



Broxbourne Local Plan

West of Wormley Area Development Options



**BOROUGH OF
BROXBOURNE**

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Planning Policy Team
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Purpose of this report

In preparing its new Local Plan the Council has considered a number of Borough-wide options as set out in the Development Options and Scenarios Report (April 2016). The Council has prepared five local area options studies in order to assess development potential in more detail. These studies have informed the Borough-Wide Options and Scenarios Report and all six studies should be read together in order to understand the development strategy for the emerging Local Plan.

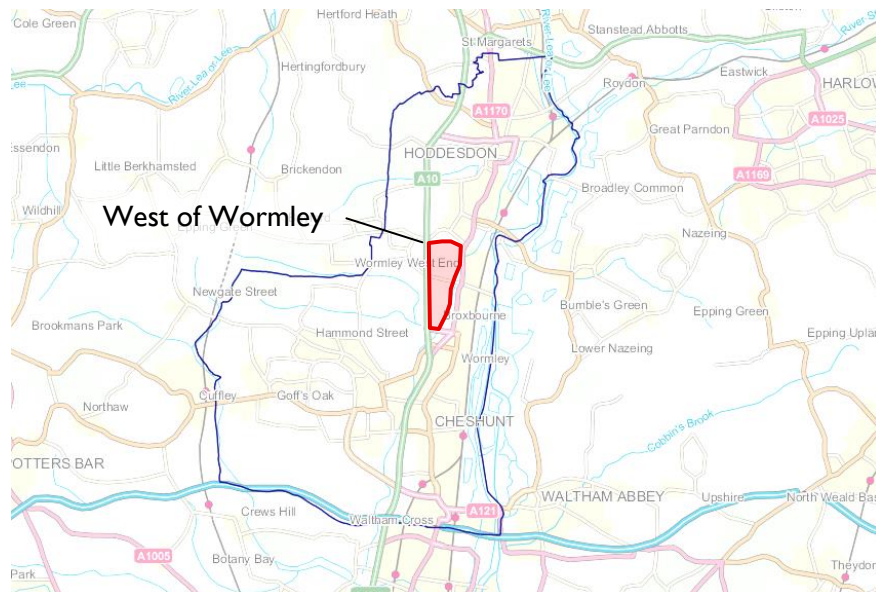
In addition to this study for West of Wormley, Development Options Reports have been prepared for Bury Green, Brookfield, Goffs Oak, and Park Plaza. A further study had been proposed for West of Hoddesdon but this was overtaken by the granting of planning permission for strategic scale development at High Leigh in April 2015.

This report sets out and discusses potential development options for the area. Although the report concludes on the performance of each option within the area's local context, it will be the Local Plan which decides on the preferred option in the context of overall Borough-wide considerations and the merits of other potential options for other areas within the Borough. This report is one of a number of evidence studies which have been produced to inform and support the Local Plan decision making process.

The West of Wormley

Introduction to the area and spatial context

The West of Wormley area measures roughly 75 hectares in a long thin wedge, around 1.8km long and 0.5km wide. A number of man-made features define the area's boundaries. It includes all land bounded by the A10 to the west, housing on Bell Lane to the north, the New River and housing on Cozens Lane West to the east, and the Turnford A10 Interchange to the south. The whole area is designated Metropolitan Green Belt and comprises a mix of grazing and meadow land, playing fields, allotments, public open space, a golf course and a school. Aside from the school it has very few existing buildings and structures, with a single residential property occupied by the school's caretaker.



The West of Wormley within the Borough of Broxbourne



The West of Wormley in its local context



An aerial view of the West of Wormley in 2010

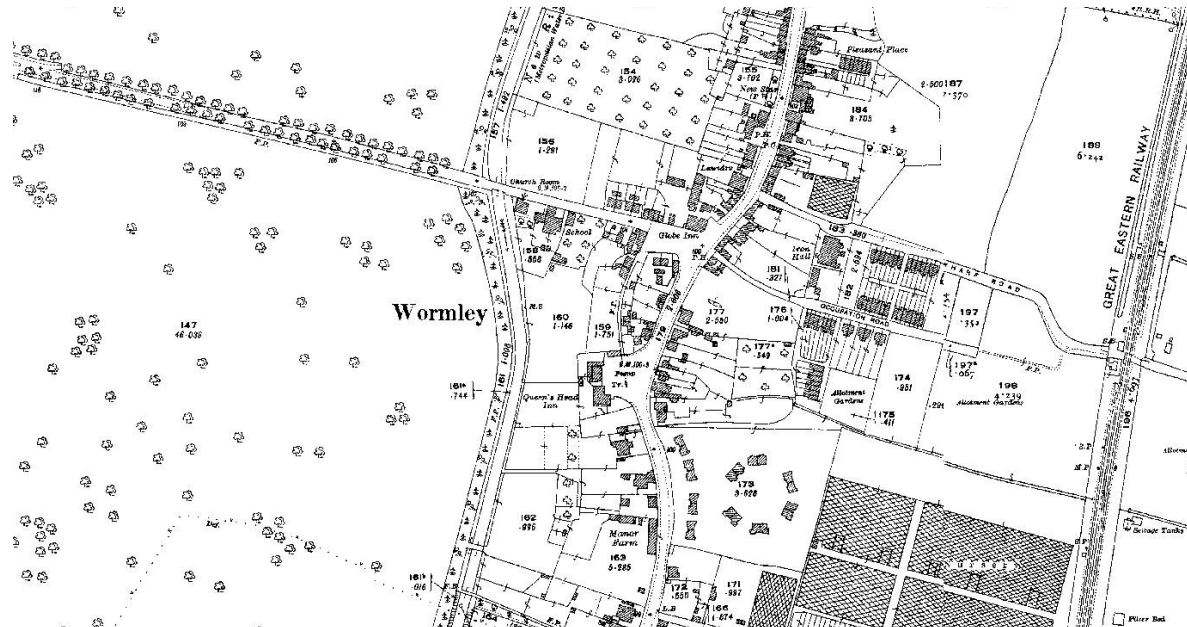
History, development and previous local plans

Wormley is situated on the historic coaching route from London to Cambridge, and traces a relatively long history. Its name is thought to be an evolution of the old English 'snake infested pasture', reflecting its location close to the marshland of the River Lee. The Domesday Book of 1085 records it as a fairly significant village, and it developed further under the influence of Wormleybury Manor. When the Great Eastern Railway was built along the Lee Valley in the 1840s it bypassed the village. Although the horticultural industry then boomed from the turn of the 20th century, the village saw little urban development until the construction of several postwar private and public housing schemes.

The area to the west of the New River has only ever seen limited urban development. A small group of cottages (Wentworth Cottages) were constructed in 1910 for workers on the nearby Broxbournebury estate, and two secondary schools (since merged into Broxbourne School) were built in the late 1950s. There has also been some recent

infilling of housing between Broxbourne School and Wentworth Cottages. Other than the school these development areas have been removed from the green belt, resulting in the remaining area of green belt discussed in this report.

Under previous local plans the West of Wormley has remained largely in its present state, free from built development. The northern half of the area, with its established playing fields, informal open space, allotments and clubhouse buildings, has never been the subject of any specific policies. By contrast the area south of Church Lane has been subject to a range of policies. The 1983 plan allocated land south of Church Lane as an 'agricultural priority area', on the basis that it was very high quality food growing land. The 1994 plan then redefined the site as a 'landscape development area' and allocated it as an open space extension with the intention of creating a new 'central park' for the borough. The current (2005) Local Plan returned to a more neutral approach to the site with no specific allocation, and it remains in use as sheep grazing land.



Wormley in 1913. Limited urban development has spread east from the historic village core along the High Road towards the railway. Glasshouses have spread to the south, but the West of Wormley remains undeveloped.



Above: The historic heart of the village on Wormley High Road
Below: Wentworth Cottages, Cozens Lane West

Issues to consider for future development

Landscape and character

The 2008 *Landscape Character Assessment* places the West of Wormley area within a 'Plateau Ridges and Slopes: Wooded parkland and farmland' landscape character area. It judges that this wider area has a strong and distinctly recognisable sense of place, characterised by a mix of farmland, parkland, woodland and more human influences.

It is judged as a landscape to be in a good condition, with no specific threats identified. However, whilst parts of the wider landscape character area are felt to be particularly tranquil, traffic noise from the A10 is identified as a significant disturbance to this. The A10 Hoddesdon by-pass which was constructed in the 1970s now separates the West of Wormley area from the wider green belt to the west, and the area is otherwise entirely enclosed by urban development, it is not as tranquil as surrounding green belt. However, as an area surrounded by urban land uses it forms an important and valued green gap within them, and so does have an important purpose.

The area's topography (shown on the map overleaf) is broadly flat at its southern end as it falls gradually into the floodplain of the Wormleybury Brook at 30m above sea level. The north-western part of the area rises more notably through Cozens Grove/Top Field local nature reserve towards Bell Lane, reaching 64m above sea level at its highest. The area's flat topography would not restrict its developability. However, the open views out across the area and the wider Lee Valley from the higher land within Cozens Grove/Top Field are a key feature and attraction of the local nature reserve. These views should be accommodated and protected within any development options.

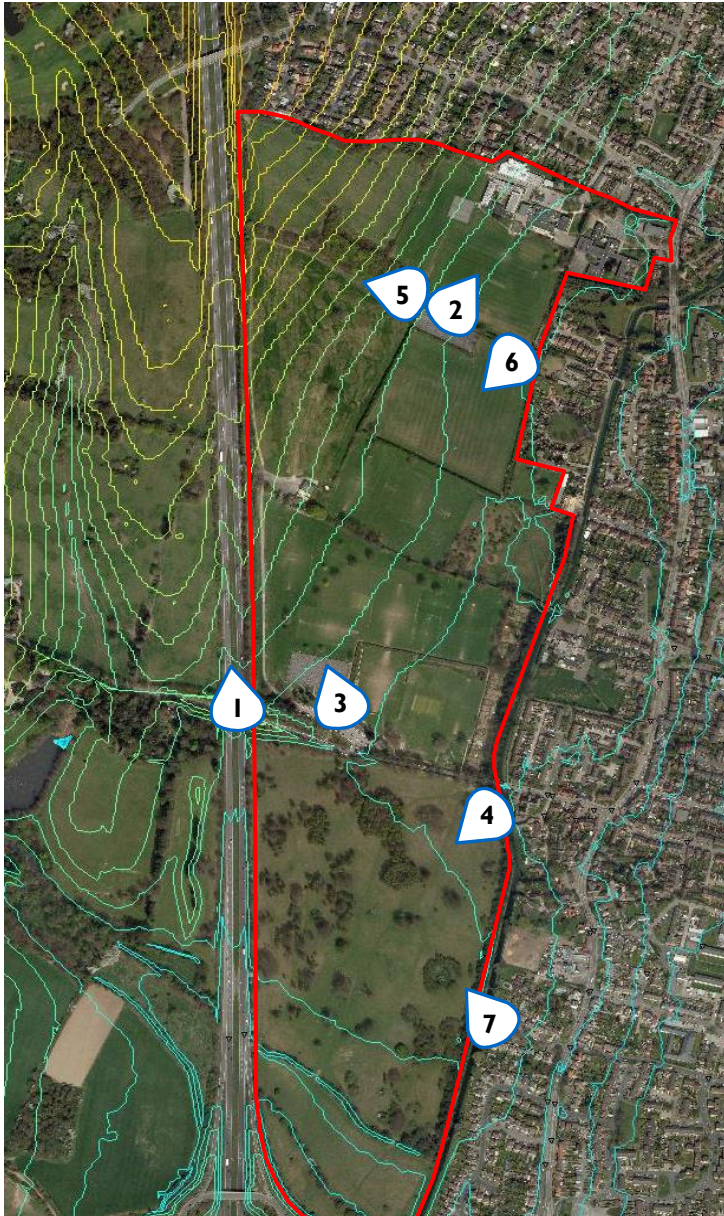
Within the West of Wormley area there are effectively two main character sub-areas – the land north of Church Lane and the land south of Church Lane. Although it has relatively few buildings and structures and is entirely within the green belt, the landscape north of

Church Lane is still a man-made one. Over half is laid out as sports pitches, which are mostly grass but with around 1 hectare of hard-surfaced netball and tennis courts. Other land uses include Broxbourne School, car parking, Church Lane allotments, a golf course, and a children's play area. The only significant area more 'natural' area north of Church Lane is the Cozens Grove/Top Field local nature reserve, which comprises an area of ancient woodland surrounded by wildflower meadow and grassland.

Despite the human influence north of Church Lane, the area retains a predominantly 'green' character. Bands of mature trees and hedges delineate its boundaries, running alongside the A10 and New River and between Broxbourne School and housing to the north. Boundaries between the individual land uses and some of the individual playing fields are similarly lined with mature hedges and trees. This compartmentalises the area, giving it a relatively formal character. However, the large size of the fields means that it still feels fundamentally open. Apart from the school playing fields and allotments the area north of Church Lane is also fully accessible to the public, being criss-crossed by a network of formal and informal walking routes (see p8). This reinforces the open and explorable feel of the area. This area is readily accessible from the urban areas of Wormley and Broxbourne and the New River Path at a number of points.

Land south of Church Lane is entirely free of built development, hard surfacing, or indeed any form of noticeable human activity. Accordingly it retains a much more natural feel than the area north of Church Lane, with a particularly attractive parkland setting of open grassland used for sheep grazing interspersed with large mature single trees and copses. The land south of Church Lane is not open to the public, although the New River provides a walking route along its eastern edge. This means that whilst it is physically more open than the land to the north, it does not serve an amenity role beyond its attractive appearance and as a visual break.

Representative views of the area are shown overleaf.



Aerial view of the West of Wormley area, showing contour lines at 2 metre intervals (Yellow = higher ground; blue = lower ground)



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Representative views within the West of Wormley area. 1: The A10 north from Church Lane; 2: Broxbourne School playing fields; 3: Tarmac sports courts at Wormley Playing Fields; 4: Wormleybury Field south from Church Lane; 5: Public footpath towards Cozens Grove; 6: Broxbourne School overflow playing fields; 7: The New River from Huntingdon Close

Environmental designations and flooding

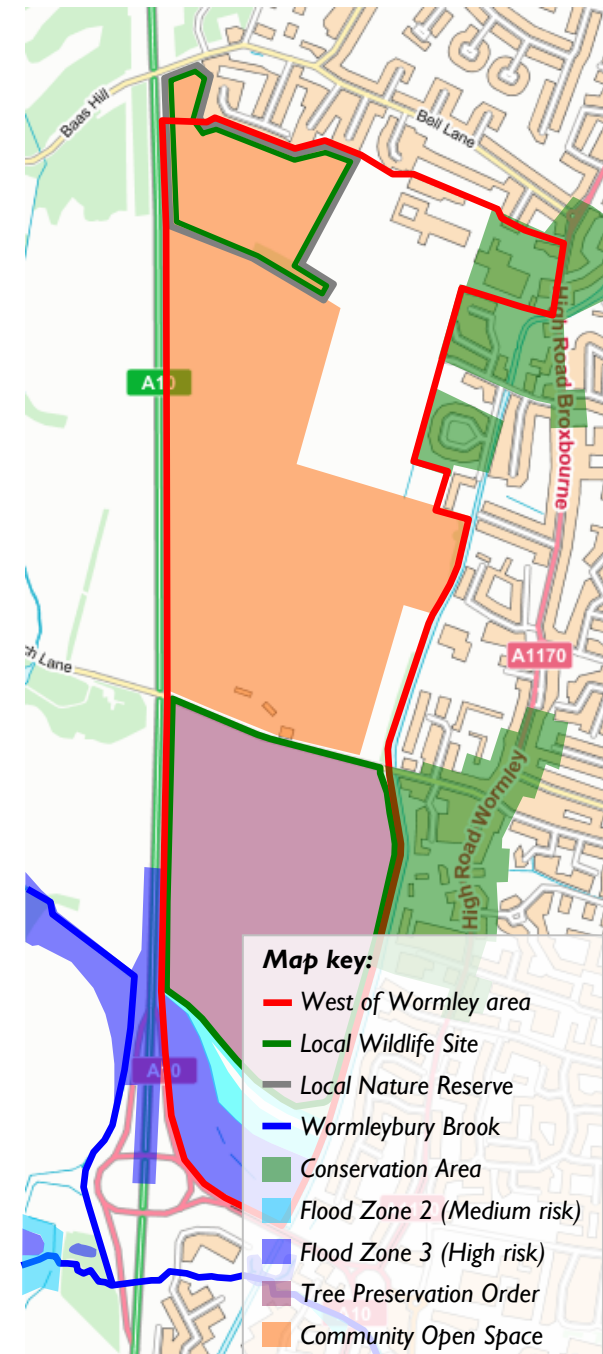
The Council has an important duty to protect the borough's natural and historic environment, and ensure that residents' homes are safe from issues such as flooding. The environmental designations within the West of Wormley area are therefore an important consideration, and the *2005 Local Plan Proposals Map* already designates much of the area for its environmental or amenity value.

Various pieces of evidence support the designations and will inform the new Local Plan's approach:

- The 2013 Wildlife and Habitat Survey judges that both of the two existing local wildlife sites in the West of Wormley area are of a high habitat value and worthy of continued protection;
- In 2005, Cozens Grove/Top Field was designated a Local Nature Reserve and is a valued recreational space. The 2010 *Submission Core Strategy* further identified the whole West of Wormley area as a 'green corridor', with the intention that it be enhanced to link urban open spaces with surrounding countryside. The updated Local Plan could take this stance forward;
- The 2014 *Outdoor Sports Strategy* finds that local outdoor sport provision does not always meet demand, and that population growth will create a need for more pitches. There is therefore a strong case for the area's community open spaces continuing to be designated as such;
- The floodplain of the Wormleybury Brook covers much of the southern end of the area. Environment Agency *Flood Maps* place most of this in Flood Zone 3, giving it a high risk of flooding (at least a 1% chance in any year). The rest of the area has a low risk of flooding, but the borough's topography means that water run-off must flow to the River Lee through the urban area. Any favoured development proposal will therefore need to demonstrate that it would not increase flood risk elsewhere, and will replicate greenfield run-off rates.

The West of Wormley area also adjoins three of the borough's six conservation areas, and contains a large area of protected trees. Any development option should be designed around these. However, the area contains no land of archaeological interest, and the Environment Agency's *Landfill Maps* show that there are no historic landfill sites in the area which development would need to take account of.

On the whole, the area's environmental designations are such that they restrict its suitability for large-scale comprehensive development. It forms an important 'green lung' between urban areas and the A10 for both wildlife and people, and its existing designations remain valid. However, the designations do not necessarily preclude the potential for more sensitively designed development.



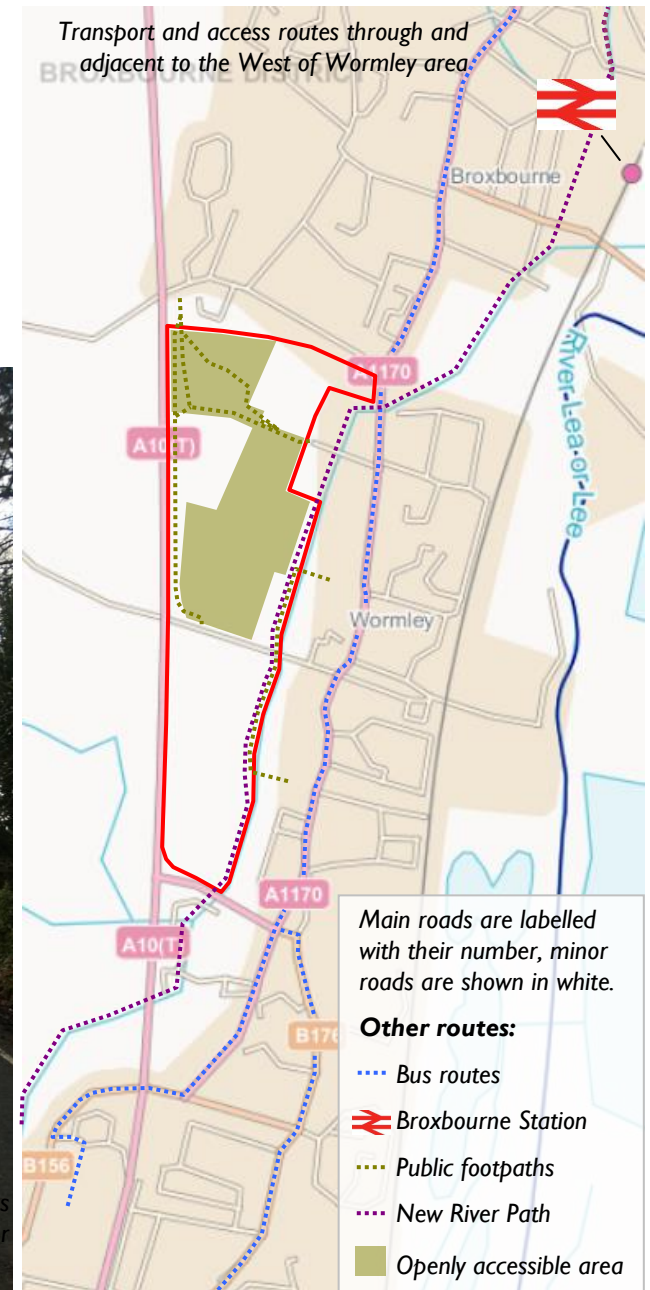
Transport, access and rights of way

At present, road access to the West of Wormley area is via Church Lane accessed from Wormley High Road.

Although the A10 runs along the western boundary of the area, its grade-separation, the West of Wormley's proximity to the Turnford Interchange and the need to use a significant amount of land mean that any new junction on it is not considered an option. It is therefore assumed that access to the area would still be from routes via the A1170 High Road for any development scenario. The 2010 *Transport Modelling Study* concludes that the A1170 already experiences a degree of stress, and its junction with Station Road in Broxbourne has particular issues during peak hours. Whilst there are several roads in the borough where congestion is more severe, these factors nevertheless constrain the developability of the site.

In terms of sustainable transport modes, Wormley's neighbourhood centre provides a limited range of local shops and services (see p9) but is walkable from most parts of the West of Wormley area. Two main bus routes (310/310A and 410/411) run along the A1170 High Road, providing up to 7 buses per hour on weekdays north towards Hoddesdon, Hertford and Harlow and south towards Cheshunt and Waltham Cross. Broxbourne railway station provides links north to Hertford, Bishops Stortford and Cambridge and south to London, and is a 15 minute walk from the north of the area around Broxbourne School (although around 35 minutes walk from the southern end).

The only vehicular route within the area itself is Church Lane, a minor road which is relatively narrow in places. There are a number of formal footpaths, as well as open fields and Cozens Grove/Top Field which are freely accessible on foot. However, as noted above the southern half of the area south of Church Lane is not open to the public. The New River Path which links to Broxbourne Station to the north and the Brookfield Centre to the south runs along the eastern boundary of the area.

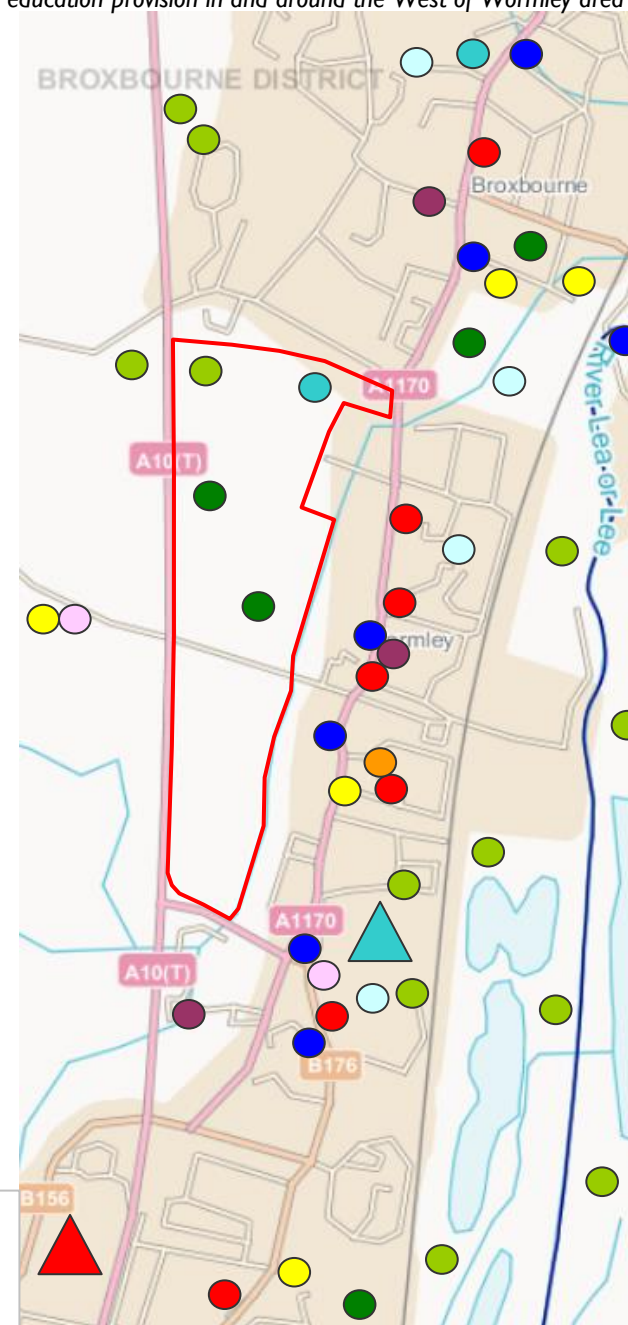


Facilities, utilities and education

Services, facilities and education provision in and around the West of Wormley area

The green belt nature of the West of Wormley means that the only facilities within its boundaries are related to leisure and education. However, the wider Wormley, Turnford and Broxbourne areas contain a wide range of day-to-day facilities; with local shops, public houses, religious venues, a community hall, doctor's surgeries, childrens nurseries, primary schools and Herts Regional College all within walking distance. This makes development in the area relatively sustainable in terms of access to services. In terms of larger-scale facilities, the nearby Brookfield Centre provides two supermarkets, as well as a large retail park. Hoddesdon Town Centre and Cheshunt Old Pond District Centre, with their wider range of services, restaurants and shops, are located 2 miles north and 2.5 miles south respectively and both are easily accessed by bus and car. The borough's three main business parks (Hoddesdon, Cheshunt and Waltham Cross) are also all within 3 miles. Although the West of Wormley area is located slightly peripherally to these higher-order facilities, its central location in the borough means that it is still relatively sustainably located. In terms of utilities, there is understood to be general capacity in the borough's electricity, gas, water and sewer networks for all growth scenarios. However, any development scheme that comes forward in the West of Wormley area will need to demonstrate that local utility capacity exists, and that the development can satisfactorily connect to the network.

Primary education capacity is a particular issue for this area. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) as the local education authority has published *Meeting the Rising Demand for School Places*, which predicts likely future pupil yields using housing targets and birth rates. New development is expected to result in a need for one new form of entry for every 500 new dwellings, and within the Wormley and Turnford area, HCC report that demand is already matched with supply. Any new development will therefore require contributions towards new school accommodation or the allocation of a site of just over 2 hectares for a new 2 FE school. Secondary school capacity in the short term is not stretched as Broxbourne School has been promoted (see p11) for redevelopment to fund its relocation and expansion. This would provide scope to accommodate pupils based on growth in the existing population, as well as pupils arising from new development. However the County Council has stated that there will be a need for new secondary provision over the medium and long term and that the Council should identify provision for a new secondary school in the central part of the Borough. This document therefore examines the potential provision of a secondary school on land south of Church Lane.



● Local shops	● Religious venue	● Childrens nursery	▲ Herts Regional College
▲ Brookfield Centre	● Community hall	● Primary school	● Sports club/playing fields
● Public house	● Doctors surgery	● Secondary school	● Open space/play area

Protecting the green belt

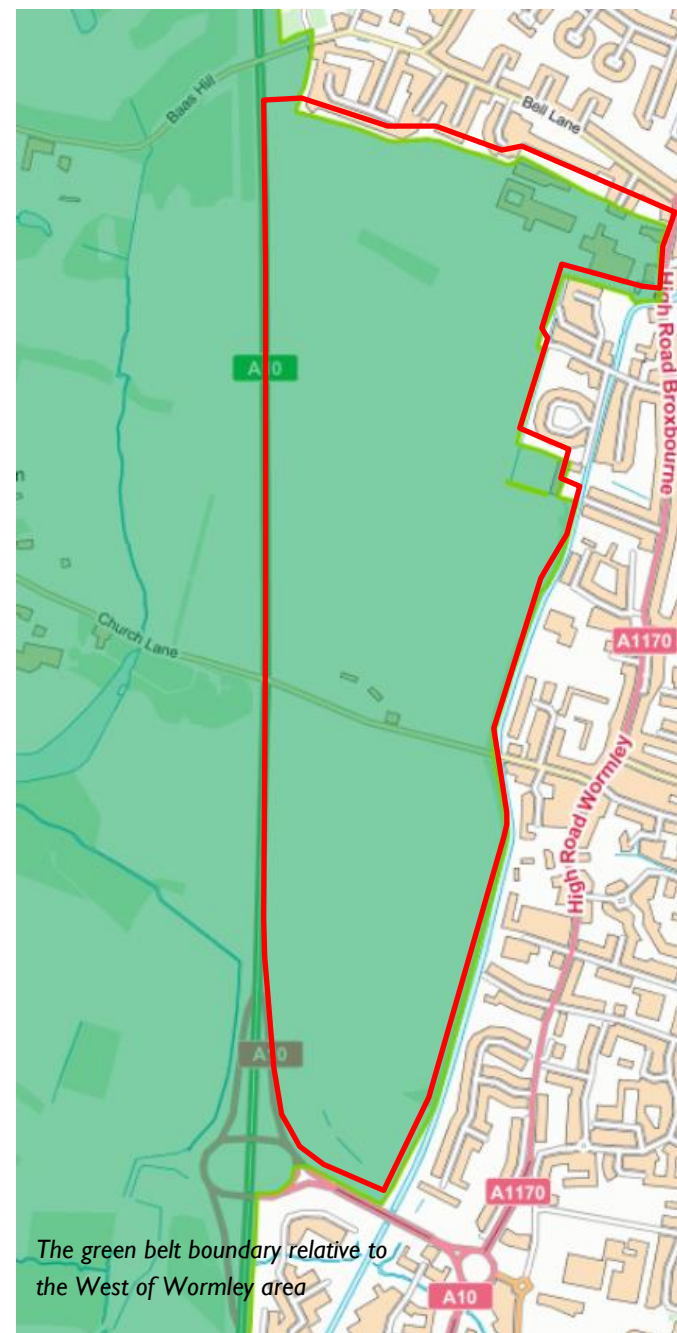
The *2005 Local Plan Proposals Map* defined the current extent of green belt land around the borough's urban areas, and the map (right) demonstrates how this area of protection wraps tightly around existing urban areas. The *National Planning Policy Framework* states that the essential characteristic of green belt land is its openness and permanence. Most development is therefore inappropriate in the green belt and should only be approved in very special circumstances, and changes to the green belt should only be made in exceptional circumstances through the plan-making process.

The green belt around the West of Wormley area is also part of the wider Metropolitan Green Belt, characterised in the area to the west of Cheshunt and towards Hatfield and Borehamwood by small villages within picturesque countryside. Its protection therefore also has a strategic purpose, as well as just a local one.

Given the need to identify sufficient land for the borough's development needs, the Council does anticipate that the Local Plan will need to remove some land from the green belt. It has therefore commissioned and undertaken three pieces of green belt evidence:

- The *2008 Green Belt Review* judges the performance of green belt land in the West of Wormley area to be broadly 'high', as it prevents the westward sprawl of Wormley and protects the areas of more tranquil open space within it. The area is not judged to have a role in preventing the merging of settlements, but this is only because the area of green belt to the west of the A10 does not contain any settlements.
- The *2008 Review of the Inner Green Belt Boundary* reaches similar conclusions about green belt function. It further notes that the range of environmental designations within the area are compelling reasons for a green belt designation, but that the green belt boundary around Broxbourne School would benefit from review regardless of any development proposal.

The West of Wormley area prevents the westward expansion of Wormley but is separated by the A10 from the strategic green belt which covers a large swathe of south-east Hertfordshire. It is judged to be an area that forms part of a local gap between Broxbourne, Wormley and Turnford and performs an important role in preventing the further coalescence of those urban areas. This area is of considerable recreational value and it is open and permanent. It concludes that this area should only be considered for development as part of the Local Plan process if more suitable sites cannot be delivered. There may though be scope for limited development of specific sites which abut the urban area and have convenient access to the local road network. Such options should be considered as part of the Local Plan process.



Landownership and promoted sites

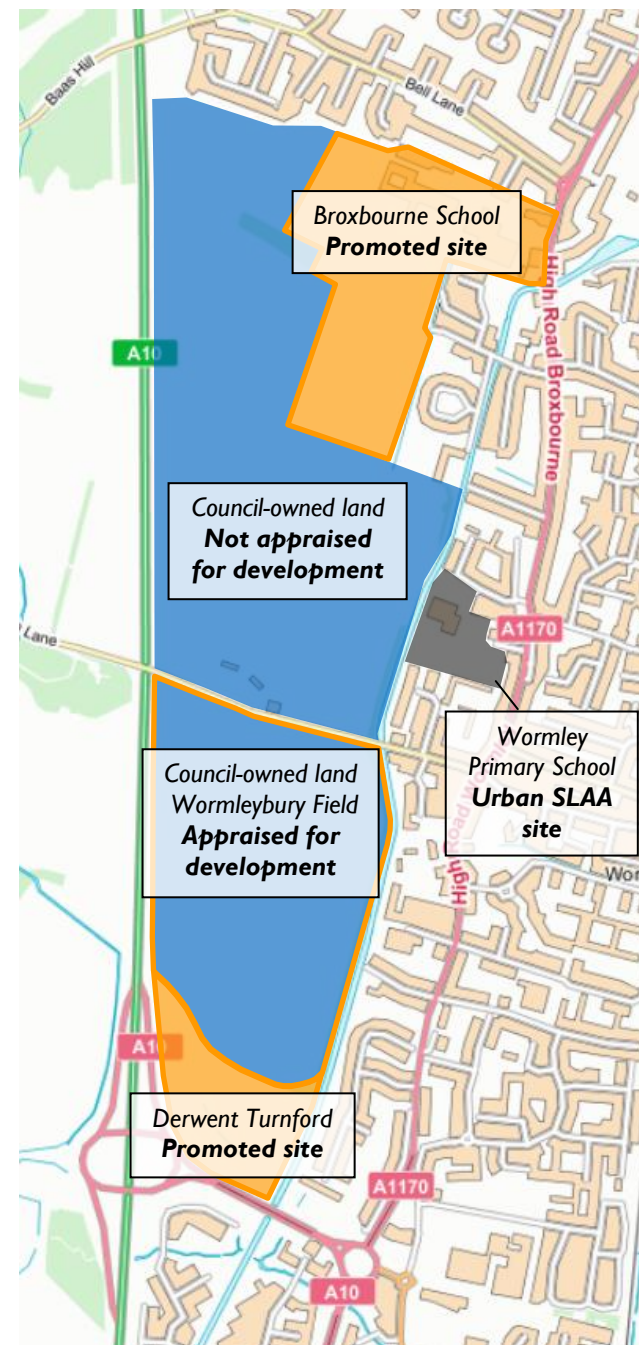
In order to ensure that there has been a “level playing field” between promoted sites when drawing up this and other development options reports, the Council has appraised the developable land in each area in its *Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA)*. To do this, the Council has undertaken several ‘calls for sites’ inviting landowners to promote their sites for development. In some cases promoters have prepared detailed documents attempting to set out the capacity and suitability of their site, whilst others have submitted no supporting information. Two sites in the West of Wormley area have been promoted and hence appraised (shown in orange on the map to the right), comprising all of the area’s privately-owned land.

The remaining land in the West of Wormley area, which makes up around 75% of its total, is owned by the Council. This is split across two sites, north and south of Church Lane. Because of its public value the Council has no intention of developing its land north of Church Lane, almost all of which is designated as community open space. However, its land south of Church Lane is only used for animal grazing and could have development potential. It has therefore been appraised for its developability as well.

The SLAA also identifies and appraises the developability of brownfield or underused land within urban areas. The primarily residential and suburban nature of Wormley means that there is only one such site, the former Wormley Primary School. This is currently being promoted for the development of 13 houses, as well as a 75-bedroom care home.

The appraisal exercise in preparing the SLAA looks at a variety of issues such as land use, topography, environmental designations, flood risk, proximity to services/facilities, access opportunities and utilities.

The following chapter outlines a number of development options based around the appraised sites, as well the issues which have been considered elsewhere in this chapter.



Development options

Based on the evidence and issues set out in the first half of this document, the Council has identified various development options for the West of Wormley area. These are broken down across two sub-areas – Broxbourne School (Area 1), and the land south of Church Lane comprising *Wormleybury Field* and *Derwent Turnford* (Area 2). Given its status as community open space, there are no development options for the Council-owned land north of Church Lane.

In drawing up development options, this report explores the issues which would need to be considered in developing certain numbers of homes and combinations of sites within the West of Wormley area. However, the options presented are not fixed and are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The preferable development sites from the Development Options Reports which have been prepared by the Council, plus the masterplan for the West of Hoddesdon area, will ultimately be identified in the Local Plan taking into account high-level borough-wide issues, and this will be subject to public consultation. The following pages and this report's conclusion therefore only examine the positive and negative aspects of development within each development option as it relates to the West of Wormley area.

The development options, set out over the following pages, are:

Area 1 Redevelopment of Broxbourne School

- Area 2**
- Option 1: Do nothing
 - Option 2: Parkland/recreation
 - Option 3: Horticulture
 - Option 4: Housing
 - Option 5: Secondary school

As part of the appraisal exercise set out on the previous page, each site has been given a reference number. These are shown within the development approaches.

Area 1: Broxbourne School

Area 1 contains a single appraised development site – the 13 hectares of Broxbourne School (BWT-GB-04). This has been promoted as part of a comprehensive scheme to relocate the school within the site, expanding it from 7 to 8 forms of entry (with scope for further expansion). The school seeks to do this by building up to 130 dwellings on the site. As this is the only promotion in Area 1, the choices for the Local Plan will be between doing nothing, or allocating the site. If it is decided to allocate the site consideration would need to be given to how much should be for housing development.

The school was once two schools, giving rise to a substandard layout with significant duplication. Many of the facilities are outdated and do not meet modern educational requirements. Redevelopment would enable these issues to be resolved.

The present school site effectively has three parts – the school buildings (3.5 hectares) occupy the northernmost part of the site, the main playing fields (4.5 hectares) occupy the central part of the site and the 'overflow' playing fields (4.5 hectares) occupy the southernmost part of the site. The relationship of the different parts of the site to one another is shown on the map overleaf.

With the existing school buildings (and a small part of the existing playing fields) developed for housing, the new school would cover the rest of the existing playing fields. The overflow playing fields would become the new main playing fields – the indicative plan of this is shown on the following page.

The main site access for the school would continue to be from Broxbourne High Road, and under the school's promoted scheme the access to the new housing would be along an existing service road from Bell Lane. In urban design terms an access to the housing from Broxbourne High Road is preferable, and any planning application for development on the site will need to include a transport assessment to support the chosen access(s) points.

In terms of housing numbers, 130 dwellings would equate to 35 dwellings per hectare (dph). The eastern half of the school site is in the New River Conservation Area, meaning that any scheme needs to be suitably designed to sit within that. There are also a number of mature trees around the existing school buildings, protected by virtue of the conservation area designation, and these should be retained as part of any development proposal.

The proposal would also effectively halve the school's playing field land. However, national standards on playing field size no longer exist, and the remaining overflow field remains larger than the playing fields at the majority of other secondary schools in the borough.



Above: Plan of Broxbourne School's promotion

Right: Aerial view of the area around Broxbourne School at present

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vided,

- with significant merit in educational terms and also by providing new facilities for potential wider community use;
- Around 130 homes could be provided in a sustainable, largely previously-developed location close to existing services and facilities;
- The overall scheme would have a limited incursion into more open and tranquil green belt land;
- Subject to normal design considerations, the impact of development on adjacent properties should be relatively acceptable;
- Development would leave a logical and defensible green belt boundary around the school.

In more negative terms:

- The site for the new school has not been developed previously;
- Whilst it could be very well designed, a three-storey school building would introduce a bulky form of development to the site and would be fairly prominent in views from Cozens Grove/Top Field Local Nature Reserve (see photo below).
- Careful consideration would need to be given to the potential traffic impact on local roads.



The northern half of the West of Wormley area, looking south-east over the rest of the area and the wider Lee Valley from Cozens Grove/Top Field Local Nature Reserve. The redeveloped Broxbourne School would be situated downhill towards the left hand side of this view.

Area 2: South of Church Lane

The area to the south of Church Lane comprises two sites under separate ownerships – *Wormleybury Field* ([BWT-GB-06](#)) owned by the Council, and the privately-owned *Derwent Turnford* ([BWT-GB-02](#)). As noted elsewhere in this report, there are a significant number of constraints affecting the land south of Church Lane. Almost the entirety of *Derwent Turnford* at the southernmost end of the area is within Flood Zone 3 (high risk), and the entirety of *Wormleybury Field* is designated as a local wildlife site. All of the trees within *Wormleybury Field* are also protected, and it is partly because of the quality of the trees and their contribution to the field's parkland landscape that its landscape is considered to be particularly tranquil. Nevertheless, public access to the land is restricted and its amenity value is primarily visual. In addition, whilst it would be a challenge and invariably result in a degree of compromise, it is possible that schemes could be developed to take account of the identified constraints.

Both of these two sites have been appraised for their developability – from this it is considered that there are four possible development options for the area south of Church Lane.

Option 1: Do nothing

The first potential option south of Church Lane is to maintain the current status quo. The site would remain in the green belt in an agricultural use, with no public access.

The positive consequences of a ‘do nothing’ option are:

- The attractive appearance of the area, particularly *Wormleybury Field*, would be unaffected by development;
- There would be no impacts on the designations affecting the area in terms of wildlife and protected trees;
- The area would remain available for any suitable use if a future Local Plan requires it;
- Church Lane would retain its existing largely rural character.

The negative consequences of a ‘do nothing’ option are:

- If left as it is, the site’s potential for public access and as a rare new open space would be lost;
- Housing need, which could potentially be met on the site, would have to be accommodated elsewhere in the borough.

Option 2: Parkland/recreation

The second development option south of Church Lane is to formally designate all or part of the area as a community open space. The Council-owned *Wormleybury Field* could be opened-up to public access, allowing its high quality parkland landscape to be properly enjoyed. Like other typical parkland landscapes, this could still be compatible with its continued use for animal grazing. Making *Derwent Turnford* publicly accessible would clearly rely on the support of the landowner, although as it does not have the same landscape value it would be less imperative to achieve.

Establishing community open space south of Church Lane would add to a continuous ‘chain’ of open space up to Hoddesdon; through Wormley Playing Fields, Cozens Grove/Top Field Local Nature Reserve, Lucern Warren Open Space and Barclay Park. At around 3 miles in length this would be a significant asset to the borough and could be promoted as such. Designation as community open space would also allow land south of Church Lane to accommodate some of the potential enhancements to Wormley Playing Fields identified elsewhere in this report, such as additional car parking.

In positive terms, option 2 would:

- Enable proper access and public enjoyment of its attractive parkland setting;
- Create a critical mass and ‘hub’ of open space and leisure facilities to the west of the borough, as envisaged in previous local plans. This would provide scope for issues identified in the Council’s *Outdoor Space Strategy* to be resolved.
- Enable the continued protection of the highly-valued trees and wildlife on the site;
- The area of *Derwent Turnford* at severe risk of flooding, which is sequentially unpreferable in any case, would not come under development pressure.

In more negative terms, option 2 would:

- Result in increased traffic along Church Lane, particularly if new car parking was provided to serve Wormley Playing Fields;
- By creating public access through it, prevent what is relatively sustainable development site by virtue of its location from being developed easily in the future.

Option 3: Horticulture

In 2012 the Council commissioned a Glasshouse Study for the borough, primarily intended to provide information on the future of the horticultural industry in the Goffs Oak area (where all of the borough’s existing glasshouses are located). However, it also suggested that there were a number of growers operating outside Broxbourne

who are looking for new sites locally. The study found that a number of sites within the Goffs Oak area could be suitable for reuse. However, several growers have also expressed specific interest in *Wormleybury Field* because it is flat, large, and publicly owned (making purchase potentially easier). Whilst *Derwent Turnford* is not publicly owned, it would otherwise also meet the growers' site requirements. Modern so-called 'third generation' glasshouses would be relatively large structures – up to 8m high at their eaves in order to offer sufficient economies of scale.

In positive terms, a horticultural option would:

- Make a significant contribution to sustainable food production;
- Create a small number of jobs, and boost the local economy accordingly.



Modern 6 metre eaves glasshouses, located in Roydon in Essex

In more negative terms, a horticultural option would:

- Require very large glasshouses to be efficient, which would be unable to be built around existing trees and hence would likely require their removal. This would irrevocably transform the character of the area and be visually intrusive;
- Have a far greater impact than other options on wildlife;

- Result in some HGV traffic along Church Lane, although the Glasshouse Study notes that traffic is not generally as severe as residents might fear;
- Potentially undermine any efforts to regenerate existing horticultural land within the Goffs Oak area, by providing growers with an 'easy' virgin site.



Development area under Option 4

Option 4: Housing

The fourth potential option would be to develop housing south of Church Lane. As noted in Chapter 3 there are a number of constraints affecting this part of the West of Wormley area, but its location close to existing development and public transport services and facilities, means that housing could potentially form a sustainable option.

Derwent Turnford has been promoted for 300 dwellings. Although no site plan has been provided to accompany the promotion, this would represent a very high density (around 70 dwellings per hectare) over 4.2 hectares. Although the site is entirely open, an area of around 0.5 hectares would need to be set aside for flood attenuation works (such as a balancing pond). At a more typical 30 dwellings

per hectare, the site could therefore accommodate around 110 dwellings.

In the case of *Wormleybury Field*, it is considered that any development would need to be very spacious to take account of the site's wildlife designation, which is made on the basis of both its tree and grassland habitats. By excluding all of the major trees and copses (map, left) the

site would have a developable area of 14 hectares – at 21 dwellings per hectare (to allow for wildlife corridors and the preservation of However, given the primary education constraints within the Wormley area, the provision of around 410 dwellings (including the 110 at *Derwent Turnford*) would necessitate the provision of one new form of primary school entry. This would need to be funded by new development. Existing schools around the West of Wormley area are understood to offer little scope for expansion, necessitating the construction of a new school. Hertfordshire County Council advise that the indicative cost of a one form of entry school is approximately £4.9 million, which would need to be funded by development. This would lessen the developable area of *Wormleybury Field* by around 2 hectares to 12 hectares overall, sufficient for 250 dwellings at 21 per hectare. This would result in a potential housing total of 360 for the land south of Church Lane.

Options to develop the land south of Church Lane for lower density housing – or only developing part of it for housing – could also be considered. This may reduce the impact on wildlife (most trees could still be protected at a higher density) and potential education requirements. However, a low density development over such a large area would create an unsustainable form of sprawl, whilst only developing a small part of the site could create an unconnected pocket of development and effectively ‘land lock’ the rest of *Wormleybury Field* behind development.

It should be noted that although *Derwent Turnford*, aside from flood risk issues, has fewer onsite constraints than *Wormleybury Field*, it is not considered developable on its own. This is primarily because of access – because it is at a much lower level than the A10 to the west, Turnford Interchange Link Road to the south and New River to the east, the only possible vehicular access to the site would be from the north. This would be via *Wormleybury Field*, to one or several access points on Church Lane.

The positive consequences of a housing development are:

- A relatively significant part of the Council’s green belt housing land need could be accommodated on a single site;

some grassland) the site could accommodate up to 300 dwellings.

- Development could be extremely attractive, with an intricate arrangement around retained trees and parkland pockets;
- The area south of Church Lane is close to a wide range of facilities and public transport links, and is located centrally within the borough making it a relatively sustainable development site;
- The option would assist in resolving future primary education capacity issues within Wormley and Turnford.

The negative consequences of a housing development are:

- The particularly attractive parkland landscape of *Wormleybury Field* would be fundamentally altered;
- There would be potentially major wildlife implications given the area’s status as a designated wildlife site;
- The traffic generated would add significant pressure to Church Lane (which is narrow) and Wormley High Road (which already suffers capacity problems);
- *Derwent Turnford* is an identified area of high flood risk, and hence is not sequentially preferable for development;
- The above identified constraints, taken together, would make a housing development particularly challenging to deliver.



Option 5: Secondary school

The fifth option is for the provision of a secondary school site on land south of Church Lane Wormley. As previously stated on page 9 Hertfordshire County Council as the education authority has identified the need to provide new secondary school places in the Borough over the plan period. Short term capacity has been found within existing schools, however there will still be a need to find a further 3.5 forms of entry in the middle term of the plan period and a further 3.5 forms of entry in the longer term. Although some of this could be found through existing school sites, it would be prudent to provide for a new 6 form of entry secondary school with Sixth Form provision in Broxbourne. The County Council has stated that its preferred location for a secondary school site is in the central part of the Borough. The Council has considered the merits of other sites in this location and the possible relocation and expansion of existing schools but neither are considered viable or suitable. Land south of Church Lane has therefore been identified for the new secondary school.

A new secondary school of this size has the capacity to hold over 1,200 students and would require approximately 9 hectares of land – under 40% of the total land south of Church Lane and north of the A10 Roundabout and most of this will constitute of open playing fields. This site is being investigated as it:

- is centrally located within the borough with good accessibility to existing bus services and Wormley village centre,
- it is in public ownership and deliverable.
- with improvements to footpaths and cyclepaths the site is well related to the proposed Brookfield Path development.
- development on this site would not prejudice any other potential opportunities. Pending development it could be retained in its current use and if the site is not required for a secondary school it could be retained as informal open space.
- it would provide an attractive setting for a new school.
- there would be an opportunity to provide leisure and recreational facilities to complement those provided at Wormley playing fields to the north of Church Lane.

The positive consequences of a secondary school are:

- The site would help deliver the secondary school to help solve future capacity issues, thereby supporting the delivery of new homes and future residents;
- A large proportion of the school would consist of playing fields, maintaining green space on the site;
- Unlike other green belt sites, this site is easily accessible via Church Lane, would not have a significant impact on neighbouring residential properties and is already within close proximity of facilities, public transport and pedestrian links;
- There is potential to provide, as an integral part of the development, new joint use sporting facilities which could complement the existing facilities provided on the northern side of Church Lane;
- The development can be planned sensitively taking into account the protected trees, the wildlife site and the A10.

The negative consequences of a secondary school are:

- The particularly attractive parkland landscape of *Wormleybury Field* would be altered to a degree;
- There will be additional traffic generated on Church Lane.

Conclusions

This report judges that the West of Wormley area could offer a relatively sustainable location for development. It is situated centrally within the borough, within close reach of services and facilities, and close to public transport links. It is also adjoined on two sides by the existing urban development, and is separated from wider countryside by the A10 which could form a new long term defensible green belt boundary. This means that the area does not offer the same tranquillity as some other areas of green belt in the borough.

However; wildlife, flood risk, public amenity and conservation of the natural and built environment are important factors which the Council has a duty to pay regard to in preparing the Local Plan. These

designations affect large parts of the West of Wormley area, and a significant part of the area is also designated as community open space. There are also access and traffic impact issues to address. Although the West of Wormley is not as tranquil as other areas, it is generally considered to be highly valued as a 'green lung' within the urban area and there are strong merits in retaining it as green belt. Any development option therefore needs to have regard to the identified constraints.

North of Church Lane, the only development option considered worthy of detailed consideration is Broxbourne School's promotion to construct a new 8 form of entry secondary school, funded by housing development on the existing developed part of the site. The school would be built on previously undeveloped playing fields, potentially disrupting the important views from Cozens Grove/Top Field Local Nature Reserve which this report considers worthy of protection. However, the provision of a new state-of-the-art school would be a major benefit, and the scheme would result in a significant number of houses being built on previously developed land close to existing facilities and public transport. As a single self-supporting scheme, there are also unlikely to be any issues with delivery. **It is concluded that this option should be considered further as part of the Local Plan process.**

South of Church Lane, five possible options have been identified – 1) a 'do nothing' option, 2) opening up as public parkland, 3) horticulture, 4) medium-density housing and 5) a reserve secondary school site. In most cases, traffic on Church Lane would be increased – with a housing development, significantly so. A 'do nothing' option would evidently have the least impact. However, the site's potential for the other four options would be denied.

The land south of Church Lane has emerged as having the right criteria to be viable for horticulture, and such development would have some benefit in terms of employment and economic growth. Glasshouses are also defined in national policy as appropriate in the green belt, but it is very unlikely that horticultural glasshouses would be able to be designed to satisfactorily having regard to landscape and wildlife considerations and the site would remain inaccessible to the public.

Development of the site for housing may not have the same level of impact on trees and wildlife as horticulture. A high quality development could be designed to account for the constraints, and have capacity for a relatively large number of homes and a new primary school. However, there would still be some impacts on wildlife and trees. These issues, and the flood risk at the southernmost end of the area, would mean that delivering housing would be a challenge. Such a proposal also raises significant traffic issues and would fundamentally alter the character of Church Lane.

Of the three possible development options, redeveloping the land for a secondary school would have the least negative impact, with potentially major benefits in terms of allowing the joint up use of sporting and leisure facilities in connection with the adjacent site. It would also provide future secondary school provision, identified as a need by the County Council.

It is therefore concluded that across the West of Wormley area as a whole, the two options where advantages broadly outweigh disadvantages are the Broxbourne School scheme north of Church Lane, and the secondary school option for land south of Church Lane. Although this will have an impact on the existing landscape it will be less of an impact than the other development options whilst also improving and providing secondary schooling.

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Welcome to Wormley Playing Field

Broxbourne Borough Council is pleased
to allow the use of this land for
recreational purposes.

However, this should not involve activities
which will cause a nuisance to local residents
nor take place at unsociable hours.

Please clear up after your dog.

For an emergency or repairs
call (01992) 785577



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