, the provision of services and minimising the need to travel.

To promote and improve the local economy, emerging local planning policy requires all employment development on sites of 1 hectare or more to designate a minimum of 10% of the net floorspace for small and/or medium size businesses.

## Employment

The district has a skilled workforce with 50% of the working population employed in white collar professions. The numbers employed in personal service occupations and sales/customer service work are less prevalent than in either the region or England as a whole<sup>10</sup>. Also in contrast to both regional and national trends, there is evidence of a decline in the number of jobs in the district: there was a decrease from 51,600 in 2001 to 46,100 in 2008 (see Table 3).

<sup>10</sup> Office of National Statistics Annual Population Survey 2009/10

**Table 3: Total employee jobs - North Hertfordshire**

Year	North Hertfordshire (employee jobs)	East (employee jobs)	Great Britain (employee jobs)
2001	51,600	2,266,100	25,490,300
2002	50,000	2,283,600	25,593,700
2003	50,100	2,304,700	25,710,600
2004	50,000	2,303,000	26,067,500
2005	51,400	2,360,700	26,496,600
2006	47,600	2,380,200	26,355,100
2007	46,000	2,368,300	26,602,200
2008	46,100	2,392,700	26,677,200

*Source: ONS annual business inquiry employee analysis*

Data from the 2001 Census shows that 52.2% of the people that lived in the district also worked in the district. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of residents of North Hertfordshire work outside the district with many commuting into London. This is reflected in the disparity between the incomes of residents and people employed in the district: while the average income of those living in the district (£533 per week) is higher than the average for the county as a whole, the average wage of those working in the district (£477) is lower. This is partly due to the nature of the local economy, which is characterised by predominantly small to medium sized employers, and the fact that a smaller proportion of local workers are employed in middle or upper management positions.

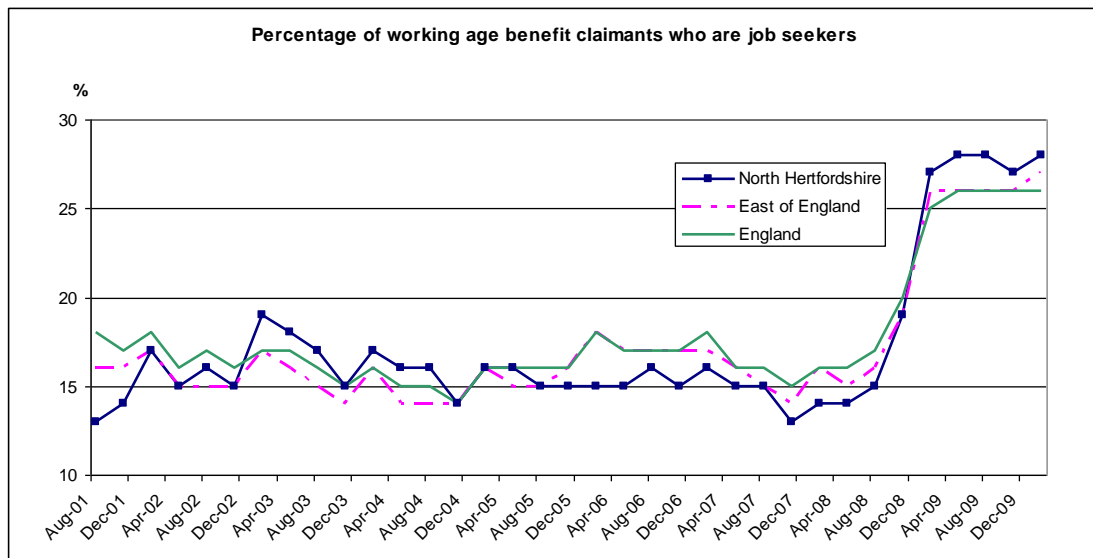
The proportion of the working age population claiming a key benefit is relatively lower in North Hertfordshire at 10% than it is in the region (13%) or the country (15%)<sup>11</sup>. However, as shown in Figure 2, the proportion claiming Jobseekers Allowance is rising more steeply in North Hertfordshire than it is in the region or the country as a whole.

There are six Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the district where over 10% of the population, as a whole, are claiming out of work benefits. Each LSOA equates to approximately 1,500 people and the most severely affected are Hitchin Oughton (Westmill estate) at 17.2% and Letchworth Garden City (Grange estate) at 15.4%. Both are predominately social housing estates.

<sup>11</sup> Office of National Statistics Benefits Data Indicators: Working Age Client Group Aug 2009



**Figure 2 : Percentage of working age benefit claimants who are job seekers**



Source: Department of Work and Pensions

## Town Centres

### Photo 3 – Hitchin town centre

The four town centres of Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Royston form a vital part in the economic, social and cultural life of the district. As these centres age and grow they require significant investment in infrastructure and local facilities.

The Council appointed Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP) in 2009 to prepare a town centre and retail study covering each of its four towns. In qualitative terms, Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City provide a reasonable range of comparison shops, including a selection of national multiples and independent retailers. The smaller centres (Royston and Baldock) have a number of small independent retailers that provide specialist shopping.

The assessment of available expenditure and existing shopping patterns suggested that convenience and comparison goods sales, by floorspace, within North Hertfordshire in 2009 was collectively trading above expected levels.

The objective of the retail development strategy for North Hertfordshire is to maintain the district’s shopping role and market share within the sub-region, in the face of increasing competition.

The Retail Study is being updated in the light of changes in Government legislation and future local housing growth.

## Education

The district's workforce has a good standard of education. Over half of the working age population have the equivalent of two or more 'A' levels - this is above both regional and national averages.

Nevertheless, there are areas within the district that rank low in terms of education, skills and training. The second most deprived LSOA in the county is in the Wilbury area of Letchworth Garden City. Moreover, there are LSOAs in all of the towns in the district in the bottom 25% of the county; eight in Letchworth Garden City, three in Hitchin, two in Royston and one in Baldock<sup>12</sup>.

## Health

North Hertfordshire scores well against almost all indicators associated with health. The exceptions are:

- Physically inactive children;
- Binge drinking adults;
- Physically inactive adults;
- Incidents of malignant melanoma; and
- Excess winter deaths

The higher than average incidence of excess winter deaths correlates with the prevalence of fuel poverty within the district. Fuel poverty particularly affects older people as they are more likely to be living alone in under-occupied dwellings and have low relative incomes. They are also generally more house-bound. The main causes of fuel poverty are:

- Low household income;
- High fuel costs; and
- Poor dwelling energy efficiency.

An estimated 17.3%<sup>13</sup> of households in the district are at risk of fuel poverty, of which 2% are at risk of severe fuel poverty. This is considerably higher than the national average for England which is about 11.5%. Of those at risk, 80% have savings of £5,000 or less.

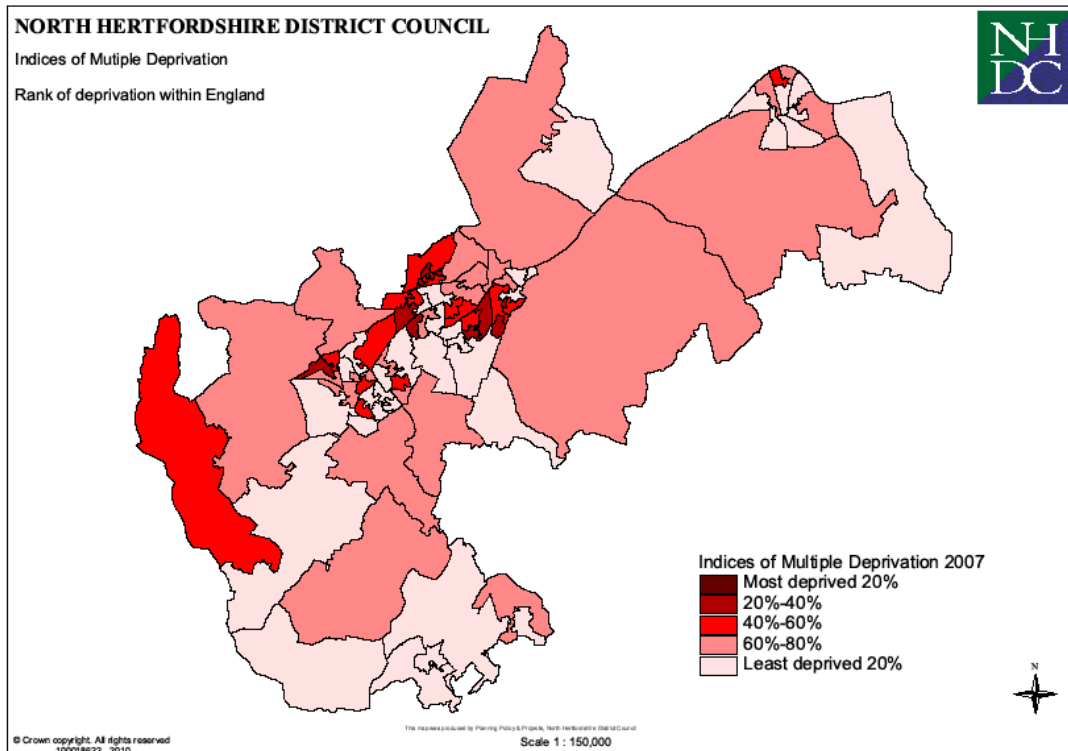
In order to address the issues of poor energy efficiency and high fuel costs, the Council is participating in the Herts and Essex Energy Partnership Scheme. This provides funding to help vulnerable households and the insulation measures include wall and loft insulation, solid wall insulation, boiler repair / replacement, general insulation works i.e. tank lagging and draft proofing. The Council also provides grants for vulnerable clients who require insulation improvements such as window upgrades from single to double glazed units.

<sup>12</sup> DCLG; Indices of deprivation, 2007

<sup>13</sup> The North Hertfordshire Stock Condition Survey 2006/07

## Deprivation

North Hertfordshire is a relatively prosperous area and none of its LSOAs are in the fifth most deprived areas in England (by rank of the Index of Multiple Deprivation). Large parts of the district's rural areas and towns are within the least deprived fifth of England and almost all the rural areas are within the least deprived two fifths.



Nevertheless, there are pockets of relative deprivation within the two largest towns of Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City. Parts of Westmill in Hitchin and Jackmans Estate, Grange Estate, and the areas of Wilbury and Westbury in Letchworth Garden City fall within the second lowest fifth of deprivation areas in the country.

Perhaps a more meaningful picture of relative deprivation can be gained by comparing North Hertfordshire to other Hertfordshire local authorities: there are 13 LSOAs in the district that are in the most deprived 20% in the county. Table 4 shows the levels of deprivation in North Hertfordshire when ranked against all Hertfordshire LSOAs.

Table 4: Indices of Deprivation 2007

Index of deprivation	No. of LSOAs in N. Hertfordshire in the		Rank of most deprived LSOA in N Hertfordshire (out of 683 in Hertfordshire - 1 is the most deprived)	Area of most deprived LSOA in the district
	Most deprived 20% of LSOAs in Hertfordshire	Most deprived 10% of LSOAs in Hertfordshire		
Overall	13	6	10	Westmill
Income	16	8	14	Westmill
Employment	15	8	5	Westmill
Health Deprivation and Disability	14	5	12	Westmill
Education, Skills and Training	12	8	2	Jackmans Estate
Barriers to Housing and Services	17	7	9	Weston and Sandon <sup>14</sup>
Crime	7	2	21	Hitchin Priory (Town Centre)
Living Environment	16	9	9	Hitchin Bearton

Source: ONS, *Indices of Deprivation 2007*

<sup>14</sup> This indicator scores lowest in LSOAs where the cost of housing is high and the scores is for other indicators of deprivation high.

### **3. The Vision for North Hertfordshire**

There are many existing overarching strategies that the LIP draws on, each with their own priorities. The following documents represent the most relevant and they provide the strategic context of the LIP.

North Hertfordshire District Council has a clear vision for the district: *Making North Hertfordshire a vibrant place for people to live, work and prosper.*

This vision belongs to, and was created by, all of the partners in the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The many agencies, organisations and individuals involved in the partnership are all working to achieve the vision through the district's **Sustainable Community Strategy (2009-2021)**.

The Sustainable Community Strategy identifies ten long term priorities for the district:

- Protecting and enhancing the environment;
- Improving the life chances of children and young people;
- Strengthening communities and involving people;
- Improving health and wellbeing;
- Enriching the lives of our elders;
- Increasing economic prosperity and employment;
- Promoting lifelong learning, training and skills development;
- Providing decent and affordable housing;
- Improving travel and transport; and
- A safe community.

In contributing to the achievement of the shared vision, the Council has three priorities:

- Town centres – to include the delivery of the town centre strategies, support for town centre partnerships and preserving/enhancing the street scene;
- Green issues – to include development of the Council's climate change strategy, retention and enhancement of green spaces and increasing recycling facilities; and
- Sustainable development – challenging development within the Green Belt and ensuring that any development which does take place is sustainable in the long term.

These are the areas on which the Council is concentrating its resources and which form the basis of its corporate business planning process.

**The North Hertfordshire Housing Strategy (2008-2013)** sets out how the Council plans to achieve its long term strategic vision for housing: to meet the

community's needs for decent, high quality and affordable homes. This is supported by six priorities for action:

- To work towards balancing local housing markets;
- To create inclusive sustainable communities;
- To improve access to, and choice in, housing;
- To provide dwellings suitable for the diverse needs of the community;
- To maintain and improve the quality of the current housing stock; and
- To protect the environment.

The Core Strategy of the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) highlights the following objectives:

- Managing environments;
- Meeting housing and transport needs;
- Healthy communities;
- Prosperous communities; and
- Delivery.

## **4. Strategic Priorities for North Hertfordshire**

The Sustainable Community Strategy, the Council's three Priorities (delivered through its Corporate Plan), the Housing Strategy and the LDF Core Strategy together provide a comprehensive picture of the vision for the district both current and future. The Council has identified four key, cross cutting ambitions that are particularly relevant to the LIP:

- A) Securing sustainable housing
- B) Delivering housing that meets the needs of excluded and vulnerable groups
- C) Housing led regeneration
- D) Support for the local economy

### **A) Securing sustainable housing**

The Council is currently reviewing its growth options in terms of housing supply over the next 20 years.

#### **Housing demand**

Historically, demand for housing in the district has been high. When reviewing the opinions of residents, the last District Wide Survey, undertaken in 2008, revealed the top answer for '*making somewhere a good place to live*' was cheaper/affordable housing<sup>15</sup>. In addition to local demand arising from the demographic changes mentioned previously, the district also faces a higher than average demand for housing from inward migrants (see Table 5 below).

Table 5: Movements between local authorities in the UK

	2005		2006		2007	
	Net inflow <sup>(1)</sup>	Rate <sup>(2)</sup>	Net inflow <sup>(1)</sup>	Rate <sup>(2)</sup>	Net inflow <sup>(1)</sup>	Rate <sup>(2)</sup>
North Hertfordshire	0.5	4.2	0.9	7.5	0.8	6.2
Hertfordshire	1.0	0.9	2.8	2.6	2.8	2.6
East	14.8	2.7	16.0	2.9	18.0	3.2

(1) thousands

(2) net migration rate per 1000 resident population

Source: ONS; based on patient register data and patient re-registration recorded in the NHSCR.

The Council undertook a Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2010 and this confirmed the continuing demand for affordable housing across the district. It identified an annual need for 560 additional units of affordable

<sup>15</sup> North Herts District Council District Wide Survey 2008 : [http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/district\\_wide\\_survey\\_2008\\_newsletter-nhdc\\_internet\\_version.pdf](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/district_wide_survey_2008_newsletter-nhdc_internet_version.pdf)

housing and recommended a tenure mix balance of 65% social rent and 35% intermediate tenures.

### House prices and rent levels

Average house prices in the district are considerably higher than those experienced in England and Wales; more significantly, they are also higher than in the East of England region (see Table 6). However, they are marginally lower than those of the county. After an increase in prices of 46.5% between September 2002 and 2007, the average price of a property in North Hertfordshire dropped by around 8.8% in the following two years<sup>16</sup>. This trend has been accompanied by a substantial decrease in the volume of sales.

Table 6: Average house prices by type, Q3 2009

	North Hertfordshire	East of England	England & Wales
Detached	£430,621	£261,521	£319,597
Semi-detached	£236,666	£162,147	£192,299
Terraced	£194,255	£132,829	£181,926
Flat/maisonette	£145,468	£109,521	£205,399
Overall	£240,990	£167,194	£223,996

Source: SHMA update 2010

The income required to buy a property varies across the district. For example, the least expensive one bedroom flats can be secured on an income of between £25,800 (Letchworth Garden City) and £35,300 (Royston). An entry level two bedroom terraced house requires an income of between £43,400 (Baldock and Letchworth Garden City) and £49,500 (southern rural areas).

On average, 67.2% of concealed households within the district earn below the income requirement for one and two bedroom flats in the cheapest market area (Letchworth Garden City). Moreover, only 18% of new forming households in the district have savings of £20,000 (or more) for a deposit; hence, 82% are unable to buy their own accommodation as they have insufficient resources to secure a mortgage.

The majority of new entrants to the housing market are, therefore, restricted to the private rental sector. To privately rent in the cheapest area of the district (Letchworth Garden City) a one bedroom flat requires an income of £24,000 and a two bedroom terrace an income of £30,000<sup>17</sup>. Based on the incomes of recently formed households and their requirements for one, two and three bedroom properties, 32% cannot afford to access even the cheapest private rented properties in the district<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> North Herts Strategic Housing Market Assessment update Oct 2010

<sup>17</sup> North Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update: Oct 2010

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*



Thus, despite a drop in the house-price-to-income ratio from 5.84 in July 2007 to 4.34 in March 2009, the limited supply of properties on the market and the tightening of lending criteria for mortgages (particularly at high loan to valuation ratios) has resulted in a 46% decline in the number of first time buyers coming into the market between 2008 and 2009.

Clearly, the cost of housing in the district is beyond the reach of many, especially young adults. As a result, demand for affordable housing has risen significantly: between April 2005 and April 2010 the number of households on the Council's housing register increased by 179%.

Nevertheless, the number of mortgage possession claims has been decreasing over the last few years which suggests that the reduction in interest rates and a revised approach to lender foreclosure have safeguarded homeowners. This trend is contrary to that of landlord possession claims which have risen sharply, up from 130 in 2007 to 200 in 2009<sup>19</sup>.

Therefore, notwithstanding the prosperity of the district, access to affordable housing is a significant issue for many residents. There are twenty Lower Super Output Areas in the district that rank in the bottom 25% in the county for barriers to housing and services<sup>20</sup> and twenty three LSOAs in the bottom 25% for living environment<sup>21</sup>.

## **Rural housing**

Aside from the four main towns in the district, there are 37 rural parishes. The availability of housing in these areas is important to ensure the sustainability of these communities – in particular the provision of affordable housing can enable young people and families to remain in the communities where they have grown up.

The Council, working in partnership with the Community Development Agency (CDA) for Hertfordshire and local Registered Providers (RPs), has undertaken a programme of rural housing needs surveys and has been very successful in delivering affordable housing in rural parishes to meet identified housing need. Some schemes have included the provision of 'flexi houses' where easy adaptation of the property facilitates the provision of an extra bedroom should the future need arise.

The provision of affordable rural housing remains a priority for the Council.

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<sup>19</sup> Statistics on mortgage and landlord possession actions in the county courts of England and Wales, 1999-2010 Quarter 3

<sup>20</sup> DCLG; Indices of deprivation, 2007 - The 'barriers to housing' indicators fall into two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers' and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid – The 'Living Environment' indicators comprises two sub-domains: the 'indoors' living environment which measures the quality of housing and the 'outdoors' living environment which contains two measures about air quality and road traffic accidents.

## **Under-occupation**

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment of 2008 estimated that as many as 2200 social rented units in the district could be under-occupied by two or more bedrooms.

Many older people occupy larger, family type, accommodation which they no longer need. Whilst it is not proposed that people are forced to downsize, many may find such properties unmanageable and expensive in terms of maintenance and heating. Due to demographic pressures, the need for accommodation with on-site care will increase as will the need for smaller properties, adaptations and other specialist accommodation for this client group.

The LSP has funded a study, undertaken by Cambridge University, into the extent of under-occupation in the district and the aspirations of under-occupying social tenants. The findings will feed in to an action plan that will provide more attractive incentives to under-occupying tenants to move and free up larger accommodation for families, enabling the better use of existing social stock.

## **Investment priorities**

The Council's investment priorities are contained in Appendix 1. This illustrates recent, current and potential housing schemes that could be delivered in the district.

The high priority potential housing schemes include:

- the regeneration of John Barker Place in Hitchin (see priority C) and the town centre regeneration at Churchgate (see priority D)
- the Council owned sites at Lloyd Way Kimpton and Clothall Common Baldock
- the two rural schemes in Barkway to deliver housing to meet identified need
- the former Priory Cinema site for a flexi-care scheme which will release land elsewhere for the provision of general needs affordable housing

## **B) Delivering housing that meets the needs of excluded and vulnerable groups**

### **Homelessness**

The Council has met the 2010 target to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by 50% and has a high rate of homelessness prevention through the introduction of a wide range of prevention initiatives, improved partnership working and changing working practices.

However, it is likely that temporary accommodation will always be required, and the Council is working with its two main providers of temporary accommodation, NHH and Aldwyck Housing Group, on improving the standard and quality of these units.

### **Single homelessness provision**

An area of high priority is the management of rough sleepers and the street homelessness. The latest estimate for rough sleepers in the district was 6 which is high for an area of the size and the relative prosperity of North Hertfordshire. This issue is being addressed at a multi-agency level with the formation of a monthly panel meeting involving key agencies.

However, the current provision of accommodation for this client group is under-developed. Present provision for single homeless persons is limited to a 17 bed night shelter owned and managed by a small charitable organisation in Hitchin. Clients are admitted between 7 pm and 8.30 am with three or four people sharing a room. Residents are accommodated for a maximum of eight weeks after which they are excluded for an eight week period before they are considered for readmission.

As a consequence, residents are on the street for long periods of the day and there is a lack of opportunity for them to participate in meaningful activity associated with pathways into settled accommodation and employment. The result is that a significant minority become entrenched in a culture of rough sleeping and street homelessness.

The Council, Hertfordshire County Council and the trustees of the night shelter have been in discussions with accommodation and support providers and the Places of Change team. The intention is to replace the night shelter with staged hostel accommodation that meets the objectives of the Places of Change Programme. The hostel will act as a pathway out of homelessness and into independent living. Key to this is the provision of a suitable building with single rooms for residents and sufficient space for key services and activities to be delivered on-site, particularly during the day.

### **Gypsies and Travellers**

The district currently has one private Gypsy and Traveller site in the parish of Codicote, consisting of six pitches.

The previous Government created a framework whereby targets for Gypsy and Traveller provision were set within the Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs). The Coalition Government has issued a letter seeking to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs), including the East of England Plan, and it has subsequently stated that local councils are best placed to assess the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and that they should identify provision to reflect local need and historic demand.

In June 2006 a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was published which looked at the levels of need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation within the five local authorities of Broxbourne, East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire, Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield. The report identified that an additional 45 pitches were required for the next 5 years in the whole of Northern and Eastern Hertfordshire. The approach to additional Gypsy and Traveller provision in North Hertfordshire will be detailed and agreed through the Council's LDF process.

### **Accommodation for people with poor mental health**

The Council has been working with NHH, Aldwyck Housing Group, the NHS and Hertfordshire County Council on the provision of an accommodation and support service for people with poor mental health. Although not all the planned units are currently available, the service is operational. It provides support in independent 'satellite' accommodation as well as more intensive support in dedicated 'cluster' units. Residents can either go directly into a 'satellite' unit, or move on from a 'cluster' unit to a 'satellite' unit. As appropriate. Once the resident is established in the 'satellite' unit, they are able to take up a permanent tenancy at the same property.

### **Accommodation for people with learning disabilities**

The Council is working in partnership on a 2008/2011 National Affordable Housing Programme funded scheme to provide 15 general needs affordable housing units and 15 one bedroom supported housing units for people with learning disabilities. The project team includes Hertfordshire County Council, NHH and MacIntyre care, the latter being a specialist in supported housing care and provision.

### **Provision for older people**

The Council has been working as part of a Local Area Programme Board with local RPs, Hertfordshire County Council, Age Concern and the NHS. Four NHH sheltered housing schemes have become flexi-care schemes, providing a total of 146 places. Further reviews of projects have identified additional opportunities to remodel good standard sheltered accommodation to flexi-care housing. In particular, a site in Royston is currently being considered for flexi-care housing.

## **C) Housing led regeneration**

The Council is constantly reviewing opportunities to regenerate the deprived areas of the district and schemes have been outlined for two areas – Ivel Court (Letchworth Garden City) and Westmill (Hitchin).

### **Ivel Court, Jackmans Estate Regeneration Project**

The site lies within the Letchworth Garden City South East ward. This ward is the 50<sup>th</sup> most disadvantaged ward in Hertfordshire (199 wards) and the 6<sup>th</sup>

most disadvantaged ward in the district of North Hertfordshire. Issues of particular concern are:

- poor health;
- poor housing;
- high unemployment; and
- crime and the fear of crime.

### **Westmill Regeneration Project**

The population of the Westmill estate is in the region of 4,952 with the highest deprivation levels of any estate in North Hertfordshire. The John Barker Place area of the Westmill estate is in the lowest 10 areas of deprivation in Hertfordshire.

The Key issues are:-

- Community Safety
- The lack of leisure and youth facilities
- Housing issues

Outlines for both of these regeneration schemes are contained within Appendix 2.

### **D) Support for the local economy**

The North Hertfordshire economy has historically provided jobs for local people, incorporating a strong manufacturing and engineering base. Johnson Matthey is district's largest employer, which employs over 1,000 people. They are a speciality chemicals company focused on skills in catalysis, precious metals, fine chemicals and process technology. There are, however, few large employers in the district and the majority of businesses are small and medium enterprises employing fewer than 50 people. This makes the economy particularly resilient to downturns.

Numerically the largest employment sector is hotels, distribution and catering which involve roughly 27% of the workforce. Financial and business services together with public administration and education accounts for 41% of the working population each with a further 14% in manufacturing<sup>22</sup>.

A growing sector for new and expanding business is in the knowledge based economy (medium and hi-tech manufacturing and hi-tech services) reflecting the high standards of education in the district and the influence of accessible colleges and universities.

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<sup>22</sup> Annual Business Survey 2008

North Hertfordshire has experienced a reduction in the number of jobs in recent years, even in the early 2000's when there was a period of relative economic prosperity.

There are a number of vacant properties in the town centres which are generally large, 'harder to let' properties rather than small retail units, which are still letting well with low vacancy rates. There are also vacant properties in the district's employment areas and there is a desire to make economic development a more proactive process by seeking to do more, encouraging development and working with businesses to grow the economy. This has started through work being completed at a county level.

Policies in the LDF will provide a framework for the future of the economy in the district, but these are not likely to be part of the development plan until at the earliest, 2013. Therefore work being conducted in the short term will be important, not only to feed into the LDF policies, but to ensure that the district is competitive until these policies are adopted.

The Council is involved in many initiatives that support the local economy :

### **Hertfordshire Works / Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)**

The work being undertaken at a county level is of particular importance as the Council needs to ensure that it is fully committed as a member of Hertfordshire Works and also the forthcoming LEP. It has been proposed that LEPs will replace both the regional development agencies and the regional assemblies - so their effect will be of particular importance to the future development of the district. Although the Council is part of the Hertfordshire LEP, it is also specifically mentioned in the Greater Cambridge and Peterborough LEP too as it borders with it and the settlement of Royston is heavily influenced by the Cambridge economy. The LEP is likely to take over from Hertfordshire Works, although transitional arrangements have not yet been agreed.

As well as representation on the Hertfordshire Works Board / LEP Board, the Council will endeavour to maintain a presence on the associated sub-groups as this is where detailed decision making will take place. These groups currently include:

- Strategy and Intelligence
- Skills and Economic Participation
- Inward Investment
- Vibrant Towns

Most recently, the greatest number of projects appear to be emanating from the Inward Investment group. Within this group there are currently projects involving:

- Strategic Sites – investigation within the county to see whether there are sites available to facilitate desired economic growth
- Rural Broadband Provision – Hertfordshire Works working with districts and British Telecom to identify rural areas with poor coverage for potential upgrades
- Invest in Hertfordshire Website<sup>23</sup> – creation of website specifically promoting Hertfordshire

In addition to these specific projects, officers from East of England Invest are continually working with districts, the county, businesses and potential future investors seeking to identify premises and facilitate future growth and development of the local economy. At the same time they are also facilitating meetings with existing businesses in the area, seeking to retain and grow those businesses that already exist.

### **Contribution to the Local Economic Assessment (LEA)**

Part 4 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill (clauses 63 and 64) places a new duty on county councils and unitary authorities to assess the economic conditions of their area, which is to be reported via a LEA. Local planning authorities have a duty to contribute to this process.

### **The Eastern Plateau Project**

The Eastern Plateau project is a European funded joint venture involving East Hertfordshire DC, Uttlesford DC and North Hertfordshire DC. This project has been allocated £2.5million to invest in local farm businesses, micro enterprises, tourism and community service providers up until December 2013. The Council's representation and involvement in the project is important given the rural character of the district.

### **Town Centres**

The four town centres of Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Royston form a vital part of the economic, social and cultural life of the district.

The Council monitors changes in commercial floorspace and unit type in each of the towns (and also village and neighbourhood centres) on an annual basis. Table 7 shows the split of use classes and the corresponding number of units at April 2010. It is evident that Hitchin has by far the largest amount of total town centre units and also shops (A1). Letchworth Garden City is second largest, followed by Royston and then Baldock. The high figure for vacant units in Letchworth Garden City is largely explained by the acquisition of shops for the proposed redevelopment of the Wynd area. Recent environmental enhancements to the Letchworth Garden City Town Centre have meant that a number of previously vacant units have been reoccupied.

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<sup>23</sup> Website available from: <http://www.hertsdirect.org/investhertfordshire>

Nevertheless, vacancy rates increased in Baldock, Royston and Letchworth Garden City from the previous year (2008-09).

**Table 7: The usage of commercial units in North Herts, April 2010**

Use Class	Royston	Baldock	LGC	Hitchin	Total	4 Town Average
A1 Retail	88	40	158	227	<b>513</b>	47.5%
A2 Financial and professional services	26	13	25	34	<b>98</b>	9.1%
A3 Restaurants	12	11	16	34	<b>73</b>	6.8%
A4 Drinking establishments	6	8	3	18	<b>35</b>	3.2%
A5 Hot food takeaway	10	6	10	12	<b>38</b>	3.5%
B1 Office	17	12	10	46	<b>85</b>	7.9%
B2 General manufacturing	1	6	1	5	<b>13</b>	1.2%
B8 Storage and distribution	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>	0.1%
C1 Hotels and hostels	1	1	1	1	<b>4</b>	0.4%
C3 Residential	9	3	0	5	<b>17</b>	1.6%
D1 Non residential institutions	10	18	6	18	<b>52</b>	4.8%
D2 Assembly and leisure	4	0	2	11	<b>17</b>	1.6%
SG sui generis	3	2	0	5	<b>10</b>	0.9%
Vacant	22	17	47	38	<b>124</b>	11.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>1080</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: NHDC Town Centre Monitoring Report 2009-10

The town centres are the economic drivers of the district and economic development contributes to their enhancement and general well-being via a number of mechanism. Firstly, the Council provides a financial contribution towards each of the town centre partnerships, part-funding a town centre manager. There is also the general matter of control of development, ensuring that uses are appropriately located, which has a large influence on their overall health. Finally, the Council influences future growth by the formulation and implementation of town centre strategies, design briefs and specific enhancement projects.

Town centre strategies have been produced for each of the four towns. These guide and promote integrated development, seeking to enhance the town centre environment whilst maintaining and improving vitality and viability over the next 10 to 15 years. They set a vision for each town and identify a number of opportunity sites for development and/or enhancement. The intention is to review these strategies in light of changes in Government legislation, the prevailing economic climate as well as social and cultural changes.

The town centres of both Baldock and Letchworth Garden City have recently been subject to major improvement works. Two years on following completion



of the Baldock Town Centre enhancement project the town is adapting to change and is functioning better. More people are visiting the town centre, there are available parking spaces for shoppers and visitors, a growing market, more and better events taking place, businesses are reporting more trade, there is good use of the footpaths and new green spaces, plus the scheme is award winning (it won the Horticultural Landscape and Amenity Award 2009 under the Category Best Commercial Project).

#### Photo 4 - Baldock

Hitchin town centre has seen significant growth in terms of residential development over the last decade and the Council has recently appointed a development partner as the next step towards achieving the Council's long standing aim of redeveloping the Churchgate centre (an old 1960's retail development which does not reflect the character of the historic town) and the surrounding area. The Council owns the land and has chosen Simons to lead on this work; Simons is a well-known, respected national company that has carried out work in a number of historic towns such as Witney, Newark, Ely, Lincoln, Durham and Carmarthen.

Their brief requires them to make significant investment in this important area of Hitchin, to ensure that there are opportunities to attract the right mix and types of shops to the town, and that it becomes more attractive whilst at the same time its historic character is retained. Simons will be looking to achieve this by creating a high quality retail-led, mixed-use scheme that will significantly enhance the town. In addition to retail, the mixed-use scheme will include residential, improvements to the Hitchin market, some existing public space and provision of new public spaces. The developers are actively seeking retail interests, in discussion with key landowners and are in the process of on-going consultation with key stakeholders and the local community as part of evolving the scheme prior to the submission of a planning application.

A number of opportunity sites are being progressed as identified in the Royston Town Centre Strategy. These include:

- The design scheme for the enhancement of Fish Hill Square has been agreed. It is anticipated that this will provide a better public space that will become a focal point for the town centre that can be used for a number of different activities such as specialist markets, pavement café's and events whilst minimising the impact of parking and traffic within the new square. There has been a positive response from the public consultation and the surrounding businesses - implementation is due in 2011.
- The preparation of a Development Brief for the Royston Cross area, another important public space within Royston town centre, seeks to improve the pedestrian priority and enhancement of the area. Delivery of this will be dependent on securing available funding in the future.

- Progressing work on the preparation of a development brief for the Royston Civic Centre Site. The site that is in multiple ownership and is identified as an opportunity site in the Royston Town Centre Strategy for possible mixed-use development. Development options are being investigated and the delivery of these will be dependent on the outcomes of the development brief, partnership working and available funding.

### **Other Council Activities**

- Employment monitoring – the process of monitoring employment related planning permissions occurs every April. A report detailing the trends and findings is published by the following September. More recently the document has included more detailed information on the economic conditions of the district.
- Town Centre monitoring - the process of monitoring town centre floorspace occurs every April. A report detailing the trends and findings is published by September. The scope of this report has also been widened to include information (where available) on the health of the district's town centres.
- Employment Area Audit – in the June/July 2010 an audit of the town's employment areas was undertaken. This enabled an understanding of the what businesses were currently present. It also provided the details of which of the units were vacant, which provided useful knowledge for any future investment.

The monitoring reports also feed into the production of the district's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

## **5. The Delivery of Housing**

### **Future housing targets**

The Council is currently working towards producing a revised draft LDF Core Strategy in 2011 which will identify a range of possible new locally-derived housing targets for the period 2011-2031 and indicate which level of growth is the Council's preferred option. This will be based on work currently being undertaken with stakeholders and infrastructure providers. The Council will then aim to formally submit the revised Core Strategy for independent examination once the relevant clauses of the Localism Bill have come into force.

The Council is supportive of housing growth where it is needed and can be delivered in a satisfactory way. The draft Core Strategy of 2007 identified directions for greenfield expansion for all four towns in the district, with the growth in Baldock being quite substantial relative to the current size of the town. Since then, significant masterplanning work has been carried out for the growth of Baldock, including such matters as identifying land for employment growth to come forward alongside the housing and possibly securing a rebuilt and enlarged secondary school for the town.

In Royston, the Council has pragmatically started allowing planning permissions on some of the sites within the area for growth (despite these sites not yet being formally allocated for development) as a means of ensuring continuation of housing supply at this time.

With respect to the growth of Stevenage into North Hertfordshire, the Council opposed the principle of these extensions when they were first proposed, as the levels of growth required went well beyond the growth needed to meet Stevenage's needs with no transparent justification for how the proposed level of growth had been derived. However, once the growth of Stevenage was included in the finished East of England Plan, the Council did start working in partnership with Stevenage Borough Council in preparing a joint action plan to guide these urban extensions.

Following the change of Government and the current uncertainty over the transition towards a new planning system without regional strategies, the Council is reconsidering its stance towards Stevenage. The previous concerns about the justification for growth around Stevenage remain, now informed by the Council's joint work on the action plans, which has identified some areas where development would have significant adverse impacts. Therefore, the Council is now considering Stevenage in a more consistent way with the other areas of land that could be used to meet development needs and weighing up how the Council can best meet identified levels of need for housing with land that has least environmental impact. At this stage, the Council is unclear whether land around Stevenage will be part of the overall solution.

The Council needs to establish its own housing target for the plan period. As a first step, it has identified 7 different “targets,” ranging from 2,300 to 15,800 additional dwellings over the 20 years from 2011 to 2031.

Table 8: Housing Supply Options 2011-2031

Option	Dwellings	Annual Build Rate
A. Brownfield	2,300	115
B. Nil-net Migration	6,000	300
C. Continue Trends excluding Great Ashby	7,700	385
D. Continue Trends including Great Ashby	11,300	565
E. Stevenage Growth	13,400	670
F. Normal Migration	15,200	760
G. Former RSS Review (“Option 1”) Figure	15,800	790

To set these options in context, Table 9 sets out potential sources of supply:

Table 9: Potential Sources of Supply

Source	Dwellings
1. Estimated Permissions as at 01 Apr 2011 (excluding WA1M site)	989
2. WA1M site (currently subject to challenge)	1,700
3. Small Sites allowance	600
4. Brownfield sites within existing settlement boundaries	785
5. Greenfield sites within Council's preferred directions for growth	2,176
6. Greenfield sites outside Council's preferred directions for growth	4,157
7. WA1M beyond permission	1,400
8. North Stevenage	1,700
9. North East Stevenage	5,700
TOTAL	19,207

*Source: Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010*

### Recent performance

Since 2003, the Council has delivered the following number of new housing units per year:

Table 10: Total housing units delivered since 2003

Year	Total completions	Open market	Affordable	Proportion (%)
2003/4	490	480	10	2
2004/5	450	364	86	19.1
2005/6	591	424	167	28.3
2006/7	623	501	122	19.6
2007/8	722	617	105	14.5
2008/9	462	366	96	20.8
2009/10	334	251	83	24.9

Source: AMR

The percentage of affordable housing delivered has been very low in some years. Not all sites will have delivered affordable housing. Until May 2008, 25% affordable housing was required on sites with a threshold of 20 or more dwellings in accordance with the Council's adopted Local Plan. Following adoption of the East of England Plan in May 2008, 35% affordable housing is required on sites with a threshold of 15 or more dwellings in line with PPS3.

The Council's preferred policy for affordable housing is the tiered approach set out in draft Core Policy G of the Core Strategy. This seeks a sliding scale of affordable housing, ranging from financial contributions for sites of four or fewer dwellings, up to 40% of dwellings being affordable on sites of 25 or more dwellings. As this is only a draft policy the Council is unable to completely implement it in current applications.

#### [Photo 5 – AH dev in LGC](#)

Another part of the emerging Core Strategy policy on affordable housing is increased use of commuted sums. At present, the Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) exceptionally allows for the affordable housing component of a scheme to be commuted by means of a payment which the Council will then use to fund affordable housing elsewhere. The emerging Core Strategy policy seeks to secure contributions from all new housing sites, which will lead to greater contribution from commuted sums, especially from sites five or fewer dwellings.

In the meantime, the Council is seeking affordable housing on sites of 15 or more dwellings in line with the national affordable housing threshold contained in PPS3. The Council is seeking 35% of homes to be affordable in line with the East of England Plan. On sites of over 25 dwellings, especially those outside current settlement boundaries, the evidence which underpins the emerging Core Policy is used to argue for 40% affordable housing.

Since the transfer of its housing stock in 2003, the Council has invested the following annual amounts in the supply of affordable housing locally:

Table 11 : Council investment in affordable housing since 2003

Year	Actual spend
2003/4	£725K
2004/5	£2.946m
2005/6	£1.426m
2006/7	£620K
2007/8	£2.532m
2008/9	£469K
2009/10	£168K
2010/11	£208K*

\*year to date at December 2010

The budget for 2011/12 current stands at £500K although this is currently subject to review.

### **New Homes Bonus**

At the moment, the finer details of the New Homes Bonus have yet to be confirmed. The Council is also reviewing its housing targets and it is therefore difficult to assess the overall impact of this initiative.

However, preliminary modelling has been undertaken, based on current proposals for the New Homes Bonus and the delivery figures for 2009/10. This illustrated that over £3m could be generated over 6 years, or just over £500K each year from 2011 until 2016. In addition to this, every 100 dwellings over and above this level, would result in a receipt of almost £940K over the six year period. These amounts would ultimately be shared with Hertfordshire County Council and the current proposals recommend a 80% / 20% division in favour of the lower tier authority.

The Council has noted that empty homes that are brought back in to use are eligible for the New Homes Bonus. The overall figure for the number of empty homes in the district was 532 at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010. However, when properties that are subject to circumstances that delay them being brought back into use, such as probate, are removed the figure is in the region of 200. Of these, a large proportion are currently being marketed and will be brought back into use without intervention either when market conditions improve or their owners reduce the price.

A number of empty homes are situated in isolated rural locations that are not served well by public transport and amenities such as shops, schools and social and leisure facilities. They are not, therefore, suitable for affordable housing as their location impedes access to essential services and the cost of transportation can be high.

The Council is currently considering the New Homes Bonus as part of its appraisal of Housing Options and review of future growth levels and the outcome of this process will be reflected in the future update of the LIP.

### **Housing quality**

Where new developments occur, the Council seeks to ensure that there is a high quality of design in the development. North Hertfordshire has a good track record of delivering quality design, in part following the model of the Garden City approach that was pioneered at Letchworth Garden City. Major new developments in Letchworth Garden City and elsewhere in the district, such as Great Ashby, have been planned following Garden City principles.

The Council has two emerging policy documents which aim to continue the delivery of high quality design. The Development Policies document includes policies encouraging new development to be sustainable, in particular by being adaptable, designing out crime, reducing the use of energy and production of waste and supporting transport beyond the private car. The Design Supplementary Planning Document is concerned more with the appearance and style of design in different parts of the district and builds on assessments of different parts of each town and every village where development is normally allowed, which will be used to inform new developments in those areas.

### **Housing innovation**

The Council has delivered innovative schemes that meet local needs and the following developments provide some examples:

- Unity House, Whinbush Road, Hitchin – completed 2005

The provision of a resource centre for the BME Forum and six one bedroomed flats, funded by the Council, for which the Council won the Annual BME Social Housing Award 2005 for best partnership working with a mainstream Registered Providers (RPs) and local authority.

- Crown House, Bridge Street, Hitchin – completed 2009/10

This town centre site was a large office building which had been vacated by HM Revenue & Customs. The site is immediately adjacent to the fording point on the River Hiz which was the original focus of the medieval town. The existing buildings were of a poor quality 1950s/60s concrete style and blocked public access to the river.

The Council has long had plans to open up public access to, and along, the River Hiz through the centre of Hitchin which is at present quite fragmented. This scheme replaced the former office building with a sympathetic modern building with a ground floor shop/café unit, where the former offices had represented a large gap in the retail frontage of Bridge Street. Above the café/shop are 24 flats, 6 of which are affordable.

The new building is set back from the river and a new walkway has been created along the river past this development along with a new link across the river to the east bank, where another new development is also opening access. Whilst these stretches of walkway have yet to link up with the other accessible parts of the river bank, they do provide an important part of the route that the Council is still working towards, especially in respect of having a link to Bridge Street.

- Elmtree Avenue, Cockernhoe – under construction

This rural site comprised of 24 statutorily defective pre-cast reinforced concrete houses, behind which were an under-used garage court and a small abandoned play area. The nearby village hall had been found to be structurally unsound and had to close, leaving Cockernhoe without a community meeting place. A parish housing needs survey had found that there was a need for additional affordable housing in the parish to meet local needs.

The scheme will replace the defective housing with new build houses, phased such that the existing residents can relocate from their old houses straight into the new ones. As well as 24 replacement dwellings, an additional 10 dwellings are being provided on the site through more efficient use of land, meeting the identified needs for affordable housing. The development also provides a new community garden at the centre of the new housing, and funded the construction of a replacement village hall.



## **6. Resourcing the delivery of the Local Investment Plan**

### **Main options**

A viability assessment of any proposed development will include a review of current funding streams, such as the Places of Change Programme or the Regional Growth Fund, however it is clear that funding will be generally limited for the life of this LIP.

The LIP highlights the local priorities that are most relevant to the partnership with the HCA, however, it is clear that collaboration on a broader scale is required to deliver the identified priorities.

In terms of social housing, the Council is in discussion with local RPs as regards their views on the new Affordable Rent model that is currently the subject of national consultation. Irrespective of the financial capacity offered by this new approach, the Council is still required to meet local housing need and is keen to support RPs with their ambitions for growth. RPs will need to review their corporate approach to development and decide whether they wish to commit to an agreement with the HCA in connection with their future delivery of social housing.

Local modelling focusing on the supply of affordable units and rent levels is currently being undertaken by the Council and RPs. The Council will be reviewing the options for its Strategic Tenancy Policy and will shortly be consulting with RPs on this.

As the HCA's grant budget has been drastically reduced, new models for the delivery of affordable housing need to be identified. This will largely depend on the ability of individual RPs to provide viable schemes - this could be achieved by utilising existing resources, maximising the opportunities offered by new initiatives such as the Affordable Rent model and the development of new partnerships.

### **Alternative Cash Subsidy**

The Council is considering working with RPs who provide a packaged approach to the delivery of affordable housing. RPs would need to bring sites forward themselves where they could generate subsidy in the form of profit from the sale of intermediate market tenure homes and also from the sale of market housing. This profit could be used to cross subsidise the provision of social rented dwellings. Such sites would still have to conform with local planning policy, in particular the minimum levels of affordable housing sought from all developers.

### **The Community Benefit Fund (CBF)**

The CBF is a financial arrangement that was set up between the Council and North Hertfordshire Homes at the date of stock transfer in 2003.

The original principles and priorities CBF funding are as follows:

1. Affordable housing in North Hertfordshire
2. Regeneration / community development in North Hertfordshire
3. Other issues that are considered of local benefit

Currently the fund has a £1.4 million deficit but it is approaching break-even. It will then accrue very slowly depending upon the 'right to buy' programme and remaining VAT reclaims.

### **Reducing Costs**

The Council will review the opportunities, in conjunction with RPs, for cost reduction with a view to delivering more units for the same cost. This would primarily involve agreeing a new dwelling standard with RPs as part of their commitment to delivering affordable housing in the district. For example, a new approach could be the adoption of a new build standard in line with current Building Regulations – this equates to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3. This could reduce the costs of building properties without unduly sacrificing quality.

## **7. Monitoring the Plan and Governance**

The LIP will be jointly monitored by the HCA and the Council. Both parties will agree when it is to be reviewed. It is anticipated that this will be on an annual basis or sooner if emerging policy prompts an earlier review.

The plan will also be monitored locally by the Council's Housing Development Group and the Local Strategic Partnership.

### 8. Appendix 1 - Recent, current and future development opportunities for affordable housing

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
<b>Completed schemes</b>										
Burleigh Park Ph 8 & 9	22 affordable units: 1 bed flats; 2 and 3 bed houses	0.620 NAHP						Rented and shared ownership	Sustainable growth and larger family accommodation.	
Crown & Sceptre, Bridge St. Hitchin	6 x 1 bed flats	0.240 NAHP					30	Rented		
Pelican Way, Letchworth Garden City	17 affordable units: 1 bed flats, 2, 3 and 5 bed houses	0.615 NAHP					17	Rented and rent to homebuy	Sustainable growth and larger family accommodation	
Pixmore Avenue, Letchworth Garden City	73 affordable units: 1 bed flats; 2, 3 and 4 bed houses	3.021 NAHP					250	Rented and IMR including 4 x IMR properties let to LD clients.	Sustainable growth, larger family accommodation and supported housing in partnership with HCC.	

ITEM 11 – APPENDIX 1

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
Edwin Knott Bungalows	2 x 2 bed bungalows	0.084 NAHP					2	2 rented bungalows adjacent RP's new offices.	Bungalow accommodation often difficult to deliver because of costs and land take.	
Burleigh Park Ph 2B & 2C	28 affordable units: 1 and 2 bed flats, 2, 3 and 4 bed houses	0.158 NAHP 0.385 LA						Rented and shared ownership.	Sustainable growth and larger family accommodation	
Milestone Road, Hitchin	Demolition of 36 existing properties and 41 new build properties incl. 5 additional affordable units.	0.150 LA					41	Regeneration including demolition and re-provision and additional 5 affordable units. Rented and shared ownership	Demolition of rented flatted accommodation and re-provision of more family homes and mixed tenure development.	

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
<b>Permissions</b>										
Beechridge Lodge	Full permission: 68 affordable units; 36 supported units; 2 bed flats; 2 and 3 bed houses NAHP funded	0.420	0.420			2008	68	36 one/two bed supported housing for elderly, rented family houses and flats for shared ownership following demolition of former homeless hostel and sheltered accommodation.	Sustainable development including supported housing, family homes.	1
Elm Tree Avenue	Full permission: phased demolition of 24 existing properties and provision of 35 new build properties incl. 11 additional affordable. NAHP funded.	0.120	0.120			2008	35	Phased demolition of 24 pre-cast reinforced concrete prefabs and provision of 35 new affordable properties, both rented and shared ownership on a site in the Green Belt and provision of new village hall for the benefit of the community.	Rural scheme to meet identified housing need and demolition of defective housing.	1
Former Convent of Providence, Limekiln Lane, Baldock	Full permission: 29 units incl 9 affordable: 1 and 2 bed flats, 2 and 3 bed houses. NAHP funded.	0.218	0.218		0.536	2010	29	Rented flats and houses and IMR flats. Grant funding £60K/£25K per unit rented/ int. market rent.	Sustainable growth and larger family homes.	1

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
Brookers Yard, Hitchin	Full permission: 142 incl. 37 affordable: 1 and 2 bed flats; 2 and 3 bed houses. NAHP & LA funded	1.084	0.459		1.543	2007	142	Re-development of former industrial. Rented and shared ownership.	Sustainable growth, larger family homes.	1
Grove Road, Hitchin	Full permission: 105 units incl. 27 affordable: 1 and 2 bed flats; 2 and 3 bed houses. NAHP & LA funded	0.811	0.330		1.141	2008	105	Re-development of former industrial. Rented and shared ownership	Sustainable growth and larger family homes.	1
Ling Dynamics Royston,	Full permission: 61 units incl. 29 affordable NAHP & LA funded	0.793		0.517	1.310	2009	61	Re- development of residential on former engineering works, in predominately residential area. 100% rented affordable scheme.	Sustainable growth and family homes. Limited affordable housing provision in Royston over the past few years.	1
Cade Close, Letchworth Garden City	Full permission 60 units, 23% private sale and 77% affordable. NAHP funded	0.858	0.858		1.716	2009	60	Code of Sustainable Homes level 4 and Lifetime Homes , eco park/ children's play area	Green Issues and sustainable development is a corporate priority	1

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
North Hertfordshire College, Willian Road, Hitchin	Outline permission for 71 dwellings, including 18 PRP. Dependent upon college redevelopment scheme. Whole scheme very uncertain at present.			0.624	0.624	2011+	71	Investment expenditure is Grant funding requirement for affordable only, based on £42K per unit for social rent and £20K per unit intermediate tenure. Planning Obligations SPD – 65%/35% rented/other tenure split.	Sustainable growth, larger family accommodation.	2
Neosid, Icknield Way, Letchworth Garden City	Full permission 115 units incl. 29 affordable. NAHP funded		0.546	0.546	1.093	2009	115	Grant funding £47.5K rented unit & £19K NBHB unit.	Sustainable growth, larger family accommodation.	1
Ivel Court, Radburn Way, Letchworth Garden City	Resolution to approve subject to S106. 59 units incl. 25 affordable, new community centre, supermarket, hot food takeaway and refurb. of existing flats and shops					2012 +	59 ?	Regeneration scheme stalled due to economic circumstances. Sale of private units to fund new community centre and poss. Affordable housing.	Sustainable growth/ development. Regeneration and community benefit for the area/estate.	1
The Old Grain Store, Gt. Wymondley	Full permission: 6 affordable dwellings. NAHP funded.		0.237		0.237	2010	6	6 affordable houses on rural exception site to meet identified housing need	Rural scheme to meet identified housing need.	1



Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
Broadwater Dale, Letchworth Garden City	Full permission: 10 affordable linked to development at The Wynd. NAHP funded		0.589		0.589	2010	10	Off site provision of affordable housing in lieu of redevelopment of the Wynd and LGC town centre by LGCHF		1
Cooks Way, Hitchin	Full permission 100% affordable housing scheme including 15 general needs and 15 supported housing units. NAHP funded		0.810	0.810	1.620	2010	30	15 supported housing units for learning disability to meet acute identified need. Grant £55K per unit rented and £30K per supported housing unit.	Sustainable development/ growth incl. larger family homes and supported housing	1
Woolgrove Road, Hitchin	Full permission: 17 affordable units. 11 rented units NAHP funded.		0.165	0.165	0.330	2010	17	11 rented units incl. one bed flats, 2 bed bungalow, 2 bed houses and 5 bed house and 2 bed houses for shared ownership on former garage site.	Sustainable growth, larger family accommodation.	1

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
Coombelands, Royston	Full permission subject to satisfactory financial viability assessment (currently being tested). 59 units overall, 19 affordable					2011	59	32% affordable housing proposed instead of 40% requirement due to financial viability as no grant funding available. Rented/ other tenure split 53%/47% rather than 65%/35% requirement for same reason.	Site outside Royston's accepted urban boundary, although has been identified for some time as an unconstrained housing site. Sustainable growth, larger family accommodation and limited affordable housing provision in Royston in recent years.	1

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
Ivy Farm, Royston	Outline permission for up to 100 units. Reserved matters application in for provision of 81 units including 32 affordable.					2011	81	40% affordable housing; 65%/35% rented/ other tenure split. Pre-application advice and extensive negotiations with landowner and planning consultant to achieve the above provision without capital grant funding.	Sustainable growth, larger family accommodation. Limited affordable housing provision in Royston in recent years.	1
Dark Lane Sandon	Full permission for 6 (4 x rented & 2 x SO) NHDC owned site in partnership with NHH NAHP funded.			0.300	0.300	2011+?	6	Scheme delayed due to great crested newts. Costs have increased due to delays so current scheme may be abandoned – revisit next year. Grant based on £60K/ £20K per rented/ SO unit.	Rural to meet identified housing need.	1
Radwell Lane, Radwell	Permission for 4 affordable units on NHDC owned site in partnership with NHH. NAHP funded.		0.090	0.090	0.180	2010/ 2011	4	Scheme includes provision of car park for adjacent village hall as a community benefit.	Rural exception site to meet identified housing need.	1

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
<b>Other sites identified in SHLAA which could be developed under current policy and would be likely to yield affordable housing</b>										
John Barker Place, Hitchin	Full permission: Major regeneration scheme 27 affordable units (incl. 3 re-provision), new community centre and shopping facilities. Overall build costs £8m incl. £3m affordable housing costs and £1.5m for provision of new community centre.			8.000	8.000	2011+	27	Major regeneration in deprived area to include affordable housing provision, new community centre and shopping facilities. Cannot be delivered without grant funding. Is number one priority for the council.	Sustainable growth/ regeneration and community benefit.	1

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
Lloyd Way, Kimpton & Coopers Close, Kimpton	Pre application advice for demolition of existing sheltered scheme and provision of total of 41 dwellings incl. 25 affordable (flats, houses and bungalows) and 16 private sale units.			1.300	1.300	2011	41	Demolition of existing unsuitable sheltered housing scheme and re- provision of more suitable accommodation in partnership with PRP on council owned and PRP owned land. Grant based on £60K/ £20K rented/ SO.	Rural. To meet needs identified in 2007 Kimpton housing needs survey. Sustainable development a corporate priority.	1
Clothall Common, Baldock	Council owned site. Review of potential land and property for disposal that may be considered by Cabinet in report in 2011. Could be considered for disposal on the open market or to RP.					2011+	26	35%/40% affordable if sold on open market. Potential for higher percentage of affordable if disposed of to RP.	Sustainable growth, mix of accommodation including larger family.	1

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
Churchgate, Hitchin	Estimated capacity of 61 dwellings. Appointment of development partner for redevelopment of Churchgate shopping centre and surrounding area of Hitchin town centre – promotes council's 3 key priorities of town centres, sustainable development and green issues					2016	61 est.	40% overall affordable housing requirement; 65%/35% rented/other tenure split in accordance with SPD. Major town centre regeneration scheme. 40% affordable housing requirement may be reduced because of economic viability, particularly without grant funding.	Sustainable growth/ regeneration. Town Centres corporate priority.	1

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
Former Priory Cinema Site, Newmarket Road, Royston	Proposals for 44 one and two bed Extra Care affordable housing scheme in partnership with PRP to meet identified HCC needs.					2011+	44	Partnership working with HCC and PRP to deliver Extra care scheme. Provision of this type of accommodation will mean that sheltered scheme no longer fit for purpose can be demolished and re-provision of affordable family housing.	Sustainable growth. Huge demand for one bed flats and 2 and 3 bed family houses in Royston. Limited affordable housing over past few years in Royston and limited available sites.	1
Wheatsheaf Meadow, Barkway	Pre-application advice 10 units including 6 affordable.					2011	10	NHH owned site. Vacant sheltered housing to be demolished and provision of mix of bungalows and houses for rent, intermediate housing and sale.	Rural. Some properties will meet identified housing need. (HNS 2008)	1

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
Windmill Close, Barkway	Two sites; one within the village boundary and an adjacent site just outside village boundary so Exception site.					2011+	23	Rural and part Rural Exception. Potential for up to 23 units on both sites, although parish council want to retain some land as green area/pocket park. Affordable housing only to meet identified need on Exception site.	Rural. Provision of properties to meet identified housing need not met through development of the Wheatsheaf Meadow site.	1
Land at Icknield Way, Baldock (A)	Outline application submitted October 10 for 37 dwellings; two bed flats and four bed houses, although request for better mix. Employment land release.					2012/ 2013	37	40% overall affordable housing requirement (25 + unit threshold). 65%/35% rented/other tenure split in accordance with Planning Obligations SPD, supported by 2007 SHMA & 2010 SHMA update.	Sustainable development/ growth and larger family houses	2
Land at Icknield Way, Baldock (B)	100% affordable housing scheme incl. 9 general needs, mix of houses and flats and 12 supported housing units.			0.855	0.855	2012/ 2013	21	100% affordable housing scheme with PRP incl. supported housing units for people with learning disability to meet acute identified need. Scheme unviable without grant funding.		2



Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
Former bus depot, Fishponds Road, Hitchin	Pre application advice: total of 29 dwellings; 14 affordable flats and 15 x 3 bed private houses.					2010	29	48% affordable housing but proposed mix not ideal as only flats for affordable and no houses and therefore does not exactly meet housing need. However, without grant funding best that can be achieved and developer got PRP on board.	Is need for one bed flats for rent and PRP on board.	2
Heath House, Princes Mews, Royston	70 dwellings granted (14 PRP). Long lease on building, still in use as offices and therefore work unlikely to start imminently.					2015+	70	Investment expend. Grant funding for affordable only.	Sustainable growth. Limited affordable housing over past few years in Royston and limited available sites.	2

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
Former depot, Icknield Way, Letchworth Garden City	NHDC owned – Senior Estates Surveyor advises that site is part of ongoing review of potential land and property for disposal that may be considered by Cabinet in report in 2011. Could be considered for disposal on the open market or to RP. Estimated capacity of 50 dwellings.			2.155	2.155	2011+	50	40% affordable housing requirement, if sold on open market and 65%/35% rented/other tenure split in accordance with SPD. Potential for larger percentage of affordable housing provision if disposed of to RP. Grant based on 100% affordable £55K rented/£20K SO.	Sustainable growth and larger family homes.	2
Clothall Common Baldock (reserved school site)	Reserved school site, anticipated that no longer required.					2012	32 est.	40% affordable housing requirement	Sustainable growth including larger family.	2

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
Agricultural supplier, Garden Walk, Royston	Estimated capacity of 56 dwellings. Employment use - alternative premises to be identified, so site not likely to be developed in the immediate future.					2016+	56	Unless current employment use can find suitable alternative site, residential development not possible.	Sustainable growth and larger family homes. Limited affordable housing over past few years in Royston and limited available sites.	2
Royston FC, Garden Walk, Royston	Estimated capacity of 44 dwellings. Alternative site for football club identified, but land allocation consultation to be undertaken.					2013 - 2016+	44	Dependent on relocation of Royston Town FC	Sustainable growth and larger family homes. Limited affordable housing over past few years in Royston and limited available sites.	2

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
The Warren Car Park, Royston	Estimated capacity of 55 dwellings. Site within town centre and therefore included in Town Centre Strategy.					2016+	55	Site close to Town Centre and included in town centre strategy. Town centres a corporate priority so may be considered for retail site potential and/or mixed use development.	Sustainable growth and larger family homes. Limited affordable housing over past few years in Royston and limited available sites.	2
Lumen Road, Royston	Estimated capacity of 75 dwellings. Current use employment use and possibility of being retained as employment use.					2014+	75	Contaminated land issues on the site and therefore likely impact on viability of delivery of affordable housing. In addition various business uses and myriad of leaseholders	Sustainable growth and larger family homes. Limited affordable housing over past few years in Royston and limited available sites.	2

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
Sycamore Close, St Ippolyts	Non Exception site. Pre application advice for 12 units so below threshold for affordable housing provision. Planning Policy advise that density too low, but unless 15 units or above no affordable housing provision.					2011+	19		Rural	2
Birds Hill (Vantage Point), Letchworth Garden City	Estimated capacity of 32 dwellings. Employment land allocation.					2016+	32	Site owned by Heritage Foundation. Employment land.	Sustainable growth	3
Former Norton School (attached playing field), Norton Road, Letchworth Garden City	Estimated capacity of 56 dwellings.					2016+	56	HCC owned site. No plans to develop in the immediate future.	Sustainable growth and larger family homes.	3

Local Authority: North Hertfordshire		Investment expenditure requested £m								
Project Name	Brief Description of Investment (including planning status)	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	Future	Total	Impact on Housing Starts on Site		Commentary on other outputs/outcomes	Fit with regional strategy / why it is considered a priority	Priority: High (1) Medium (2) Low (3)
						Year	Number			
Rentokil, London Road, Baldock	Conditional permission for change of use from offices to 55 bed care home.						55			3
Top Field, Fishponds Road, Hitchin	Estimated capacity of 56 dwellings. Complications with Charities Commission in bringing the site forward as land should be kept for sporting benefit of the town. Currently Hitchin FC ground.					2016+	56		Sustainable growth and larger family homes.	3

## Appendix 2 – Regeneration schemes

### Ivel Court, Jackmans Estate Regeneration Project

It has been proposed that the overall form, scale and character of the regeneration development would provide a diversity of buildings and spaces that would create a focal point within Jackmans Estate. The quality of townscape, pedestrian accessibility and natural surveillance of public space are considered to be paramount within design proposals.

Vehicular and pedestrian accessibility to Ivel Court is a key objective and should be reinforced within any design scheme.

It is anticipated the regeneration of Ivel Court would deliver the following outcomes :

#### General Environmental Outcomes

- To provide an environment that challenges the preconceptions of the established locality.
- To deliver sustainable development that achieves good quality design and enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors.
- To create spaces and entrances that allows natural supervision and enhances community safety.
- Enhanced and more secure car parking.
- To deliver buildings which are both stimulating and practical on a daily basis, and economic and reliable in the long term.
- To deliver buildings which have a low environmental impact.
- To integrate new buildings and landscaping seamlessly into the fabric of the surrounding communities.
- To provide a high visibility scheme that enhances the entrance into Letchworth Garden City from the A1 (M).

#### Community Resource Outcomes

- New purpose built or refurbished community centre and facilities to enhance the existing provision
- Design of community centre to be based on a careful analysis of users' needs.
- Incorporation and enhancement of existing library facilities.
- Incorporation of health service facilities.
- Incorporation of education and training facilities.
- Enhanced and more flexible space allowing use of community resources by existing users and a wide range of community groups, such as after schools clubs, youth facilities, older persons' facilities, entertainment facilities, crèche or nursery facilities, internet café, office facilities for outreach workers or community based workers and volunteers.

### Commercial Outcomes

- Enhanced supermarket facilities.
- Improved access to shops.
- Improved access and security to goods yard.
- Enhanced shop frontages.

### Housing Outcomes

- Provide an appropriate level of new affordable homes for rent and for intermediate income households, which satisfy identified housing needs (final property levels to be agreed).
- Homes to be provided or managed by a suitable RP.
- Flexible living spaces which can be adapted to sustain changing social patterns.
- Innovative urban design that enhances the environment.
- Homes that are environmentally sustainable and make use of the latest technology to reduce the use of natural resources in construction, in domestic running costs, and in future maintenance.
- Homes that offer safe personal space, with entrances and common parts designed to enhance community safety while encouraging social interaction.

Work began preparing the planning submission documentation and this concluded in 2008 with planning approval for the scheme being achieved.

Unfortunately progress with the project has been delayed due the current economic climate. The existing approved scheme is now considered unviable due to a lack of cross subsidy from the private sale units. Therefore further progress on this scheme will rely on new scheme details being prepared and the options are currently being reviewed.

### **Westmill Regeneration Project**

The Council and NHH agreed to work in partnership to consider the regeneration of the central area of the Westmill estate around John Barker Place in Hitchin. An architectural practice was appointed to carry out the first phase of this regeneration project, that is the production of a framework-plan which outlined the design and concept for the area and the consultation work that has led up to the initial recommendations.

It is anticipated the regeneration of Westmill would deliver the following outcomes:

#### Key outcomes

- Reduction in crime and fear of crime;
- Improvements in the quality of youth facilities;
- More successful commercial facilities;



- Increased housing provision with mixed affordable tenures: and
- Improved public transport links.

Early public consultation exercises identified various areas that were required to be considered in the future proposals, they were;

- Open space analysis and provision
- Car parking
- Waste disposal
- Garden space
- Resident related facilities
- Outdoor facilities for Children i.e. improving the safety aspects.

#### Environmental outcomes

- To deliver sustainable development that achieves good quality design and enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors.
- To create attractive spaces and entrances that allows natural supervision and enhances community safety.
- Improved and more secure car parking.
- To deliver buildings which are both stimulating and practical on a daily basis, and economic and reliable in the long term.
- Buildings that meet the practical needs of the local Community.
- To integrate new buildings and landscaping seamlessly into the fabric of the surrounding communities.

#### Community resource outcomes

- New purpose built or refurbished community centre.
- Community centre facilities and scale to be based on a careful analysis of Community needs, and should allow the reasonable aspiration for the centre management.
- Enhanced and more flexible space allowing use of community resources by existing users and a wide range of community groups, such as after school clubs, youth facilities, older persons' facilities, entertainment facilities, crèche or nursery facilities, internet café, office facilities for outreach workers or community based workers and volunteers.

#### Commercial outcomes

- Enhanced shopping, mixed economy facilities
- Improved access and security to goods yard.

#### Housing outcomes

- A minimum of 8 new affordable homes for rent and a further 4 homes for intermediate income households, and which satisfy identified

housing needs (final property levels to be agreed, subject to land availability).

- Affordable homes managed by NHH.
- Attractive design that enhances the local environment.
- Homes that are environmentally sustainable and make use of the proven technology to reduce the use of natural resources in construction, in domestic running costs, and in future maintenance.

Play provision outcomes

- Retain and enhanced play area provision.
- Retain and enhanced youth outdoor activity area.

Consultants were appointed by NHH to produce the working details from the concept information. Planning application information was prepared and submitted, resulting in approval in 2009.

NHH lodged a funding bid with the HCA in August 2010, however, due to funding limitations, the bid was unsuccessful. As a result, the Council is currently reviewing the options for the regeneration of Westmill.