# East Hemel Stage 2 Engagement

Welcome to the second exhibition about The Crown Estate's East Hemel development. The exhibition provides an overview of engagement undertaken to date, and an update on the progress of our proposals in response to our engagement with the local community, local authorities and other stakeholders.

## Stage 1 engagement

We held an initial series of drop-in exhibitions in October 2024, where local people and organisations could meet the project team. We had over 1,750 visits to our in person and online exhibitions. A summary of the feedback provided at Stage 1 is provided on the next Panel, with a



## full report available on the project website www.easthemel.co.uk.







## Stage 2 engagement

Stage 2 included a Study Tour of two new neighbourhoods in Cambridge, an East Hemel site visit and Community Design Workshop at Adeyfield Free Church from 28th to 30th January 2025.

This exhibition presents material from the Community Design Workshop, including maps, sketches and key ideas. Please read the information about these emerging plans and provide your considered views which we will analyse and feed into the emerging proposals ahead of a target outline planning application later in 2025.

Key comments and ideas from the community are highlighted in pink boxes throughout the engagement panels.



You can also view the material on the website at www.easthemel.co.uk or scan the QR code here.

The Crown Estate team thanks you for your participation in this important project.

The sessions were informative, creative and took onboard the comments and suggestions from the attendees and integrated them into the outputs.



# Stage 1 summary

## October 2024 events

The first phase of community engagement was held across the local area in October 2024, at venues in Hemel Hempstead town centre, Redbourn, Woodhall Farm, Maylands and Leverstock Green. These drop-in events were a chance to introduce local residents and communities to the project, the local planning context, and to meet the project team and to ask any initial questions about the process and proposals. Key themes that were raised included the following:

Areas of concern	Masterplan considerations	
Traffic congestion, routes, rat-running, safety	Prioritising modal shift measures to reduce car use ; testing impacts and decisions on the wider network; infrastructure requirements	
Transport - noise, air quality/ pollution, horses	Noise testing and mitigation; bus routing, stops and multi-modal transport hubs; leisure routes	
Nickey Line, walking and cycling routes	Prioritising active modes within the site and into wider network; Nickey Line character and crossings	
Green space, Country Park, leisure and play, wildlife	Character and mix of open spaces; wildlife corridors and habitat creation; phasing and access to amenity	
Housing numbers, types, tenure, location, design	Approach to density across the site; diverse housing mix	
Identity, authenticity, association, brand	Movement networks that stitch into existing; continuing the legacy of green space and play, centres and facilities	
Health, schools, shops	Local centres location and mix; schools and health integrated into centres	
Employment types, access, skills, opportunities	Mix of employment spaces – supporting a mix of businesses and sectors - linking with Hertfordshire's Economic Strategy	
Relationships of centres & boundaries	Complementing existing centres and facilities; creating amenity for existing residents	
Trust of TCE, Councils, agencies, developers	Continued engagement and transparency	





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# Cambridge Study Tour

In December 2024, following an invitation to those who had expressed an interest, a small group of local residents visited Trumpington and Eddington, two new neighbourhood developments on the outskirts of Cambridge.

The group met with a local councillor and several others involved with the design and delivery of the neighbourhoods. A series of guided walks explored the places and key decisions that communities, planners, politicians and others had made, to create these neighbourhoods on the edge of an established town.

The study tour provided an opportunity for local residents to ask questions, learn about the achievements and anything they might now do differently. They discussed parking, maintenance, social housing, energy, sustainable drainage and many other aspects of the planning and ongoing management.





## Lessons from Cambridge neighbourhoods

- Good quality design and materials
- Effective design and management of parking
- Important role of public transport
- Provide local shops and services
- Integrate energy and sustainability
- Well-executed flood management and mitigation
- Mix of public and private spaces and gardens
- Overall phasing and provision of services and amenities
- Importance of early delivery of key infrastructure (schools, social infrastructure)
- Stewardship mechanism with residents, elected members, developers

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Beautiful designs of very high standard with good variety. Good connections to central Cambridge by bus and train. They learn from mistakes.

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## THE CROWN COMESTATE

## East Hemel

# Community Design Workshop

## East Hemel site visit

The site visit on 28 January 2025 enabled people from the local area to explore parts of the East Hemel site with the design team, helping to share understanding of the landscape, topography, heritage assets, site constraints, and other factors that the proposals would need to take into account.

There were questions about the links between existing neighbourhoods such as Woodhall Farm, Maylands, Leverstock Green and Redbourn.







## Community Design Workshop

The design workshops were held over 29-30 January 2025 at Adeyfield Free Church. These involved a mix of residents, representatives of local organisations, local statutory bodies, parish councils and the design team. These interactive sessions involved detailed presentations on topics such as site constraints, movement and connectivity, sustainable urban drainage, biodiversity, neighbourhood centres, and stewardship.

Throughout the course of the workshops, many sketches, diagrams and important principles were generated; these are summarised in the next panels. We would like to hear your feedback on the emerging plan ideas.



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enjoyed the interaction with the experts and other members of the public.



# Planning policy & Constraints

East Hemel is allocated for development in the St Albans City and District Council Local Plan. East Hemel forms part of the proposals for Hemel Garden Communities.

The draft Local Plan divides the site into three allocated sites (H2, H3 and H4). Policy requires that the development provides:

- 4,000 dwellings (including 40% affordable and homes for the elderly)
- 17-ha Business/ R&D Park
- 36-ha extension to Maylands (logistics & mixed industry)
- 3 Primary schools including Early Years



- 1 secondary school
- Neighbourhood and local centres (with community facilities, shops/services, medical centre)
- 2 sites for Gypsy and Traveller Pitches
- A Country Park
- Sustainable Alternative Natural Greenspace ('SANG') to protect the Chilterns SAC
- Biodiversity Net Gain of 10%+
- Enhancing the Hemel Garden Communities Green Loop
- Providing a wide range of public open spaces, a new sports hub and playing fields
- A Sustainable Transport Corridor prioritising walking, cycling and buses
- A pedestrian/cycle bridge across the A414
- Safeguarding routes for the planned 'HERT' rapid transit system

Outside the allocations, land east of M1 Junction 8 is earmarked for future highway improvements.

The Local Plan allocations restrict or specify the location of some of the

required land uses. There are also a number of physical constraints which will affect how development and open space can be arranged within the site:





## East Hemel

# Landscape considerations

## Context & principles

The landscape at East Hemel is rich and varied, with natural features that will shape how the area evolves. The masterplan must work sensitively with the land—respecting its topography, green spaces, and the wider setting of Hemel Hempstead—to create a sustainable, well-balanced, and characterful place for people and nature. The maps on this panel highlight key landscape considerations, from existing green corridors to natural constraints. These factors, along with policy guidance, environmental studies, and community input, will help shape the design principles that guide the masterplan's evolution.



## Role of greenspace

Green spaces will be at the heart of East Hemel, shaping its character and ensuring a healthy environment for both people and nature. A network of open spaces will provide places to relax, play, and connect with the landscape, while also supporting biodiversity, climate resilience, and local ecology. The aim is to create a thriving, green

East Hemel landscape principles

ecology. The aim is to create a thriving, green environment where wildlife can flourish alongside vibrant new neighbourhoods, aligning with the East Hemel vision guiding principle of 'Nurturing the natural environment'.

## Workshop ideas

Support walking, cycling, and horse riding with wellintegrated routes, improved Shape neighbourhoods around green spaces, fostering gathering,

## Nickey Line links, and repurposed quiet lanes.

recreation, and local services within a biodiverse setting

Multifunctional open spaces designed inclusively for all to enjoy

Identify opportunities for exposing chalk to create nationally scarce chalk grassland Create landscaped buffers, and treat new and existing communities sensitively

The round table discussions did help us to understand what might be possible in the resulting design.

## THE CROWN ESTATE

## East Hemel

## Movement and access

## Context

Local connectivity, and the importance of wider links and access to shops, services and amenities must be carefully planned. The east side of Hemel Hempstead currently suffers from congestion and rat running, where problems on the motorway network can back-up into the town. East Hemel has high aspirations to enable more active and sustainable travel modes, while ensuring accessibility for vehicular journeys, in a way that blends into the new neighbourhoods and wider townscape.







There is a need for proper relief roads on the eastern side of the development

## THE CROWN ESTATE East Hemel

# Neighbourhood and housing considerations

## Context

Hemel Hempstead was designed based on a structure of distinctive neighbourhoods each served by a local centre, a structure that is important to incorporate into the town's continued growth.

## Workshop ideas for neighbourhoods include:

Social spaces and uses for

people to come together, with a recognition that communities can be based both on localities as well as



- common interests
- The clustering of facilities like school, nursery, GP surgery, cafe, shops etc.
- Schools as the heart of a neighbourhood
- Tenure blind neighbourhoods that integrate different types and tenures of homes
- Transitioning between old and new neighbourhoods
- Green spaces separating communities, with houses overlooking water and valleys

## Workshop ideas for housing include:

- Homes and neighbourhoods must be distinctive in particular distinct from Leverstock Green; using materials, colours, planting and architecture in ways that builds a cohesive character but is diverse and interesting across the site, avoiding monotony
- It is important that all homes have outdoor space, but it may be that this takes different forms in different homes, ranging from the gardens, terraces and patios, to shared spaces
- Homes should be flexible and adaptable, allowing families to grow or for people to age in place
- Homes must be sustainably constructed, incorporating elements such as solar panels, rainwater harvesting, green roofs, cycle parking
- Taller buildings could potentially be located along valley slopes to minimise heights overall, but should also be located around local centres to add to their vibrancy

## Workshop ideas for types of homes include:



#### Terraced homes, a traditional house type that has stood the test of time, is flexible

to different lifestyles and families.

### Intergenerational homes

where large families can live together. This could mean larger sizes, more space on the ground floor for conversions, or granny flats.



Homes for downsizers, where people in the area can move while staying local, such as flats, small terraces or maisonettes.

#### Later living facilities

located close to local centres and health facilities, and sharing spaces with the wider community.



## THE CROWN

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# North area emerging ideas

## Context

The north of the site is allocated in the St Albans Regulation 19 Local Plan for mixed-use residential development, including primary and secondary schools and sports pitches, with the land east of the overhead pylons remaining in the Green Belt.

The area has a **distinctive** topography, with a flat plateau around Punchbowl Lane which descends steeply towards the Nickey Line and Redbourn Road along the Ver Valley slopes. Initial ideas include the introduction of a **Country** Park along these slopes, with the historic Wood End Farm activated as a destination and gateway to the park.

Protecting the Upper Ver Valley character and landscape

A major nature destination with new habitats, routes and recreation opportunities

Wood End Farm: A Country Park destination that activates and celebrates heritage

> Country Park as green gateway into Hemel



### Idea for a Country Park: a gateway

Arts and heritage trail along the Nickey Line

> A Sports Hub at the entrance to the sports pitches, which could have facilities for teams or indoor sports areas

## Workshop ideas

Second draft

Country Park - a major new park connecting into both Hemel and Redbourn, that is more natural with walking routes, wooded areas, meadows, and ponds

**Restore listed Wood End** 

**Farm** and bring to life as a community space in the Country Park - with uses like food growing,



Utilising an underground pipeline easement that cannot be built on as a pedestrian and cycle route



## THE CROWN

# Central area emerging ideas

## Context

The centre of the site is allocated in the St Albans Regulation 19 Local Plan for employment uses as an extension to Maylands and part of the Hertfordshire Enviro-Tech Enterprise Zone, including logistics and industrial uses alongside business and research spaces.



As the land is in proximity to Buncefield Oil Terminal, the area has strict guidelines on permitted uses and activities that are permissible in proximity to Buncefield Oil Terminal, which will inform the distribution of uses in the site.

> Putting industrial units against the M1 as a noise buffer for the rest of the site

## Workshop ideas



When a major, life-changing development is planned on your doorstep, you feel powerless to affect how it will turn out. The workshops at least gave me the feeling that local opinions were being heard.

## THE CROWN ESTATE LESCIENT

# South area emerging ideas

## Context

The south of the site is allocated in the St Albans Regulation 19 Local Plan for mixed-use **residential development**, including **two primary schools** and **sports pitches**.

The area is defined by rolling hills and valleys, and a patchwork of hedgerows. It also borders Leverstock Green, an existing established neighbourhood with a strong identity and thriving community facilities.

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## Workshop ideas

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Second draft Woodland planting long the M1 to buffer the site from oise and views Parkland along the Valley floors to keep low areas free for flood mitigation and management, creating a linear valley park

A potential second small centre co-located with the second primary school

Local centre on the park, with primary school, food store, GP, shops, community uses and bus stop close together and easy to get to. Westwick Row Farm could form part of the centre, converted into community use such as a pub. Retain all existing farmsteads

A cycle link via the sports pitches to facilitate cycling towards St Albans

A4147

Hemalu

Protecting

rat-running

Westwick Row as

a quietway, avoiding

centre of residential neighbourhoods that offer hyper-local places to play or gather close to home, complementing larger park spaces

'Minihubs' - small

spaces or parks at the

Buffering Leverstock Green with planting and open space to create separation and distinctiveness between the two neighbourhoods



Creating

The design team now have a good grasp of the areas of concern for Leverstock Green residents.

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Creating a link

into Bunker's

Park

## THE CROWN ESTATE East Hemel

# **Composite plan**

Following the site visit and community design workshop, the project team collated all the main ideas and developed an initial illustrative masterplan:

**Combined workshop plan** showing North, Central, and South areas



**Boundary Way** 

· A414.

In addition to large parks, creating local spaces and parks distributed throughout the neighbourhoods that offer places to play and gather close to home. These were called 'mini hubs'

> **Re-using the historic** farm buildings for community uses such as education, food growing, pubs, community facilities

**Protecting historic** lanes as quietway routes that are not used for rat-running

Creating an employment area which has a sense of place, with quality

public spaces, routes and environment which support a diverse new business community

> A sustainable transport corridor to link the entire site

Creating green, planted buffers to Leverstock Green and adjacent properties

A4147 Hemel Hempstead Road

Leverstock Green Centre/

Wood End Lane

Leverstock Green

> There was a final map of all of our ideas to make the project 'come alive' rather than being piece-meal ideas.

WESTWICK



A4147 Hemel Hempstead Road

# Deivery and stewardship

The Crown Estate is committed to delivering a stewardship strategy at East Hemel and will work with the community to create a stewardship model that will support the long-term longevity and management of community facilities. This will ensure that the facilities support and build an inclusive, diverse and cohesive community which everyone can feel part of and be proud of.







At the Community Design Workshop we explored key principles of stewardship under two main themes:

- Management of community infrastructure: which includes green spaces and water management, buildings and assets, that are identified to be owned by the community and not adopted by public authorities
- Placemaking: enabling the activation of the new community at East Hemel by facilitating community engagement and activities, and maximising social and community benefits to encourage a strong sense of identity and integration

We discussed the potential core functions of a stewardship model as outlined in the diagram below:

## East Hemel stewardship model (to be explored further)

#### **Public Open Space** Management & Maintenance

Open Space and Landscape Management

#### **Financial Management &** Investment

Maximising Income from Assets

Maintaining Reserves for the Maintenance and Replacement of Assets

#### **Facilities & Services**

Managing, Hiring out and Leasing Community Buildings, Sports Facilities, Food Growing etc

Sustainable Transport Schemes

**Community Services** 

#### Placemaking

**Community Development** and Integration

> Promotion and Communication

Activities and Events

**Community Grants** 

Successful implementation of stewardship requires stakeholder participation, supporting residents to feel empowered to be involved with the governance, co-design and care of community facilities to ensure opportunities are created that facilitate and enable collaboration. Planning early for stewardship is an important part of this process.

We considered ideas not originally in my mind, like the complexities of stewardship.



## **Benefits and outcomes**

The Crown Estate vision for East Hemel is built on the principles of:

Nurturing our natural world Connecting places and people Celebrating pride of place

Promoting community participation

Fostering prosperity and new economies

The delivery of the evolving masterplan plan will produce the following benefits, and be in accordance with the Council's Local Plan policy requirements.





#### Greenspace New country

park, playing fields, parks, play areas

## Landscape & biodiversity Habitat conservation & creation, water & flood management





#### New community facilities 4 schools, health

& retail facilities, adaptive re-use of farmsteads for community use

#### Local infrastructure Upgrades of infrastructure, including new roads & utilities, with traffic management



New homes Range of house types & tenures in distinctive,

## Active, sustainable travel Network of active travel paths, bridleways & hubs,

## walkable neighbourhoods

## public transport linking to main centres



Jobs Range of new workspace, with many different job types & skill levels

#### Low carbon

Energy efficient buildings, energy generation & low carbon material selection



## Stewardship Long term

management of assets with community involvement

## Heritage & identity

Distinctive local character in design, re-used farmsteads, preserved hedgerows & historic lanes

By the end of the 3 days most of those involved appeared to be proud of what was achieved and felt, in part, ownership of the results.

## THE POD

# Programme and next steps

Following the Stage 2 events and online consultation, the progression of the development at East Hemel is projected to take place over the following timeline:





SHARE LATEST MASTERPLAN

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

(SUBJECT TO PLANNING APPROVAL)



## Ways to contribute and stay involved

There are many ways of contributing and staying up to date including providing contact information to receive updates and news and participating in future inperson engagement events

Please provide feedback on a paper form or online at www.easthemel.co.uk, or using the QR code here.

The Crown Estate team thanks you for your participation in this important project.

A great insight into the process of designing a new development. It felt like we were being listened to and that our opinions mattered.

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