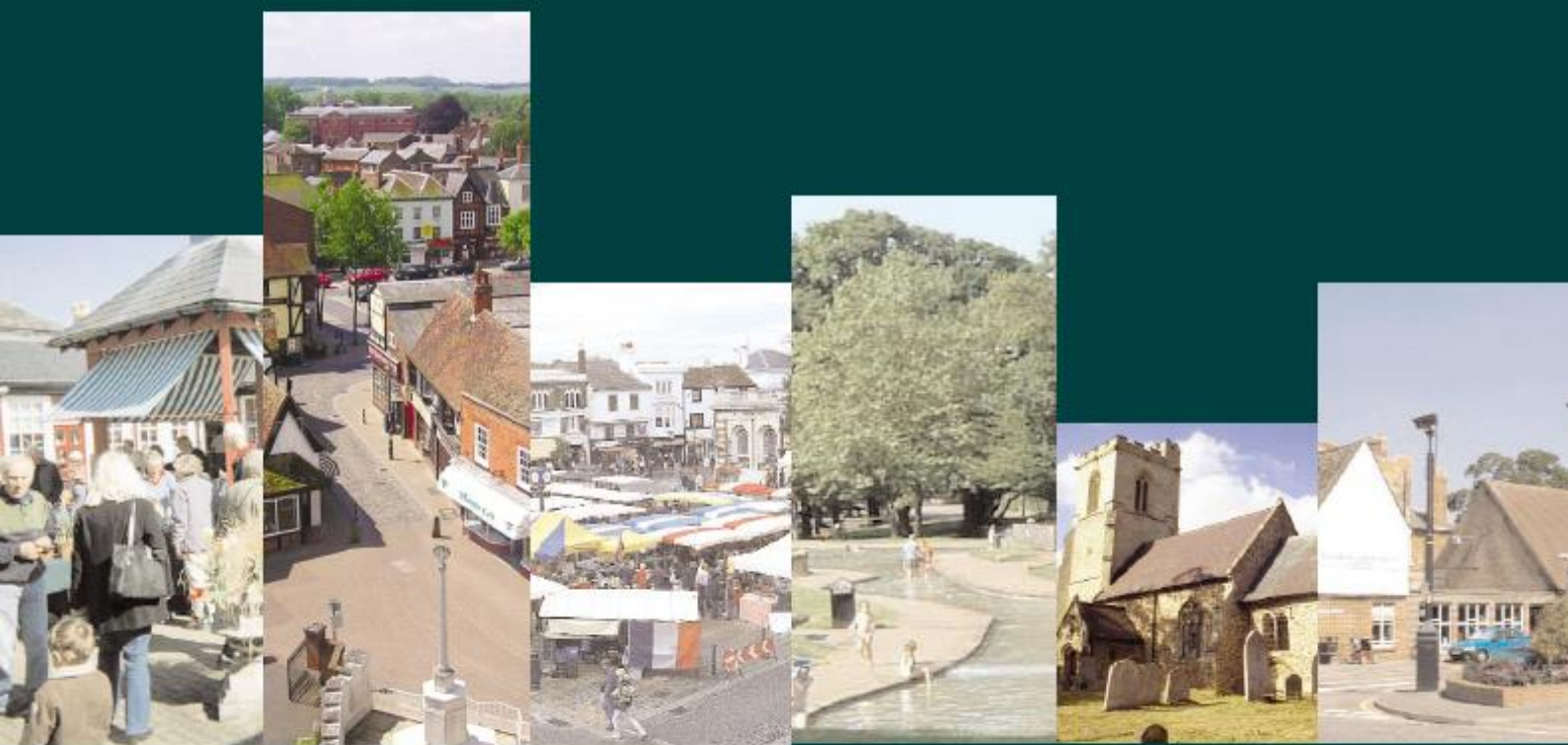




Strategic Planning and Projects



www.north-herts.gov.uk

Local Development Scheme

Timetable for producing
a new Local Plan for
North Hertfordshire
December 2015 – Draft

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out a timetable for the preparation of a local plan. The Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) set out the Government’s planning policies for England and introduced changes into the plan making system. The East of England Plan was revoked at the beginning of January 2013.
- 1.2 The Council will now prepare a new local plan for the District which will reflect the locally derived objectively assessed housing need target.

2. Current position and the way forward for North Hertfordshire

- 2.1 Planning applications have to be determined in accordance with the policies of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. At present the statutory development plan for North Hertfordshire comprises:
- (i) Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan adopted in 2007 (HCC)
 - (ii) Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document, 2012 (HCC)
 - (iii) Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations Document, 2014 (HCC)
 - (iv) Saved policies from the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 with Alterations adopted 1996 (NHDC)
- 2.2 The County Council is at the early stages of reviewing the Minerals Local Plan, 2007 and undertook an initial consultation in 2015. It is anticipated that a review of the Minerals Local Plan would be adopted in 2018. The saved policies from the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 with Alterations, adopted 1996 will be replaced by the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, following the timetable outlined in this Local Development Scheme.
- 2.3 It is not possible at the outset to be precise about the timetable for the production of various facets of work for the Local Plan and as such the timings identified are simply indications of when stages will be undertaken, begun or completed. The work may or may not last for the whole of the period specified and it should not be interpreted that the timetable will endure with strict precision. The LDS will be subject to periodic review.
- 2.4 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the policies of the local plan were saved for three years from September 2004. Since September 2007, only certain policies have been saved, as listed in Figure 1. These policies are now saved indefinitely, until such time as they are explicitly revoked by other documents. The policies need to be considered alongside policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Where policies are inconsistent with the NPPF, less weight will be applied to them. There are four policies where the Council has identified an inconsistency between the Local Plan and the NPPF – these are noted in the table below. More details can be found on the Councils' website, www.north-herts.gov.uk.

Figure 1: Saved Policies of Local Plan No. 2 with Alterations

Policy	Title
2	Green Belt
3	Settlements within the Green Belt
4	North East Stevenage
5	Excluded villages
6	Rural areas beyond the Green Belt (inconsistent with NPPF)
7	Selected villages beyond the Green Belt
8	Development in towns
9	Royston's development limits
11	Chilterns AONB
14	Nature conservation
16	Areas of archaeological significance and other archaeological areas
19	Historic Parks and Gardens
21	Landscape and open space pattern in towns
25	Re-use of rural buildings (inconsistent with NPPF)
26	Housing proposals (inconsistent with NPPF)
28	House extensions
29	Rural housing needs
29a	Affordable housing for urban local needs
30	Replacement or extension of dwellings in the countryside
33	Relatives and staff accommodation
34	Caravans and mobile homes
36	Employment provision (inconsistent with NPPF)
37	Business uses (B1 Use Class)
39	Leisure uses
42	Shopping

43	Shopping areas in town centres
45	Shopfronts
47	General aviation
51	Developments effects and planning gain
55	Car parking standards
57	Residential guidelines and standards
58	Letchworth Garden City design principles

- 2.5 In addition to the Local Plan, we have an existing suite of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) which supports the local plan. These SPG will also be replaced by the new policies within the Local Plan. Figure 2 shows the current status of existing SPG, as well as which existing policy the SPG supports.

Figure 2: Supplementary Planning Guidance pre 2004 and post 2004

SPG No.	Title and date	Comments
1	Land north of Royston June 1990	Policies for the area of land transferred to North Hertfordshire from South Cambridgeshire Remains material until adoption of Local Plan
3	Access to Hitchin Industrial Areas January 1992	Clarifies interpretation of policy relating to sites HE1 and HE2 Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan
8	Urban Regeneration September 1997	Encourages use of previously developed land Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan
9	Car parking standards for houses in multiple occupation October 1997	Refer now to Vehicle Parking SPD
10	Nightingale Road, Hitchin (Site HS2) November 1997	Reviews allocation of site Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan
11	Design guide for a shopfront in Baldock January 1998	Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan
12	Design guide for a shopfront in Hitchin January 1998	Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan
13	Design guide for a shopfront in Letchworth January 1998	Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan
14	Design guide for a shopfront in Royston January 1998	Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan
15	Shopping February 1999	Restricts out-of-town retail developments

16	Environmental guidelines for the management of roads in the Chilterns AONB September 1998	Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan. May form basis of new SPD in future
17	Chilterns building design guide February 2000	Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan. May form basis of new SPD in future.
18	Ashwell Village Design Guide October 2000	Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan. May form basis of new SPD in future.
19	North Herts Towns Cycle Routes Network December 2000	Supports the development of a cycle network in the towns Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan. May form basis of new SPD in future.
20	Letchworth Design Guide October 2000	Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan.
21	Pirton Village Design Statement April 2003	Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan. May form basis for new SPD in future.
	Paynes Park Design Brief and Views October 1988	Was updated by a revised brief in 2005. The revised brief is a statement of the Council's policy rather than full SPD.
	River Hiz Development Guidelines March 1995	Supports creation of walkway along river through Hitchin Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan. May form basis for new SPD in future.
	Energy Conservation Requirements February 1997	Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan. May form basis for new SPD in future.
	Skills Centre, Pixmore Avenue, Letchworth July 2001	Development of the site has been completed.
	Clothall Common, Baldock October 2001	Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan

	Lloyd Way, Kimpton February 2002	Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan
	North Herts College, Hitchin September 2003	Remains material until adoption of the Local Plan

Figure 2 cont: Supplementary Planning Documents and Planning Briefs, adopted since 2004

Title	Type of Document	Date
Churchgate Development Area Planning Brief, Hitchin	Planning Brief	2005
Royston Cross Development Brief	Development Brief	Adopted April 2011
Design SPD	SPD	July 2011
Planning Obligations SPD, 2006	SPD	November 2006
Vehicle Parking at New Development 2011	SPD	November 2011
Baldock Town Centre Strategy	Statement of Council Policy	January 2006
Hitchin Town Centre Strategy	Statement of Council Policy	November 2004
Letchworth Garden City Town Centre Strategy	SPD	January 2007
Royston Town Centre Strategy 2008	SPD	June 2008

3. Summary and Profile of the Local Plan

3.1 The timetable for producing the local plan is summarised in Figure 3 below:

Figure 3: Local Plan

The Local Plan	
Subject	This document will include the Council's spatial vision for North Hertfordshire, detailed planning policies against which planning applications will be assessed and land allocations (including housing, employment, retail, community and leisure facilities) for the District up to 2031. It will be closely linked to the priorities identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy for North Hertfordshire.
Geographical area	North Hertfordshire District
Status	Local Plan
Chain of conformity	Must conform with national planning policy.
Timetable for production	
Survey and participation on options	January 2005 - August 2007 (main consultation time September / October 2005)
Preferred options 2007 participation	September – October 2007
Analyse responses	November 2007 – December 2011
Additional issues and options consultation for new housing growth figures	November 2010
Consideration of new legislation and national planning policy guidance and the implications for North Hertfordshire	December 2010 - March 2012
Preferred Options – Revised housing growth figures	February – March 2012
Consideration of comments	April – October 2012
Housing Options	February 2013 – March 2013
Housing Additional	July 2013 – August 2013

Location Options	
Preferred Options Consultation	December 2014 – January 2015
Consideration of comments	February 2015 – July 2016
Proposed Submission Consultation	August – October 2016
Consideration of comments	October 2016 – February 2017
Formal Submission to Secretary of State	March 2017
Pre-examination meeting	May 2017
Independent examination	August 2017
Inspector's report	December 2017
Adoption	March 2018
Production arrangements	Led by the Strategic Planning & Projects group, with input from the Policy and Community Services Group and other internal departments as appropriate. The adopted Statement of Community Involvement SCI will determine how external parties and members of the public will be involved.
Timetable for review	The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) will assess the effectiveness of the policies contained within the Local Plan. It is envisaged that the Local Plan will only need reviewing once every five to ten years.

Figure 4: Proposals Map

Proposals Map	
Subject	This document will present all the Council's policies with a geographic extent on a map base.
Geographical area	North Hertfordshire District
Status	Development Plan Document (DPD)
Chain of conformity	Records the policies of all other DPDs.
Timetable for production	The Proposals Map currently shows the policies of Local Plan 2 with Alterations. The map will be updated as the Local Plan progresses. A full set of Proposals Maps were published alongside the Local Plan Preferred Options consultation document, December 2014.

Figure 5: Statement of Community Involvement

Statement of Community Involvement	
Subject	This document sets out the Council's policy on involving the community in the preparation of policies and the determination of planning applications.
Geographical area	North Hertfordshire District
Status	Local Development Document
Chain of conformity	Must meet minimum standards set in legislation. All other documents must be produced in accordance with this document.
Timetable for production	
Following changes in legislation and the Regulations, the Statement of Community Involvement was revised and adopted by the Council in September 2015.	

4. Resources

- 4.1 It will be necessary for the Council to commit significant resources to the preparation of the Local Plan and the supporting evidence base.
- 4.2 The Council's Corporate Service and Financial Planning process seeks to ensure that adequate resources are made available over at least the period up until submission of the Local Plan. The Council has established reserve funds to cover the costs associated with a significant amount of this work. The potential risks have been identified in the Risks Register.
- 4.3 The Council has established a Strategic Planning and Projects team which comprises a total of 8 staff, 5 of which are planning professionals. The team deals with a range of policy, projects and transport related work and the overall size of the team will allow the "pressure points" of the Local Plan process to be accommodated given sufficient advanced notice for workloads to be planned and resources allocated.
- 4.4 Significant levels of staff commitment at a corporate level are assured in order to satisfactorily progress the Local Plan. This will include staff from several departments within the Council. As well as technical input, there will be considerable support for community and stakeholder involvement through the public participation/community engagement process.
- 4.5 Where there is a lack of identified capacity or expertise within the Council's own resources, this will be supplemented by the use of consultants during the programme. The Service and Financial Planning process has already identified and budgeted for consultancy input and support into the process during the initial period.
- 4.6 The Council already monitors many aspects of the effects of its policies. The production of the Annual Monitoring Report is therefore also built into existing work programmes.
- 4.7 An independent examination will be required for the Local Plan. For this the Council has negotiated with the Planning Inspectorate a service level agreement to ensure the necessary Inspectors will be available. Arrangements are in place for a barrister to support the Council's case at the independent examination.

Risks

- 4.8 There are several factors which may impact upon the ability of the Council to keep to this timetable. Figure 6 considers the main risks to the draft timetable.

Figure 6: Risks to the delivery of this timetable

Risk	Mitigating measures
<p>Significant public opposition</p> <p>High Risk</p>	<p>The Local Plan has the potential to be highly contentious. Whilst every effort will be made to build cross-community consensus, there is a high risk of significant public opposition.</p>
<p>Loss of staff</p> <p>High Risk</p>	<p>The structure and staffing levels within the Strategic Planning and Projects Group will be constantly monitored and reviewed to ensure that the correct level of skills are maintained either in house or through the use of consultants where a short fall has been identified. Additional Government funding where available or Cabinet approved growth bids will be sought where required to replace or enhance necessary skills.</p>
<p>Financial shortfall</p> <p>Medium Risk</p>	<p>In the short term, the Council has allocated funds through its Service and Financial Planning process to allow for the preparation of the Local Plan. It has also been identified as a risk in the proposed Budget Strategy in the event that the initial sum proves insufficient (subject to Council approval). In the medium term, should costs increase, such as that associated with the Independent Examination, a growth bid application to Cabinet may be required, supported by the Executive Member.</p>
<p>Changing Political Priorities</p> <p>High / Medium Risk</p>	<p>Proposals are discussed with Members of all parties via informal means (cross-party briefings) and formal (Scrutiny and Overview Committee etc). This helps build consensus and reduce the likelihood of wholesale change of direction from local politicians.</p>
<p>Duty to Cooperate</p> <p>High Risk</p>	<p>The Local Plan has to be prepared in accordance with the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities and statutory consultees. Discussions between officers and Portfolio Holders from the neighbouring authorities are undertaken throughout the process. This seeks to ensure that every effort is made to positively engage with neighbouring authorities to meet cross boundary objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development.</p>
<p>Legal Challenge</p> <p>Medium Risk</p>	<p>As a measure of last resort anyone may issue a legal challenge within six weeks of adoption of the Local Plan. The degree to which this will happen is uncertain because of the untried nature of the system but a number of challenges have been made recently which need to be kept under review. However, a challenge will only succeed if the Council (or Inspector) has made a mistake in procedure or in fact.</p>

Figure 7: Local Plan timetable – December 2015

