

# Heart of Maylands Development Brief

October 2010



Prepared for

**Dacorum Borough Council**

## Revision Schedule

### Heart of Maylands Development Brief October 2010

Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
01	19 May 2010	Draft for client comment	<b>Vanessa Adams</b> Senior Planner	<b>Patrick Ross</b> Assistant Director, Tribal	<b>Ben Castell</b> Technical Director, Scott Wilson
02	8 July 2010	Revised draft	<b>Vanessa Adams</b> Senior Planner	<b>Patrick Ross</b> Assistant Director, Tribal	<b>Patrick Ross</b> Assistant Director, Tribal
03	20 August 2010	Revised draft	<b>Vanessa Adams</b> Senior Planner	<b>Patrick Ross</b> Assistant Director, Tribal	<b>Patrick Ross</b> Assistant Director, Tribal
04	28 Sept 2010	Revised draft	<b>Vanessa Adams</b> Senior Planner	<b>Patrick Ross</b> Assistant Director, Tribal	<b>Ben Castell</b> Technical Director, Scott Wilson
05	20 Oct 2010	Final version	<b>Vanessa Adams</b> Senior Planner	<b>Patrick Ross</b> Assistant Director, Tribal	<b>Ben Castell</b> Technical Director, Scott Wilson

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Hemel 2020 vision

1.1.1 Hemel Hempstead was developed as a New Town in the early 1950s and 1960s and, in many ways, has proved to be a successful place. Despite these successes, a new vision is necessary to regenerate the town and provide a template for its future development.

1.1.2 The Hemel 2020 Vision therefore sets out a framework for the regeneration of Hemel Hempstead and includes five objectives:

1. **Wider town centre regeneration** – to regenerate and redevelop the town centre including the surrounding areas to promote an exciting and thriving town centre, to create better identity for areas within the town and to generate more of an evening economy.
2. **Maylands** - to rejuvenate the Maylands Business Park to achieve a vibrant, dynamic and premier business-led community and first choice investment location with some residential development, leisure space and a Green Energy Centre.
3. **Neighbourhood Centres** – to regenerate, reinvigorate and green the neighbourhood local centres.
4. **Green spaces** – to improve the networks of open spaces, create a new Urban Park in the south of Hemel Hempstead, extend Bunkers Park, provide continuous green links throughout the town and enhance the green spaces in Boxmoor including Heath Park and the GUC.
5. **Growth of Hemel Hempstead** – to respond to the designation of the town as a 'Key Centre for Development and Change' and the need to provide significant numbers of new homes, jobs and associated facilities.

1.1.3 It is the second objective which this Development Brief seeks to support.

## 1.2 The vision for the Heart of Maylands

1.2.1 The Council's 2007 Maylands Master Plan set out a vision for the Maylands Business Park which seeks *"to create an environment where a range of businesses can grow and prosper through the development of Maylands as a sustainable, well connected Green Business Park offering a high standard of accommodation within a pleasant high quality environment, served by a range of conveniently located shops and amenities."* Within this vision, the Master Plan identifies the Heart of Maylands as having a central role in supporting the wider Maylands Business Park, particularly by focusing development around human activity and social interaction.

1.2.2 The Heart of Maylands aims to become a strong functional centre for the businesses and employees working in Maylands Business Park, providing shops, cafés, restaurants, business services, community facilities, open space and access to public transport in a high quality built environment. By creating an attractive functional 'heart' for Maylands Business Park, it is hoped that this will help retain existing businesses and employees, and also attract new investment to the area.

- 1.2.3 The Heart will become a new local centre and a focus for human activity and social interaction with a new green open space, active ground floor uses, and enhanced landscaping. Development is expected to be mixed-use with local convenience shops, banks, salons, restaurants, cafés and small offices on the ground floor, with either residential or office development on upper floors.
- 1.2.4 As with all new development in Maylands Business Park, the Heart will aim for high levels of sustainability, incorporating sustainable building design, energy use, transport and ecology, in line with the vision for Maylands becoming a 'green' business park and an exemplar of sustainable development for Dacorum as a whole.

## 1.3 This document

- 1.3.1 This Development Brief sets out background information on the site and presents aspirations for future development in the Heart of Maylands. It sets out guidance on land uses, layouts, design and landscaping, access and movement and requirements for the delivery of sites in the Heart, and will be used by the Council to help guide development control considerations in the area.
- 1.3.2 The aim of this Development Brief is to provide clear guidance on how the Heart of Maylands should be developed, whilst not being overly prescriptive on the design of specific buildings or spaces, or on the uses that individual buildings will have. It is also intended to ensure that the quality of design, construction, maintenance and management of the Heart will support the regeneration of Maylands Business Park.
- 1.3.3 This Brief has been prepared for Dacorum Borough Council following consultation with Council officers, key landowners and some local businesses/occupiers, and the Maylands Partnership's Implementation Team. This revised draft is being issued to the Council for approval as a 'Planning Policy Statement', which is not formal planning guidance, and has the same status as the Maylands Master Plan and the Maylands Gateway Development Brief.

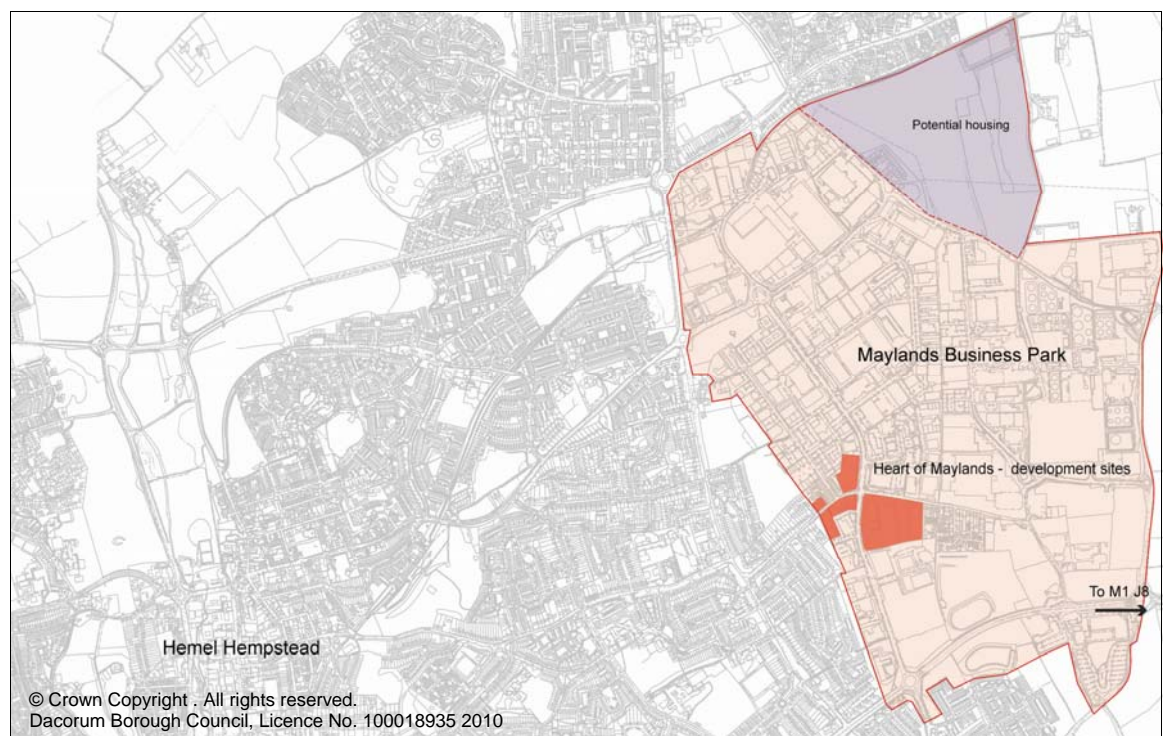
### **Relationship with the wider planning context**

- 1.3.4 This Development Brief is being produced ahead of the adoption of Dacorum's Local Development Framework (LDF) and therefore sets out the Council's intention for future formal planning policy framework for the area. It will be used, alongside the 2007 Maylands Master Plan, as part of the evidence base to inform the production of the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan (AAP) which will form part of the LDF, and the AAP will set out the planning policy for the Maylands Business Park and beyond. Recommendations in this Brief will be carried through into the AAP and will be afforded greater weight in the AAP, where the Council also intends to designate the Heart of Maylands as a new Local Centre.
- 1.3.5 This Development Brief is intended to supplement the 2007 Maylands Master Plan and provide a more detailed, yet complementary strategy for the Heart as a key driver in the regeneration of Maylands Business Park.
- 1.3.6 More detail is provided under Section 2 of this Brief.

## 1.4 The Heart of Maylands area

- 1.4.1 Maylands is one of the largest business parks in the Eastern Region and home to around 630 businesses employing an estimated 16,500 people within approximately 6.2million sq ft of commercial floorspace. It is located on the eastern side of Hemel Hempstead, bounded to the south by Breakspear Way, to the north by the B487 Redbourn Road and Three Cherry Trees Lane, to the east by Green Lane and roughly demarcated to the west by the A4147 Redbourn Road and High Street Green.

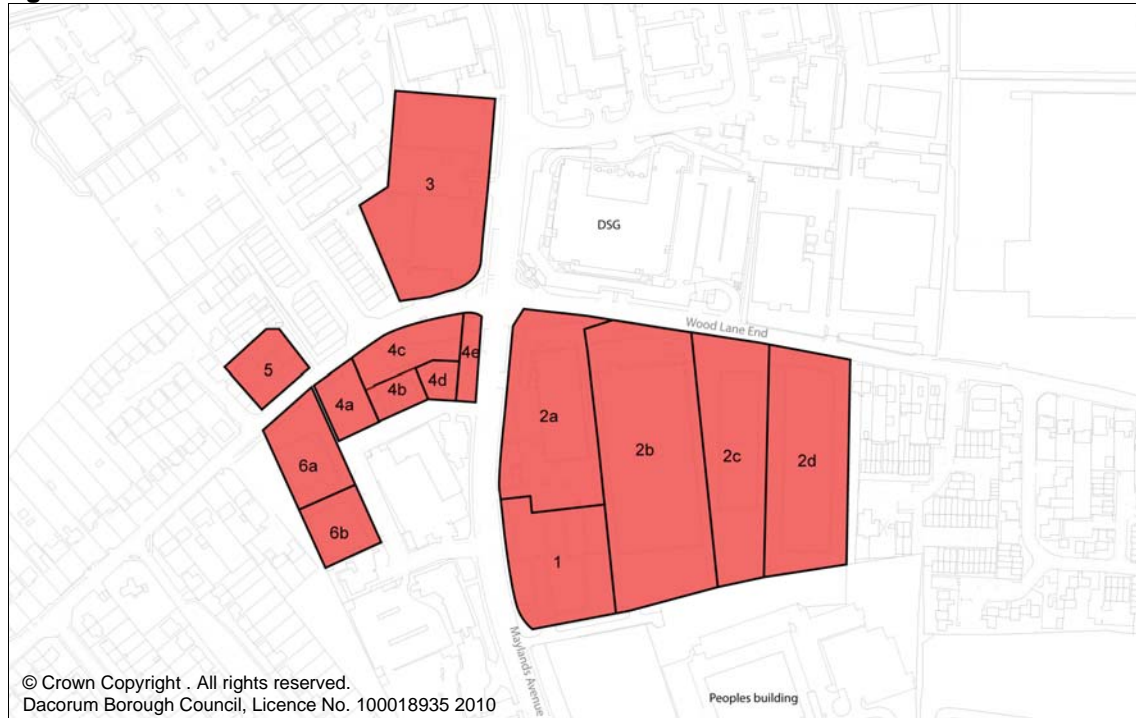
**Figure 1.1** Maylands Business Park and surroundings



- 1.4.2 The area covered by this Development Brief is at the centre of the Maylands Business Park and is focused around the Maylands Avenue/Wood Lane End junction, as shown on Figure 1.2. The Heart of Maylands area comprises the following sites:

- Jarvis car park site (Site 1)
- The HSBC building and industrial units behind (Site 2)
- The Schroff buildings (Site 3)
- The existing shop units, garage, light industrial units and car park behind (Site 4)
- The banks (Site 5)
- Office buildings on the western side of Duxon's Turn (Site 6).

**Figure 1.2** Location of sites



- 1.4.3 Current uses within the Heart of Maylands include light industry, some office and warehousing, car parking, financial services, and local shops and services.
- 1.4.4 The Heart of Maylands area is expected to become a vibrant hub supporting the wider business area and the Peoplebuilding development on Maylands Avenue, adjacent and south of Site 1 is indicative of the high quality design which is expected in the redeveloped Heart. In addition, the area has recently benefited from Council investment in a temporary, pocket park on Site 1 with high quality street furniture which may be relocated to the proposed open space within the redeveloped Heart.

## 2 Policy background

### 2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 This section provides the existing planning policy context for the Heart of Maylands and sets it within the context of the current Local Plan and the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 2.1.2 A full list of planning policy documents which have been used to inform this Development Brief is set out at Appendix A.

### 2.2 National and regional planning policy context

- 2.2.1 This Development Brief has been prepared in accordance with guidance set out in the relevant national planning policies, particularly the following Planning Policy Statements (PPS): PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development); the consultation guidance on a PPS on 'Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate' (which will replace the PPS1 Supplement and PPS22 on Renewable Energy); PPS3 (Housing); PSS4 (Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth); PPG13 (Transport); and PPS25 (Development and Flood Risk). These key documents should be taken into account at the detailed design stage.
- 2.2.2 The Brief has also been informed by RPG9 (Regional Planning Guidance for the South East); and the East of England Plan (May 2008), which specifically identified Hemel Hempstead a focus for housing and employment growth in Dacorum. Whilst the coalition government elected in May 2010 has revoked all Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) such as the East of England Plan, local planning authorities (LPAs) have been advised to continue making plans for their area.
- 2.2.3 LPAs are now responsible for determining their own housing numbers and have been advised that they are free to continue with the RSS figures. However, the East of England Plan did not include dwelling targets for Dacorum and Welwyn-Hatfield, following a High Court decision in favour of Hertfordshire County Council and St Albans City and District Councils to delete the parts of the Plan which referred to large scale housing growth in the Green Belt at Hemel Hempstead.

### 2.3 Local planning policy context

- 2.3.1 The Development Brief for the Heart of Maylands is being produced ahead of the adoption of Dacorum's LDF, and therefore has to relate to both the current Local Plan (adopted in 2004) and the forthcoming LDF.
- 2.3.2 This Development Brief will be a material planning consideration and sets out the Council's intentions for the future planning policy framework for the area.

#### Local Plan

- 2.3.3 All of the Heart of Maylands sites fall within the Maylands Avenue General Employment Area in the adopted Local Plan. Policy 31 General Employment Area recognises the importance of such areas and seeks to retain them for their contribution to employment and prosperity, and Policy 9



Land Use Division also seeks to encourage appropriate employment generating development in these areas.

- 2.3.4 Policy 31 also identifies Maylands Avenue as a Core Office Location and a 'prestigious business area to be enhanced' and states that small scale retail uses are considered acceptable if primarily needed to serve the area and the business community.
- 2.3.5 Policy 9 also states that *"mixed use developments will be supported in town and local centres, and also in residential areas and employment areas where they would constitute the most sustainable form of development and would not conflict with other policies in the Plan."*
- 2.3.6 In addition to the key Local Plan policies that are relevant to the development of the site (identified in Appendix A), there are a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) that are relevant. These provide advice on environmental guidelines, development in residential areas, parking standards, energy efficiency and conservation, landscape character and water conservation.

### Emerging Core Strategy

- 2.3.7 One of strategic objectives set out in the draft Core Strategy<sup>1</sup> is to 'promote a vibrant and prosperous economy'. In order to achieve this, the Council aims to 'strengthen confidence in Hemel Hempstead's role as a thriving sub-regional business centre and shopping hub' and 'develop the Maylands Business Park as a leader of "green enterprise" and focus of the low carbon economy.'
- 2.3.8 The visions for Hemel Hempstead town and for East Hemel Hempstead (Maylands Business Park) in the draft Core Strategy<sup>2</sup> identify the need for 'better public transport links between Maylands Business Park, the town centre and the main railway station in Hemel Hempstead'. They also include the aims of providing more employment opportunities at Maylands and a better environment that is more accessible.
- 2.3.9 The draft Core Strategy<sup>3</sup> also defines Character Zones and Development Opportunities within East Hemel Hempstead. The Heart of Maylands is recognised as holding significant regeneration opportunities for Maylands, with the opportunity to provide a functional local centre and around 250 homes.

### East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan

- 2.3.10 The East Hemel Hempstead AAP Issues and Options Paper (June 2009) seeks to incorporate some of the elements of the Maylands Master Plan into the formal planning policy framework. It identifies the need to address under-performance of the area and to "attract higher value, professional employers to meet the needs of our well qualified workforce."
- 2.3.11 The document suggests that the Heart should be the functional centre and local hub for the Maylands Business Park, providing shops, cafes, restaurants, business services, community/health facilities, open space and access to passenger transport. The Heart will be designated as a new Local Centre in the AAP.

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<sup>1</sup> Core Strategy – Draft Recommended for Consultation, Dacorum Borough Council, September 2010

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

2.3.12 The AAP also suggests that 100 of the 500 indicative units of new housing which could be provided within the Maylands Business Park could be in the Heart itself, with the remainder on land towards the north west of Maylands adjoining existing residential properties and open space. This would mean the loss of around 10ha of existing employment land which would potentially be compensated for by the provision of additional land for employment and for the advantages that planned new housing would bring such as:

- Bringing workplaces and homes closer together;
- Providing key worker housing close to employment areas;
- Helping to support local services and facilities;
- Reducing the need to travel elsewhere by private car;
- Reducing the pressure to build on the Green Belt surrounding Hemel Hempstead;
- Allowing Maylands Business Park to improve its overall appearance and relationship to surrounding areas and to attract new investment into the area.

### Maylands Master Plan

2.3.13 The Maylands Master Plan was adopted in 2007 as a Planning Policy Statement and seeks to unlock the potential of Maylands Business Park to become the East of England's leading location for business. It sets out guidance for development within the character areas in the Business Park, including the Heart of Maylands. This stated that *"the Heart of Maylands will become the functional centre of Maylands, providing shops, cafés, restaurants, business services, community facilities, open space and access to public transport."* The guidance suggests that this 'local' centre should primarily serve the businesses and employees across Maylands Business Park and that development should comprise a mix of uses, including flexibility for office and residential accommodation on upper floors.

2.3.14 The Master Plan guidance for the Heart of Maylands also states that the emphasis of development should be around human activity and social interaction, primarily through the provision of a public square and open space, active ground floor uses with outdoor seating where appropriate, quality public realm and sensitively handled parking areas.

### The SW Herts Employment Land Study Update

2.3.15 The SW Herts Employment Land Study Update was produced in June 2010 by Roger Tym and Partners for Dacorum and Three Rivers Council. It notes that current policies and targets favour large-scale growth in the office sector in Maylands Business Park but recognises that the market analysis suggests that this will be difficult to achieve. The Study recommends that in order to improve Maylands' chances of attracting office development, the proposals for public transport improvements and provision of local amenities in the Maylands Masterplan should be implemented. However, it also cautions against the level of amenities proposed in the Masterplan.

2.3.16 The Study also recommends that the Council adopts a more flexible approach to B-class uses on Maylands Avenue, including allowing B2/B8 schemes on this main route as long as they have a higher than normal office content and where the offices face onto Maylands Avenue.

## 2.4 Rationale behind this Development Brief

- 2.4.1 The need to create a functional centre and local hub for Maylands Business Park as a whole which provides a mix of uses including local, small scale retail/leisure/services to serve the existing and new business communities, as well existing residents nearby, is clear. However, whilst the main objective of this Brief is to regenerate the Heart, it is recognised that fluctuating market conditions require this Brief to be as flexible as possible in the uses it encourages and permits in the area.
- 2.4.2 The Brief seeks to encourage as much commercial development in the area as possible given its designation as a General Employment Area. It sets out development guidance to help promote the provision of a stronger, thriving hub of a variety of uses and a high quality open space in the Heart, in order to help strengthen its attractiveness to new and existing businesses in the wider Maylands Business Park. The Brief sets out the need for active uses on the ground floors of development, particularly around the most prominent part of the Heart at its core (see Sections 4 and 5 for further detail). The Brief suggests that only a limited amount of retail, leisure and service uses be provided in the Heart based on limited demand in a largely commercial area; this is supported by the findings of the recent Employment Land Study update.
- 2.4.3 The Brief allows for a defined amount of residential development in the area to help encourage regeneration of the Heart as supporting uses are required that will generate the additional activity and expenditure needed for the Heart to thrive. The proposal to include significant residential development is based on our understanding of the current concerns about the viability of providing offices as the main supporting uses. However, if market conditions improve and there is demand for more offices in the Heart, the Brief is flexible enough to allow a shift in the balance towards more office development.
- 2.4.4 Market research also indicates that in order for the redevelopment of the whole of the Heart of Maylands area to be financially viable, based on current market conditions the maximum residential component should be higher at around 270 units rather than the 100 originally envisaged in the emerging AAP. Therefore this Brief defines 270 residential units as the maximum amount of residential development which will be accepted in the Heart, with the main objective to enable regeneration of the Heart and therefore the wider Maylands Business Park.

## **3 Site and context appraisal**

### **3.1 Introduction**

- 3.1.1 This section sets out an analysis of the Heart of Maylands and its surroundings and culminates in the identification of constraints and opportunities for development in the area. Where appropriate, the analysis also covers the whole of the Maylands Business Park to ensure that any redevelopment of the Heart is fully integrated into its wider context.

## 3.2 Land ownership

3.2.1 Figure 3.1 below shows the location and land ownership parcels within the Heart of Maylands. Sites 4 and 6 are in multiple ownerships.

**Figure 3.1** Location of sites



### Land ownership details

Site	Freehold owner	Approximate size (ha)
1	Jarvis Commercial Properties Limited	0.6
2	(a-c) ING PIF UK Ltd (d) Akzo Nobel (CPS) Pension Scheme Ltd	3.4
3	Total Pension Fund	1
4	(a & e) Dacorum Borough Council (b) Brian & Marion McCann (c) Herald Investments International Ltd (d) Multiple – 3 owners	0.7
5	Greentree Estates Ltd	0.15
6	(a) Multiple interests – 3 owners (b) Micro-Corporation Ltd	0.4

## 3.3 Land uses

### Current uses in the Heart of Maylands and building heights

3.3.1 The current land uses in and around the Heart and building heights are shown below in Figure 3.2. The core of the Heart of Maylands is predominantly industrial and office use with small scale, local convenience retailing on Site 4 (Wood Lane End) in the southwest corner of the main

junction. The units vary in size and type from large industrial sheds on Site 2 (Maylands Avenue/Wood Lane End) to small and medium-sized units on Duxons Turn. Site 3 (Maylands Avenue) is a mixture of office and warehousing, whilst Site 1 (Maylands Avenue) is used as a car park and also houses temporary pocket park/outdoor seating area for employees in the area to use. Three bank branches are situated on Site 5 (Wood Lane End).

3.3.2 Around the Heart sites defined on the plan, there is a mixture of office, industrial and residential uses, with existing housing anchoring either end of the Heart area. Mark Road, located between Sites 3 and 5 is a thriving area of lower quality industrial units with small businesses and services, which need to be carefully considered in the redevelopment of the Heart. The DSG office building opposite Site 3 on Maylands Avenue is a landmark in the area, as is the Peoplebuilding (south of Site 1), also on Maylands Avenue.

**Figure 3.2** Land uses and building heights

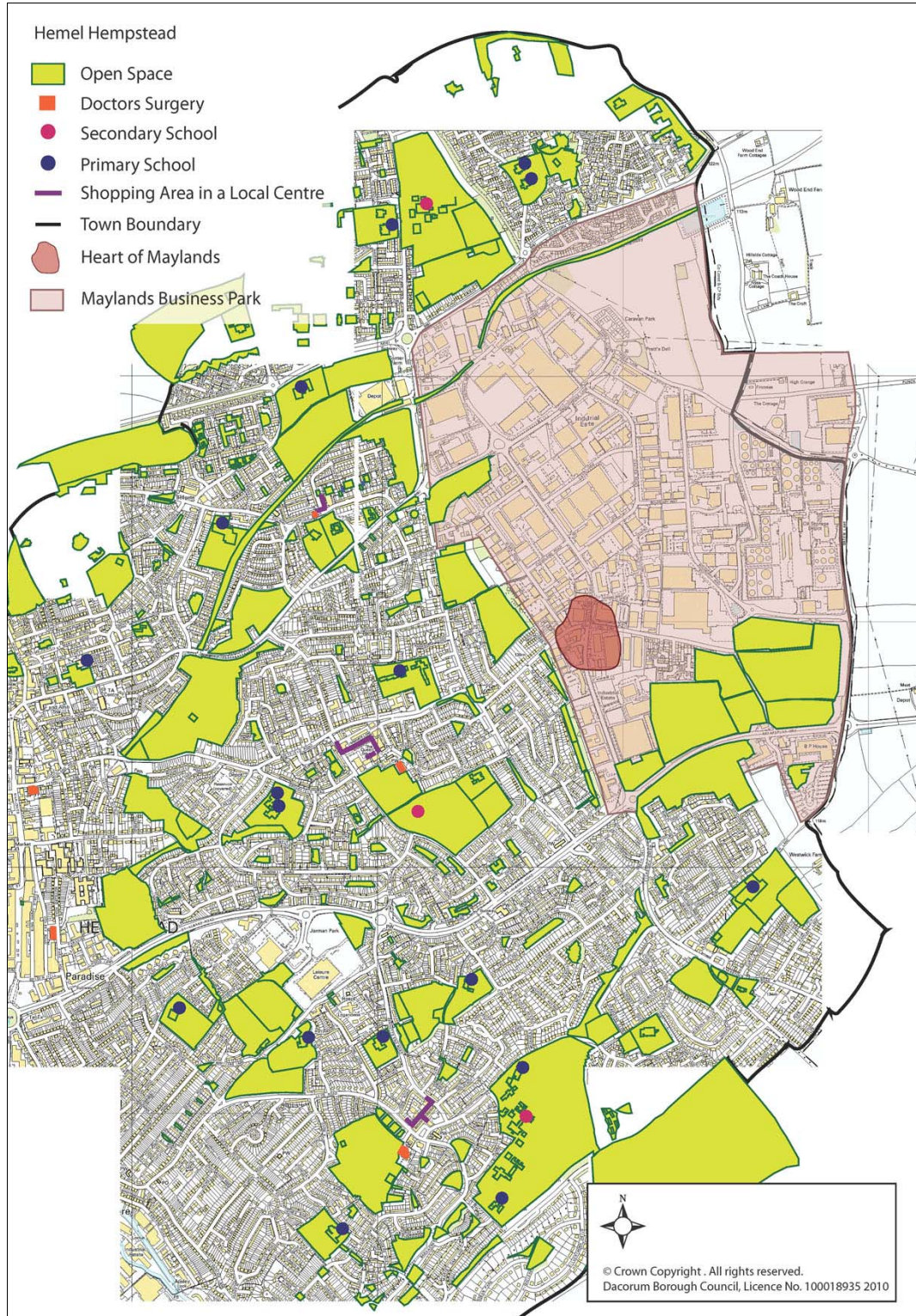


3.3.3 Building heights are generally low-rise (two to three storeys) across the Heart with some exceptions for the DSG building on the northeast corner of the main junction and the Peoplebuilding south of the Heart which are four to five storeys high. Residential areas to the east and west of the Heart are two to three storeys high.

**Local amenities in the wider area**

3.3.4 A number of documents (such as the 2005 Employment Land Review) have already highlighted that the Maylands Business Park lacks social amenities which are needed to attract businesses. Figure 3.3 shows the distribution of local amenities in the wider Hemel Hempstead area – as the area has historically not had much housing, there is a lack of such amenities. The introduction of new residential uses into the area however, will create a demand/need for the introduction of new social amenities.

Figure 3.3 Amenities

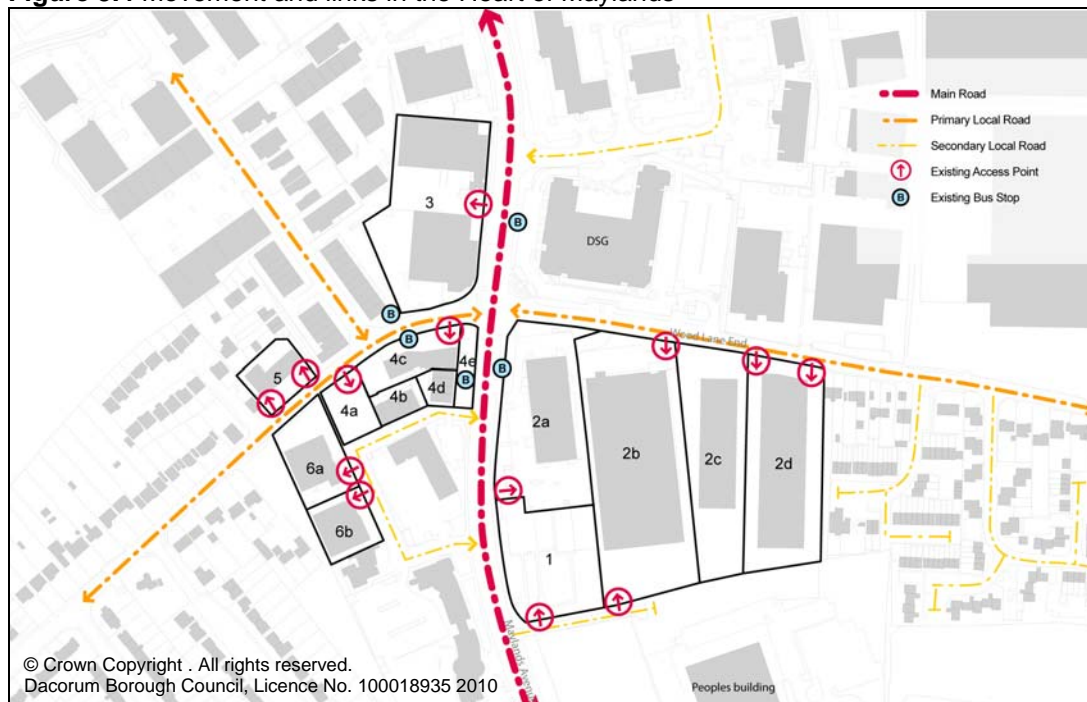


## 3.4 Movement and links

### Heart of Maylands

- 3.4.1 Figure 3.4 shows the main movements and linkages into and out of the Heart of Maylands area. Maylands Avenue is the main north-south axis which connects the Heart to the rest of Maylands Business Park, whilst Wood Lane End bisects the Heart. Most of the sites in the Heart are accessed from either of these main roads or via secondary roads such as Duxons Turn.
- 3.4.2 In terms of public transport, the area is served by two bus routes, the H13 and the 301, with stops on Maylands Avenue and Wood Lane End. These bus routes connect Maylands to Hemel Hempstead town centre, Hemel Hempstead railway station and Stevenage.

**Figure 3.4** Movement and links in the Heart of Maylands



### Wider area connections

- 3.4.3 The Heart's connections to the rest of the Maylands Business Park and its relationship to Hemel Hempstead town centre are shown in Figure 3.5. The main route through Maylands and the Heart is the A4147 Maylands Avenue, with the A414 the main route from Maylands to Hemel Hempstead railway station, and the B487 the main route from the town centre to Maylands.
- 3.4.4 Maylands Business Park is easily accessible from the motorway network being close to the M1/M25 interchange and Hemel Hempstead railway station connects Maylands to Central London (25 minute journey).
- 3.4.5 There are a number of proposals currently under consideration to encourage sustainable travel choices (as set out in the Steer Davies Gleave Maylands Sustainable Transport Plan 2009) in Maylands Business Park including:



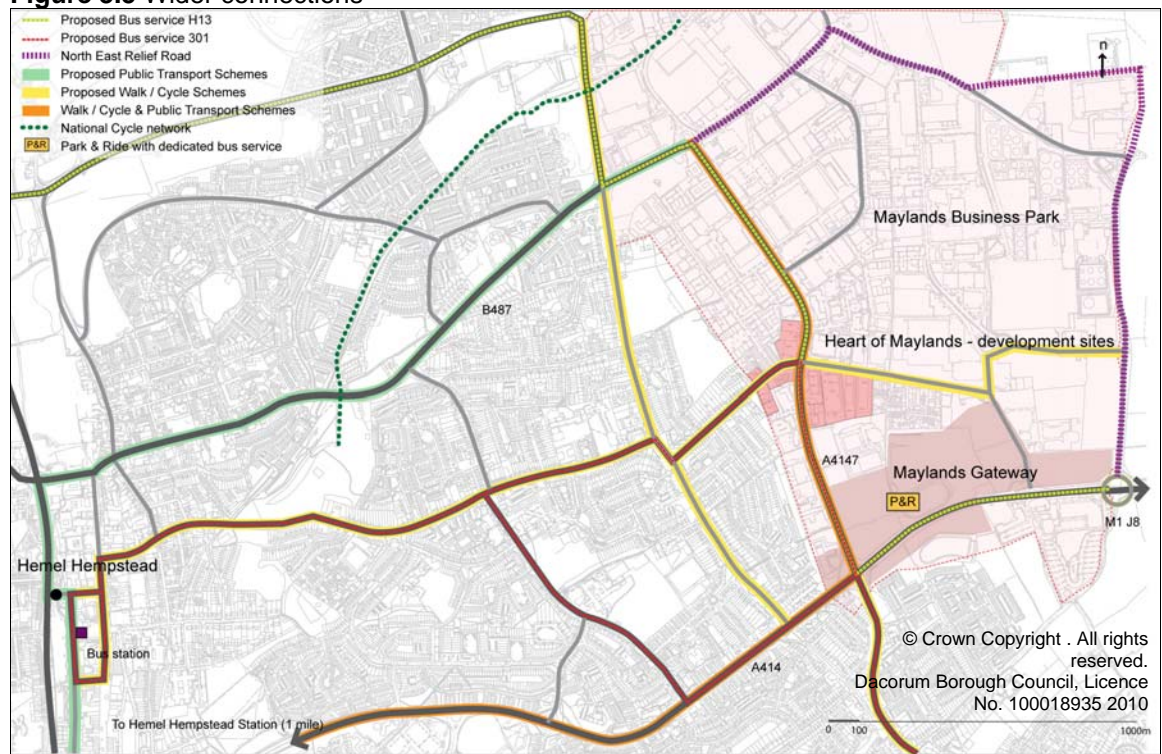
- Development of a car sharing scheme in Maylands;
- Improvements to walking and cycling networks including links between the town centre, railway and bus stations and Maylands;
- Increased and improved cycle parking at major employers in Maylands;
- Considering the possibility of a Park and Ride site in Maylands with a dedicated, high frequency bus service linking the area to the town centre, railway and bus stations;
- Extending the existing 301 and 14 bus services onto new routes to provide a more comprehensive network and integrating bus and rail timetables.

3.4.6 These improvements will be required to help increase the attractiveness and operation of the Maylands Business Park and the Heart and funding is being explored by the Council.

3.4.7 There are also proposals for traffic management and highway improvements for the wider area under consideration including:

- The North East Relief Road which will serve new housing and employment development at North East Hemel Hempstead;
- Resurfacing of Maylands Avenue and redesigning of the A414 junction;
- A designated lorry route and HGV parking site at Maylands;
- Provision of freight transfer facilities at Maylands;
- Introduction of traffic signals at junctions with A414 and general speed reductions.

**Figure 3.5** Wider connections



### 3.5 Landscape and environment

- 3.5.1 The Heart of Maylands is dominated by the intersection of Maylands Avenue and Wood Lane End, as shown in Figure 3.6 below. This busy crossroad and the visual and physical domination of road traffic, right in the centre of the Heart, is important in terms of the image it presents for the Heart, but it is dominated by the blank wall of the DSG building's podium level (which contains parking) and a parking forecourt by the shops on the opposite corner.
- 3.5.2 Wood Lane End benefits from the presence of mature trees and strips of wooded areas, and Maylands Avenue has the potential, with its grassy verges, to be improved with public realm enhancements. There are no open spaces in the Heart at present which can be used as a social amenity. The recently opened pocket park is located on Site 1, which provides a small seating area for public use.

Figure 3.6 Landscape and environment

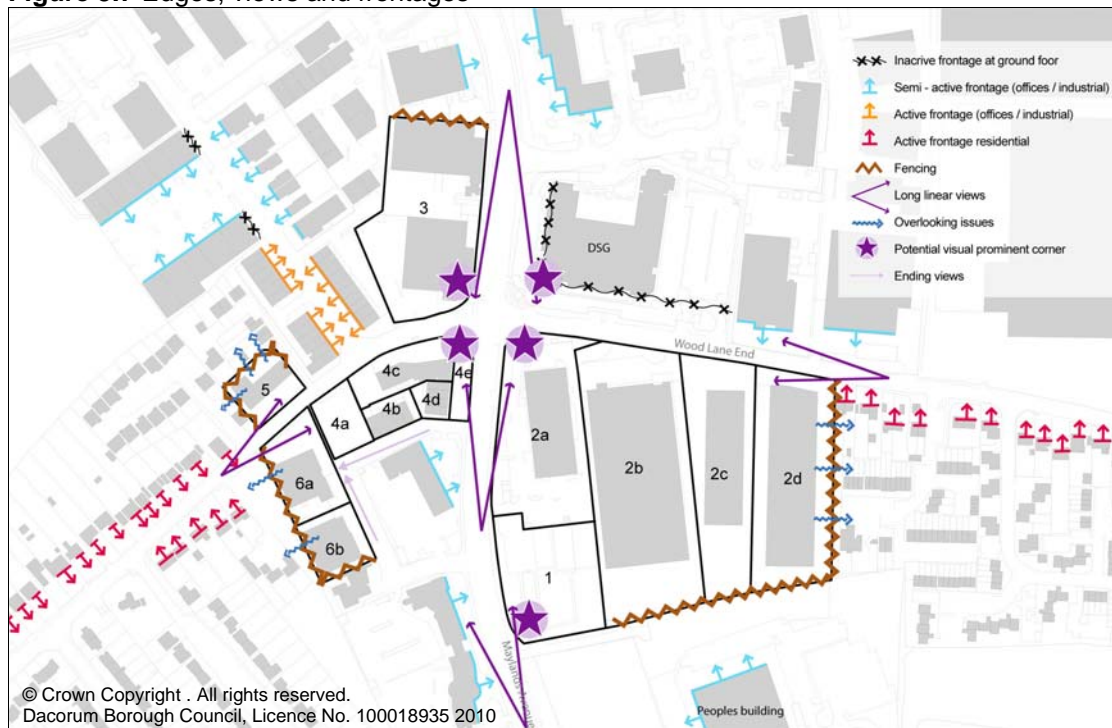


### 3.6 Edges, views and frontages

3.6.1 Figure 3.7 shows that there are potential visually prominent corners on all sides of the junction which need to be capitalised on as the ‘public face’ of the Heart development, and by Site 1 as one of the first buildings to be seen on arriving in the Heart from the south. At present, the blank walls of the ground floor level of the DSG building present inactive frontage at this important junction, where it could potentially be a visually prominent corner.

3.6.2 Any new development on Sites 5, 6 and 2d needs to consider overlooking issues with adjacent and existing residential areas, whilst any new development on Sites 3 and 5 will need to carefully consider the interfaces with the rear of the industrial units along Mark Road.

**Figure 3.7** Edges, views and frontages

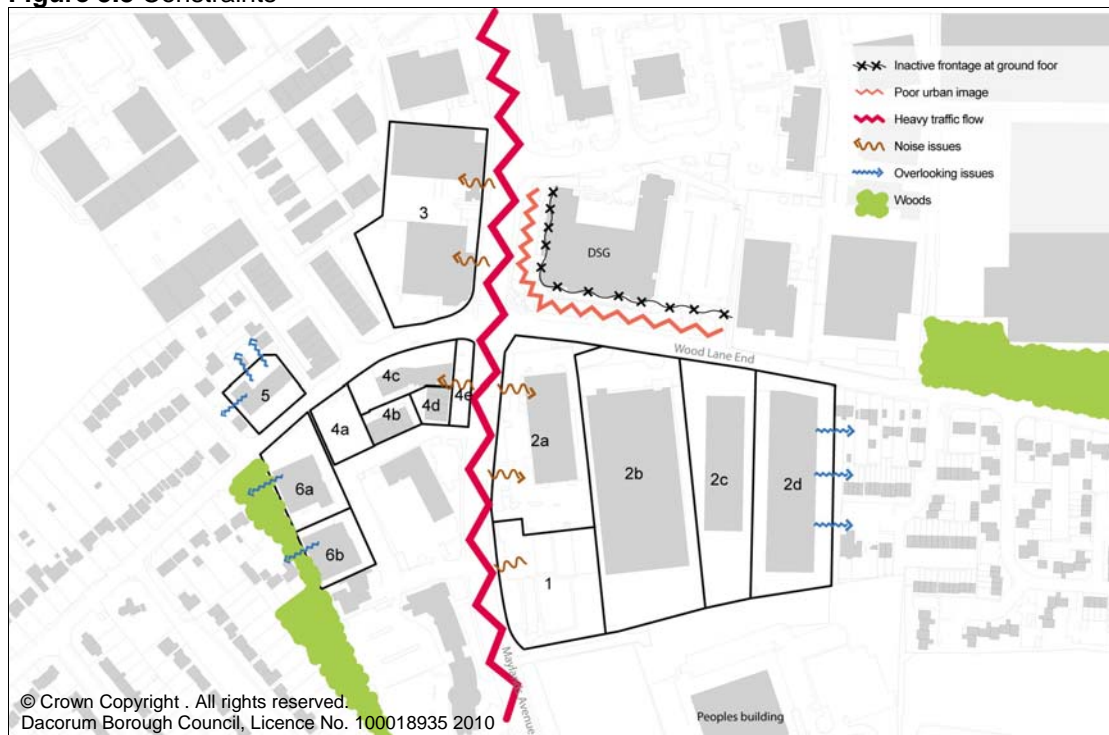


## 3.7 Constraints and opportunities

### Constraints

- 3.7.1 There are three main design constraints, illustrated on Figure 3.8 below, which new development in the Heart will need to consider during the detailed design stage.
- 3.7.2 Firstly, heavy traffic flow along Maylands Avenue and the associated noise levels which could impact on any new residential development on upper levels such that sound insulation will need to be considered. Secondly, existing residential areas could be overlooked by new development on adjacent sites so designs should take this into account. Finally, blank frontage at street level around the DSG building will not benefit any new development facing it from Sites 3, 2a, 2b or 2c so this will also need to be considered.

**Figure 3.8 Constraints**



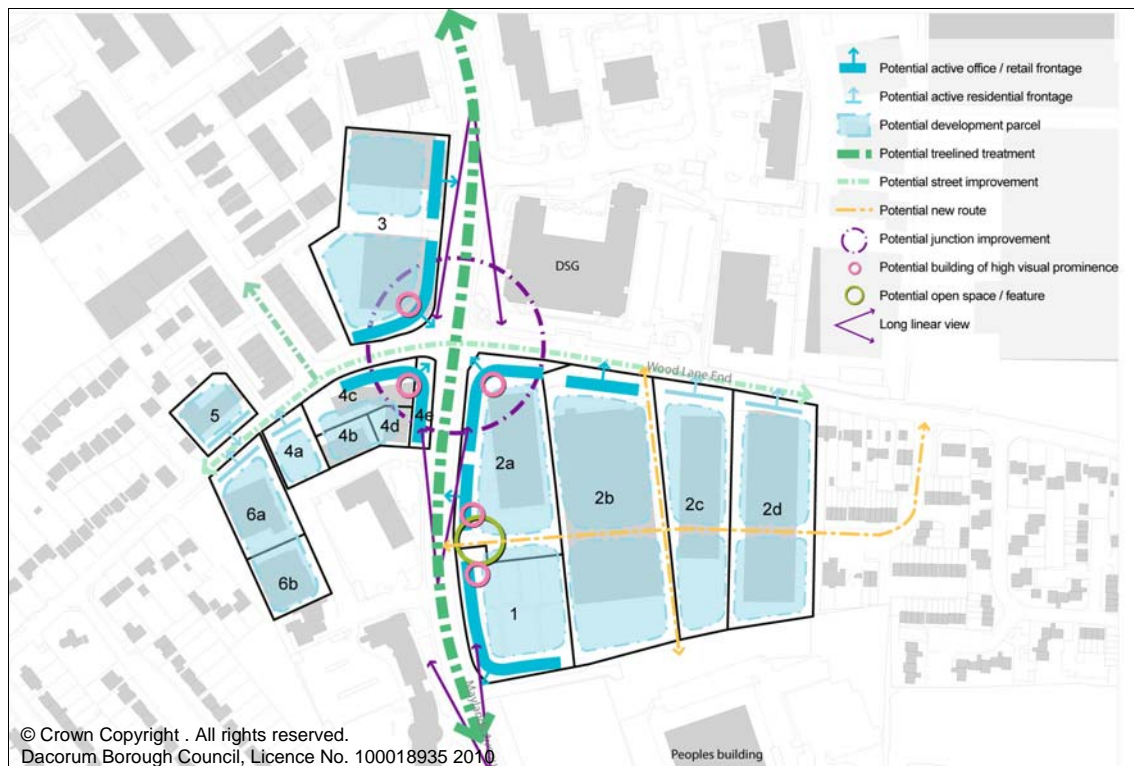
- 3.7.3 However, there are also two main issues which are not shown on the diagram but which need to be carefully considered with the future redevelopment: the relocation of tenants and maintaining employment land in the Maylands Business Park.
- 3.7.4 The Heart currently provides accommodation for a range of businesses including local convenience/retailing, warehousing, light industrial, and office uses. It is recognised that these are important sources of employment for Maylands and the Council's preference is for these existing businesses to be relocated within the Heart. If relocation is neither viable nor desirable, these businesses should seek to relocate elsewhere within the wider Maylands Business Park.
- 3.7.5 Given that the Maylands Business Park is an important employment area for the borough, the focus for the wider area will remain on employment. A limit on the residential component for the Heart of Maylands area as defined by this Brief has therefore been set at around 270 units.

## Opportunities

3.7.6 The Heart of Maylands presents significant opportunities for redevelopment, as shown below on Figure 3.9. These include the potential for:

- A new open space on Maylands Avenue;
- Visually prominent building(s) on the corner of Wood Lane End/Maylands Avenue;
- Some relatively substantial development parcels which are based on land ownerships;
- Active office/retail frontage around the main junction on both Maylands Avenue and Wood Lane End;
- Junction and streetscape improvements;
- Tree planting along Maylands Avenue;
- Potential introduction of new routes through Site 2 for access.

Figure 3.9 Opportunities



## 4 Planning and design principles

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section sets out overarching planning and design framework for new development on sites in the Heart of Maylands.

### 4.2 The vision and objectives for the Heart of Maylands

**4.2.1 Regeneration of the Heart will deliver a high quality, vibrant centre to serve the local business and residential community, and to help improve the attractiveness of the wider Maylands Business Park as an employment location. The introduction of new homes, local shops/services and office space will create a thriving ‘heart’ and a new local centre for Maylands’ existing and new communities to interact. New development in the Heart will seamlessly integrate into the wider Maylands Business Park area into existing and planned developments, and although sites may come forward for development at different times, they will be developed with a unified approach in accordance with the guidance set out in this Brief.**

4.2.2 The current planning context (Section 2) and analysis of the site’s opportunities and constraints (Section 3) show that the redevelopment of the Heart will bring forward many social, economic and environmental benefits to the rest of Maylands Business Park. It is anticipated that redeveloping the Heart will:

- Create a strong functional centre with local shops and services to help support the wider business area and surrounding residential areas;
- Improve the area’s attractiveness to new and existing businesses and residents by providing and promoting a high quality built environment with an attractive open space for social interaction;
- Provide a mix of uses with office/business use and new homes, therefore helping to reduce the need to travel elsewhere by private car;
- Provide new local services and facilities for new and existing workers and residents;
- Redevelop brownfield sites and therefore help to reduce the pressure on Hemel Hempstead’s Green Belt.

## 4.3 Key principles for development

4.3.1 Development in the Heart of Maylands should follow these key principles:

### **Delivery of a vibrant centre serving the whole of Maylands Business Park and enhancing its attractiveness as an employment location**

4.3.2 The regeneration of the Heart of Maylands is important to the future success of the wider Maylands Business Park as a borough-wide and regional employment location. The introduction of an appropriate mix of uses, set within high quality new buildings, tree-lined streets and an attractive public open space, will provide a business environment which meets the needs of existing businesses, and also attract further investment into the area. The new cafés, restaurants and bars, and the new public space on Maylands Avenue will provide places for employers and employees to congregate during lunchtimes or after work, or for businesses to entertain clients, therefore encouraging human activity and social interaction within the Heart of Maylands.

### **Creation of a new, high quality open space on Maylands Avenue to encourage social interaction**

4.3.3 On Maylands Avenue there is an opportunity to create a new, high quality open space primarily to serve the wider Maylands business community and to provide a place for people to interact at lunchtimes for example. This space should be predominantly hard landscaped (with permeable paving) with elements of soft landscaping (such as trees and planting), and should incorporate high quality street furniture and lighting. It should also be fronted by new development on at least two sides to give a sense of enclosure and fronted by active frontages, which could be retail/leisure uses or simply front doors and windows of development, overlooking the new space. This space should be easily seen from passing traffic on Maylands Avenue as another visible sign of the Heart's regeneration and as an attractive place for businesses to locate.

4.3.4 Given the Council's aspiration for the Heart to be regenerated to support the wider Maylands Business Park area and in recognition of the difficult market conditions at the time of preparing this Brief, a lower level of provision (than the National Playing Fields Association 2.8ha per 1,000 population standard) will be allowed (see Section 5.5). All development in the Heart will be expected to contribute towards the provision of this new, high quality public space on Maylands Avenue and any residential development may also be expected to contribute to a compensatory level of open space (which meets Local Plan standards) within a five minute walk of the site.

### **Provision of an appropriate mix of uses in a safe and secure environment**

4.3.5 An appropriate mix of uses will be sought in the Heart as a new Local Centre, including residential, office and local retail/leisure/services uses. A limited amount of retail/leisure/service uses is sought and should include food and drink together with services and facilities which help support the area's businesses. These uses should be focused on the ground floors of development around the Maylands Avenue/Wood Lane End junction with some by the new open space, with residential and/or office development on the upper floors, depending on prevailing market conditions. By encouraging a mix of uses in the Heart, particularly through improving local amenities, it is hoped that this will help to increase the attractiveness of the area for office development in particular.



- 4.3.6 The retail units provided should be flexible enough to accommodate a range of A-class uses, but the sales area of individual units should be no more than 3,000 sq ft. The uses which would be permitted include:
- A1 (shops, hairdressers, dry cleaners, sandwich bars);
  - A2 (banks, building societies, estate agents and other professional services);
  - A3 (restaurants/cafés);
  - A4 (pubs and bars);
  - Sui Generis (laundrettes, taxi/vehicle hire);
  - D2 Leisure (gym/other leisure uses).
- 4.3.7 Where appropriate, new development - particularly on sites around the Maylands Avenue/Wood Lane End junction - should have ground floor active frontages facing Maylands Avenue to help reanimate it. In urban design terms, 'active frontages' mean a variety of things from "frequent doors and windows with few blank walls" and frontages which feel welcoming, to "lively internal uses visible from the outside, or spilling onto the street" – i.e. retail/leisure/services uses (Urban Design Compendium, 2000). Residential development will not be permitted as ground floor uses around the junction or along Maylands Avenue.
- 4.3.8 The façades of the buildings fronting the junction should also be strong architecturally given their visual prominence in the Heart. Surface parking should be provided at the rear of development and should be avoided on the Maylands Avenue frontage in particular.
- 4.3.9 The design and layout of new development and the mix of uses should discourage crime by ensuring that there is maximum potential for natural surveillance where possible. The green open space should be overlooked on all sides, and entrances to new development and parking areas should be well lit and highly visible.
- 4.3.10 The above is guidance on the preferred mix and location of uses. However if a development proposal were to come forward which may deviate to some extent from this guidance (e.g. a hotel development) it will be judged on its merits and in particular its ability to deliver the wider vision and aims of this Brief, whilst also meeting the principles set out in this section.

### **Introduction of residential development to support retail and local services**

- 4.3.11 The main objective of this Brief is to ensure that the Heart is regenerated to help secure the future of the wider Maylands Business Park. The Council aspires to retain the Heart for commercial uses as much as possible but recognises that in order for regeneration to occur in the short to medium term, and for new retail and local services to thrive, that current market conditions are likely to favour residential uses rather than office uses in the initial phase of development. It is anticipated that the new residents will help to support the new retail and local services, and that as these become more established and well used, this will contribute to the sense of vibrancy and animation to the Heart as a functional centre. In time, it is expected that this will attract new commercial uses to the Heart, particularly those which require office space.
- 4.3.12 As its main objective is to regenerate the Heart, the Brief is intended to be flexible enough to allow for the redevelopment of sites with residential or office uses depending on the prevailing market conditions. The Council aspires to retain the Heart for commercial uses as much as possible but recognises that in order for regeneration to occur in the short to medium term,

residential supporting uses in the Heart may come forward first given market conditions. This should ideally take place around the junction first for impact, but it is also recognised that in planning terms, new residential development on sites on the edge of the Heart, particularly to the east on Wood Lane End, would integrate well with existing residential areas. Landowners/developers are therefore encouraged to consult with the Council early on given that only a maximum of 270 units in total will be permitted in the Heart.

4.3.13 In addition to guidance set out in the Appendix 3 of the Local Plan: Layout and Design of Residential Areas, new residential development in the Heart should:

- Provide a mix of housing units, sizes, types (flats or town houses) and tenure according to Local Plan Policies 16 (size of new dwellings) and the emerging findings from the London Commuter Belt (West) Strategic Housing Market Assessment. New residential development will be expected to deliver 35% affordable housing (over certain thresholds) and for 75% of affordable units to be available as socially rented. This requirement will be set out in the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which will be adopted in April 2011;
- Carefully design the interfaces between new development and neighbouring uses and incorporate screening with tree planting or other measures, particularly where residential uses are adjacent to commercial uses on sites which are yet to come forward in the Heart.

4.3.14 It is expected that any development proposals for residential use should consider the interaction of new residents with existing social amenities (Section 3.3.4) and to provide new amenities (or to contribute towards them) as appropriate, for example, open space.

### High quality development

4.3.15 All development should seek to:

- Be of a high quality and sustainable design (see Section 4.3.24);
- Design parking to be at the rear or centre of the individual sites to minimise the impact of parking in the Heart, particularly for sites around the junction and on Maylands Avenue;
- Have taller buildings towards the centre of the Heart and lower buildings towards the eastern and western edges on Wood Lane End. There may be potential for higher blocks around the junction if they demonstrate good design principles;
- Have separate entrances for residential and non-residential uses if provided within the same development block;
- Have well-lit and highly visible access points from the main roads and parking areas.

4.3.16 Block layouts suggested in Section 5 are shown for indicative purposes only and variations, which still meet the development principles as set out in this Brief, may be permitted.

4.3.17 Figure 4.1 overleaf shows examples which illustrate the type of high quality new development which is expected in the Heart of Maylands.

**Fig 4.1** Suggested urban image and landscape treatments



Ground floor active frontage



Low rise mixed use blocks



Good enclosure around the public open space



Public space - a destination for social interaction



Pedestrian paths - creating interaction between buildings and the street



Landscaped surface car parks



High quality accessible cycling provision across the Heart

## Creation of new landmark building(s) at the intersection of Maylands Avenue and Wood Lane End

- 4.3.18 A landmark building or a number of landmark buildings should be created on the Maylands Avenue/Wood Lane End intersection with well designed, high quality facades facing onto the crossroads. This will help to provide a strong outward sign of regeneration in the Heart and investment in the Maylands Business Park as a whole, visible to passing traffic and local businesses and residents.

### High quality public realm and landscape enhancements

- 4.3.19 Maylands Avenue will become a tree-lined street with high quality public realm and landscaping, with streetscape enhancements at the junction. Developer contributions towards these enhancements will be sought. In addition, a limited range of materials and street furniture should be agreed upon by the Council and developers in order to create a coherent and unified urban design approach across the Heart development
- 4.3.20 Where appropriate, individual developments will also be expected to include similarly high quality, sustainable public realm into their schemes and parking areas should also be landscaped. New access roads to provide access to new developments on sites east of Maylands Avenue should have shared surfaces and be tree-lined, particularly if within a residential scheme.

### An accessible Heart

- 4.3.21 The strategic importance of the redevelopment of the Heart means that new development will be expected to create better linkages to the rest of the Maylands Business Park, Hemel Hempstead town centre and railway station. This includes improvements to existing routes used by pedestrians and cyclists (including improvements to cut-throughs where appropriate – e.g. from Macted Road and Boundary Road). The redeveloped Heart will be highly permeable with routes through development sites to encourage walking and cycling, and new development should provide secure cycle parking.
- 4.3.22 The regenerated Heart will also improve connections to the rest of the Business Park and town centre by public transport. Bus stops will be retained in their current locations within the Heart and the area will also benefit from the proposed improvements to the bus services (in terms of extended routes, increased frequency and the new Park & Ride scheme) which are planned to be introduced in the wider area.
- 4.3.23 Within each site, parking should be sensitively handled and designed for at surface level or at underground or undercroft levels. In order to reduce the visual dominance of parking areas in the Heart and to create a more attractive urban environment, parking areas fronting directly onto Maylands Avenue, particularly around the junction, will not be permitted. Around the junction and along Maylands Avenue, parking should be provided towards the rear of, or at the centre of, sites.
- 4.3.24 It is recognised that the level of parking provided will need to respond to the operational requirements of commercial occupiers as well as the new residential population with shared parking schemes for residents and workers on mixed-use blocks will be encouraged where possible. This will be particularly encouraged where schemes can demonstrate that the space saved by lower parking provision contributes towards a higher quality development in urban design terms.

## A sustainable Heart

- 4.3.25 As with all development in the wider Maylands Business Park area, new development in the Heart will aspire to contribute towards 'greening Maylands' by seeking to:
- Ensuring access to high quality open space through the creation of a new green open space on Maylands Avenue;
  - Protecting the area's natural resources and minimise resource uses by including design proposals for green and brown roofs, rainwater harvesting, sustainable urban design drainage;
  - Adopting an 'energy hierarchy' as an integral part of the design process. New development will be expected to be of a high standard in terms of sustainable design and construction. Specifically, development should be built to limit water consumption to 105L per day per resident (commercial development will also be expected to show how it limits water consumption) and deliver 10% of energy consumption either from on-site or decentralised low carbon and/or renewable energy supply systems. New development will also be expected to meet Lifetime Homes Standards and to be built to one step above Part L of Building Regulations Code for Sustainable Homes/non-residential equivalent requirements;
  - New development should encourage, and where appropriate contribute to, sustainable means of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport;
  - Ensuring social sustainability of local communities and workers by providing a mix of accommodation, recreation, education, health care and employment opportunities;
  - Ensuring economic sustainability of the wider Maylands Business Park area by creating a social 'heart' to support local businesses and workers.
- 4.3.26 Development proposals should also refer to the Council's emerging Climate Change Study (Low and Zero Carbon Study) when available.

## 5 Indicative design concept and proposals

### 5.1 Introduction

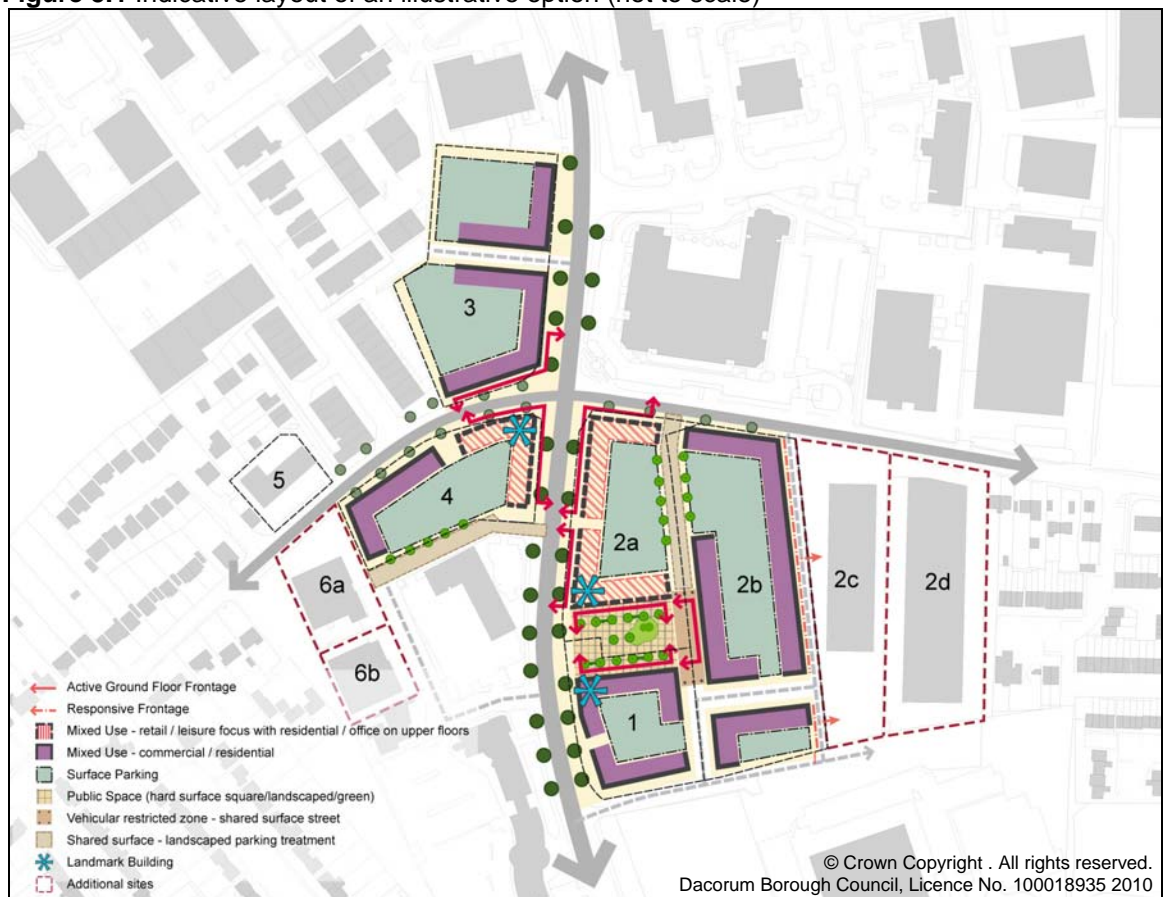
5.1.1 This section sets out an illustrative example of how the sites could be developed out based on the principles set out in the previous section. The principles effectively lay out the 'fixed ground rules' for development in the Heart and the proposals shown here are one of many possible variations.

5.1.2 These designs are indicative only and are subject to more detailed design and feasibility studies by individual landowners as and when their sites come forward for development.

### 5.2 Mix of uses

5.2.1 Figure 5.1 below provides one possible option of how the Heart could be comprehensively redeveloped in terms of the broad mix of uses. The block sizes shown here are indicative and may be allowed to vary depending on the uses (though the sales area of an individual retail unit should not exceed 3,000 sq ft), but development should seek to follow the requirements for an open space on Maylands Avenue and the preferred location of active frontages around the junction and open space.

**Figure 5.1** Indicative layout of an illustrative option (not to scale)



5.2.2 The key features of this indicative layout are:

- A **visually prominent building** of high architectural quality on the southwest corner of the junction facing the crossroads and Wood Lane End should signal the visible regeneration of the Heart. Parking should be provided to the rear of this site and the development could have residential or office space on the upper floors with non-residential uses on the ground floor facing the junction;
- A **high quality, green open space** on the western side of Maylands Avenue, enclosed on at least two sides. **Retail/leisure/services uses should be on the ground floors of development surrounding the open space** to help animate it as the new social hub for the Heart, with residential and/or office uses on upper floors providing natural surveillance for the open space. The third and easternmost side of the space, as shown in this particular layout, also has active ground floor uses fronting an access-only route which should be designed so that it appears to blend in with the open space, with high quality landscaping treatment;
- A **mix of uses** with residential and/or office space on the rest of the sites with **active frontages facing Maylands Avenue** and parking provided to the rear/centre of these sites;
- Whilst the regeneration focus is on the central sites, there is also potential for lower-rise residential development (possibly in the form of family housing) on the sites shown with dotted lines which should be designed to integrate with existing, neighbouring residential areas.

### 5.3 Relative building heights

5.3.1 Figure 5.2 sets out indicative building heights where the tallest buildings should be located around the junction and facing Maylands Avenue, providing they can demonstrate good design principles and sufficient parking provision. Medium and low-rise buildings should be located towards the periphery of the Heart, heading east on Wood Lane End and north on Maylands Avenue, away from the junction.

**Figure 5.2** Indicative building heights





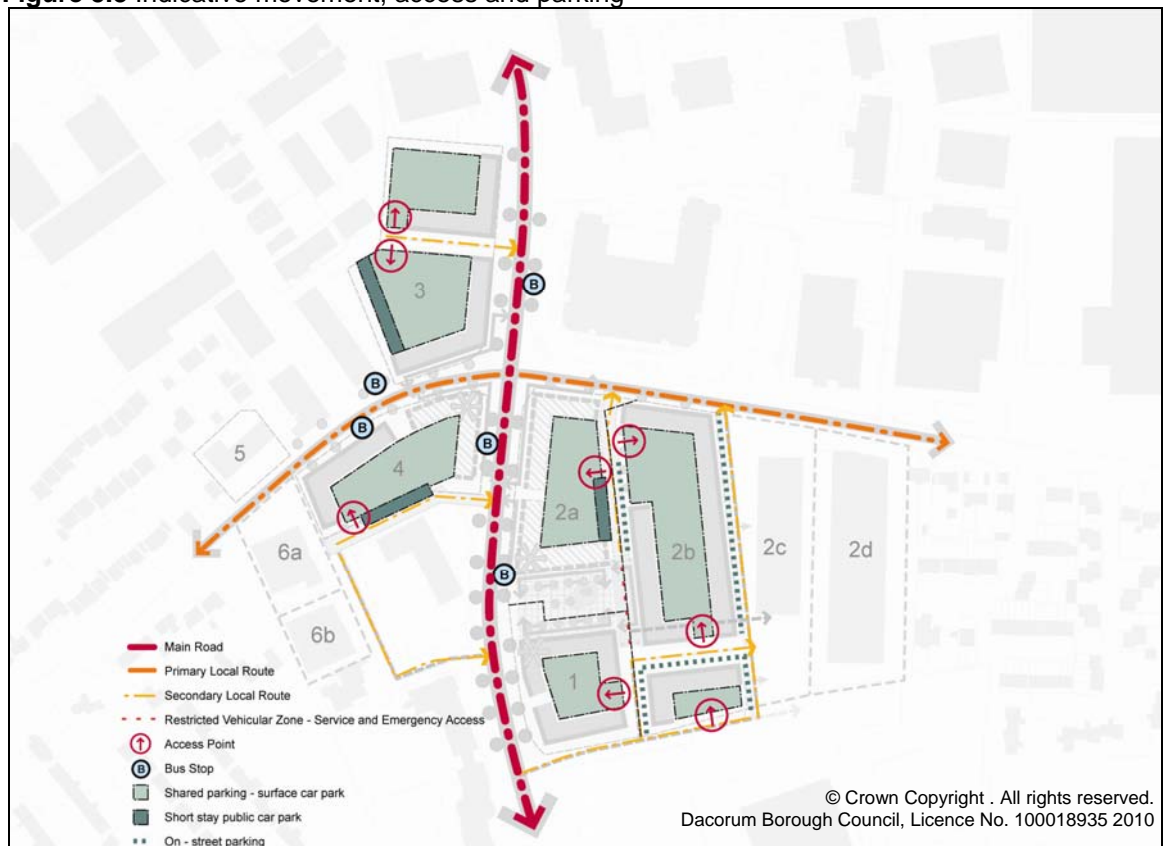
## 5.4 Movement, access and parking

5.4.1 Figure 5.3 shows an indicative movement, access and parking strategy for the Heart which will be subject to further detailed design and feasibility testing. The key recommendations are:

- Vehicular access to the sites will be from existing access points for Sites 3 and 4, with potential new access routes required for Sites 1, 2a and 2b, linking Wood Lane End to Maylands Avenue (again subject to further design and feasibility testing). Servicing of these developments will also need to be incorporated but should use the same vehicular access points;
- Parking should be provided within the site boundaries with parking areas should be provided to the rear or centre of the sites. Some on-street parking may also be required (for visitors for example) and should be provided on both sides of the secondary routes (with shared surface treatment);
- Bus stops should remain in their current positions by Site 4.

5.4.2 It is also proposed that junction improvements at Wood Lane End/Maylands Avenue would take place as part of the wider redevelopment of the area but are subject to more detailed feasibility studies.

**Figure 5.3** Indicative movement, access and parking



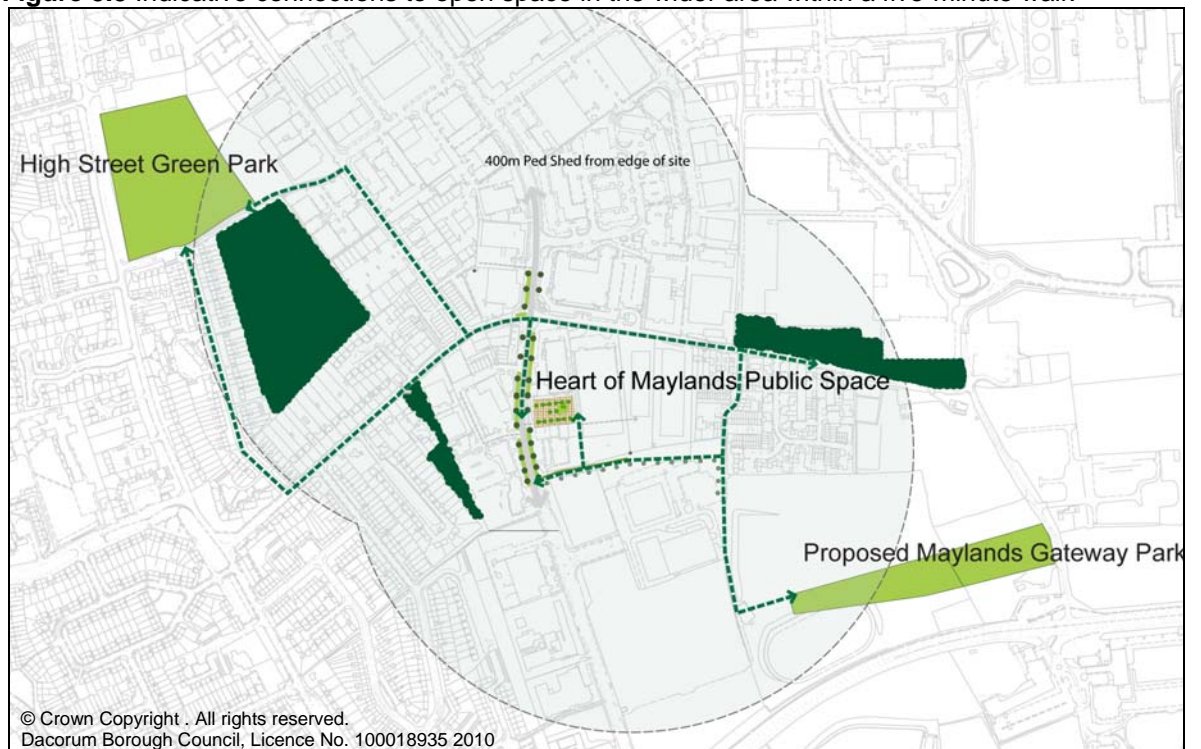
## 5.5 Open space and landscape

- 5.5.1 Figure 5.4 shows that one main open space is proposed – the new green open space on the eastern side of Maylands Avenue. Connections to existing green spaces in the wider area are shown in Figure 5.5.
- 5.5.2 The Council would normally expect residential developments to provide 2.8ha per 1,000 population of leisure space in line with Policy 73 of the Local Plan and the National Playing Fields Association (NFPA) standard. However, the strategic nature of development within the Heart and its role in supporting the wider Business Park means that the provision of recreational open space at the Heart of Maylands is not considered the most appropriate use of land. Given the strategic importance of the new development and taking into consideration possible viability issues, a lower level of on-site provision for open space may be permitted within the most prominent part of the Heart (sites 1, 2a, 2b, 3 and 4) by the Council. Contributions from developers will be used to create a high quality public space on-site and in line with the design principles set out in paragraph 4.3.3 and 4.3.4 and should be at least 0.2ha to 0.3ha in size. Developers will also be expected to contribute towards the provision of off-site open space required to meet the Local Plan and NFPA standards. The quantum of off-site open space required will be determined by the dwelling mix proposed by the applicant and assessed at the time of the planning application. The Council will seek contributions towards child play space, natural green space and outdoor sports facilities. On-site provision however, will be expected if Sites 2c and 2d are redeveloped for residential use.
- 5.5.3 The landscaping strategy for the Heart also includes tree-planting along Maylands Avenue and street planting and soft landscaping on the edges of sites, particularly where development sites border existing uses. Developers will also be expected to contribute towards the Maylands Avenue landscaping treatment (see Section 6 for further detail), and to incorporate soft landscaping for borders within their own schemes.

**Figure 5.4** Indicative open space and landscape



**Figure 5.5** Indicative connections to open space in the wider area within a five-minute walk



## 6 Delivery

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This Brief sets out planning and design guidance for the Heart of Maylands to guide individual landowners and developers coming forward with proposals for their sites. It sets parameters for new development which is likely to be delivered by a number of private investors over a period of five to fifteen years and therefore requires this level of guidance to ensure a unified approach to development is in place as sites come forward.

### 6.2 Delivery and phasing

- 6.2.1 The development principles set out in this Brief are flexible enough to accommodate changing economic circumstances, without sacrificing the vision for a strong functional centre for Maylands Business Park.
- 6.2.2 However, the main impediment to redevelopment on most sites is that developers and landowners are likely to want to wait for an improvement in the market before development activity is likely to commence. It is anticipated that this could begin to happen between 2012 and 2014 which will fit in well with the end of lease periods on some of the privately owned sites. It is also noted that the existing buildings have a value to their owners and that re-letting them can be both attractive and safe from a commercial perspective.
- 6.2.3 Initial viability work and discussions with landowners suggests that there is appetite for redevelopment in the Heart but that in the current market, redevelopment of the Heart is likely to potentially be more financially viable if predominantly residential-supported rather than office-supported due to the current marketplace. It is possible however that the early redevelopment of one of the sites – for example Site 4 which includes Council owned land - may help to strengthen the vision for the Heart and could create footfall which, together with improved market conditions, could make more office development viable within the Heart.
- 6.2.4 Site 4 will be one of the most complex sites to deliver given the multiple small ownerships. The Council owns parts of Site 4 which could be used to facilitate and drive forward redevelopment on this site, and in the wider area.
- 6.2.5 Sites coming forward may need to consider and design for the possibility of adjacent sites remaining as they are for some time, and may also need to consider their phasing in relation to other proposed uses. Initial phases of development will need to minimise any adverse impacts on businesses in premises that will be redeveloped in later phases, and the interfaces between residential and non-residential uses carefully managed. Access routes should be brought forward early in the development process to facilitate future development on adjacent sites.
- 6.2.6 The support and retention of existing businesses which provide services and facilities to the wider estate is very important to growing and developing the area. Redevelopment should therefore seek to retain and accommodate these businesses within the new development where there is a desire amongst the businesses to remain. Redevelopments need to allow for the continued operation of existing businesses in the area, throughout the redevelopment process - and where relevant the process of business relocation.

- 6.2.7 Proposals for new development will also need to demonstrate how they will plan for impacts on highways, utility and infrastructure capacity issues and include where relevant investment proposals to provide necessary upgrades or increases in capacity.
- 6.2.8 Given the role of residential development in supporting the delivery of services/facilities for the wider area and given the proposed limit on residential numbers in the Heart, when it comes to determining planning applications with residential elements, consideration will be given to proposed development timescales. Therefore, those applications with a residential element that could be delivered earlier will be more likely to receive support.

### 6.3 Planning obligations

- 6.3.1 The Council has drafted a Planning Obligations SPD which is due to be adopted in April 2011. This includes, for residential developments, a standard approach for affordable housing and standard charges for 7 other types of facilities and infrastructure which are supported by planning objectives and evidence of anticipated development impact.
- 6.3.2 Planning obligations from all new developments in the Heart are likely to be required to contribute towards the provision of the new green open space on Maylands Avenue with high quality landscaping, street furniture and lighting as the main priority for the Heart. In addition, the Council will work closely with the potential developer of the open space to help ensure the deliverability and viability of this open space.
- 6.3.3 Contributions may also be sought for public realm and environmental improvements to the immediately surrounding areas for individual sites, and for cycleways and footpaths. Residential developments may be required to contribute towards off-site provision of open space and recreational facilities.
- 6.3.4 As these contributions are likely to be dependent on the prevailing market conditions, it is essential that developers enter into early discussions with the Council's planning officers during the pre-application stage about planning obligations that may be required for their development.