

North Herts Council
SOUTHERN RURAL COMMUNITY FORUM

**Meeting held at Ickleford Village Hall, 82 Arlesey Road, Ickleford, SG5 3TG.
On Thursday, 27th June 2024 at 7.30pm**

NOTES

Present: Councillor David Barnard (DB) (Chair), Councillor Claire Strong (CS) (Vice-Chair), Councillor Joe Graziano (JG), Councillor Caroline McDonnell (CM), Councillor Steven Patmore (SP), Councillor Louise Peace (LP), Councillor Vijaiya Poopalasingham (VP), Councillor Paul Ward (PW)

In Attendance: Laura Hartley (LH) (Community Partnerships Officer)

Also present: At the commencement of the meeting there were 6 members of the public (MoP).

Meeting started at **19:34**

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Ralph Muncer, Cllr Laura Williams, Cllr Lisa Nash, Cllr Domonic Griffiths

2. Chair's Announcements

Cllr Barnard welcomed everyone in attendance.

- Highlighted that the Forum is an informal, inclusive meeting to share ideas.

3. Public Participation – Grant Applications

Laura Hartley, Community and Partnerships Officer, informed those present that there is £16,555 in the Southern Rural grant budget.

No grant applications to consider for recommendation to the Executive Member for Community Partnerships.

4. Community Update

Laura Hartley, Community and Partnerships Officer, presented the [Community Update](#).

Discussion around including Southern Rural villages to the Hitchin Councillors' Community surgery.

DB and CS to approach Hitchin Councillors about joining Southern Rural villages with the Surgery and to adapt the graphics to include 'and surrounding villages'.

5. Presentation – [The Local Plan](#)

Cllr Barnard presented information on The Local Plan. Full notes can be found at the end of this document.

There was discussion around:

- The review process of the Local Plan and how the review of East of Luton (EoL) will be included.

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- Questions around Master Plans, what is incorporated within this and how they are included in the application process.
- Queries on how developers take on feedback and implement this into the plan.
- [Neighbourhood plans](#) – what they are and how they are created. Also discussed timescale, expense and how they fit within the Local Plan.

MoP asked about the review process of the Local Plan and how this includes review of the East of Luton (EoL).

CS explained the review process and how the Master Plan is included in the application process, when this presented to planning committee and full council.

MoP asked around data provided by Luton Borough Council.

CS advised that a draft timetable and information is published on their [website](#).

MoP will be meeting with Offley Parish Council and NHC officers around EoL next week.

MoP brought up traffic levels and road infrastructure in the Southern Rural Area.

PW discussed how this is presenting issues in the Knebworth Area as an example.

As the [Highway Authority](#) this sits with Hertfordshire County Council.

MoP questioned how a Neighbourhood plan and a Local Plan fit together.

Another **MoP** asked about when Neighbourhood Plans could be created during or after the current Local Plan review.

LP explained that when creating a Neighbourhood Plan, this cannot have anything in this that would contradict a Local Plan and the Local Plan cannot contradict the National Planning Policy Framework, with one sitting above the other.

PW took part in Knebworth's Neighbourhood Plan, with part of the process being to assess the plan to make sure it doesn't conflict. The process took 5 years for Knebworth Parish Council.

DB thanked the public for attending and engaging with the forum members on this topic.

6. Ward Matters & Outside Organisations

MoP – [Ignite Festival](#) fundraiser festival in Ickleford, 6th July, with proceeds going to 'Empowering Ethan'.

LP – Digital inclusion sessions. Open to anyone to come along with digital issues, to socialise and have a chat with others in the community. Every Monday 12pm – 1.30pm. Poster below.

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Weekly Community Drop-in Sessions
12pm – 1.30pm every Monday
(Except Bank Holidays and School Holidays)
at Ickleford Village Hall, Arlesey Road

The ‘Drop In’ sessions are free to attend and there is no charge

All residents are welcome!

Free digital device advice and IT support provided and assistance with form-filling etc.

Or simply just drop in for a mug of soup, coffee, tea & cake and chat with other local people.
We look forward to meeting you!



CS shared that the Health Trust in Hitchin run a Carers café every Friday 10am -12pm to combat loneliness. Anyone is welcome and they also have other organisation attend for support.

SP shared Kimpton Folk Festival taking place Saturday 6th July and Codicote Village Day on 20th July 1pm – 5pm at The Great Field, opposite the church.

JG shared Kings Walden Parish AGM taking place on 6th July 12pm – 4pm, Breachwood Green Village Hall & Recreation Ground.

DB shared the feedback and success on the Great Offley riding club who have reformed and Pirton Fate taking place 6th July.

7. Future Community Forums

Cllr Barnard asked Members and members of the public for suggestions for future forums. The following suggestions were made:

- March – police to return. Look to have this virtually or hybrid in the council offices so this can be recorded and shared.
- Transport

Meeting closed at 20:45.



Southern Rural Community Forum Information Note

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North Herts Local Plan 2011-2031

Our Local Plan was adopted in November 2022. The Plan is our current Plan and will remain so until such time that any updated iteration is examined and formally adopted.

The Local Plan sets out the long-term vision for the District by encouraging high quality sustainable design and identifying how and where new homes, jobs and infrastructure will be delivered.

North Hertfordshire has a wide range of green infrastructure and environmental assets of local, regional, and national importance. The Plan seeks to protect, maintain, and enhance these assets and also seeks to protect the distinct historical qualities that we have in the District.

Local Plan Review

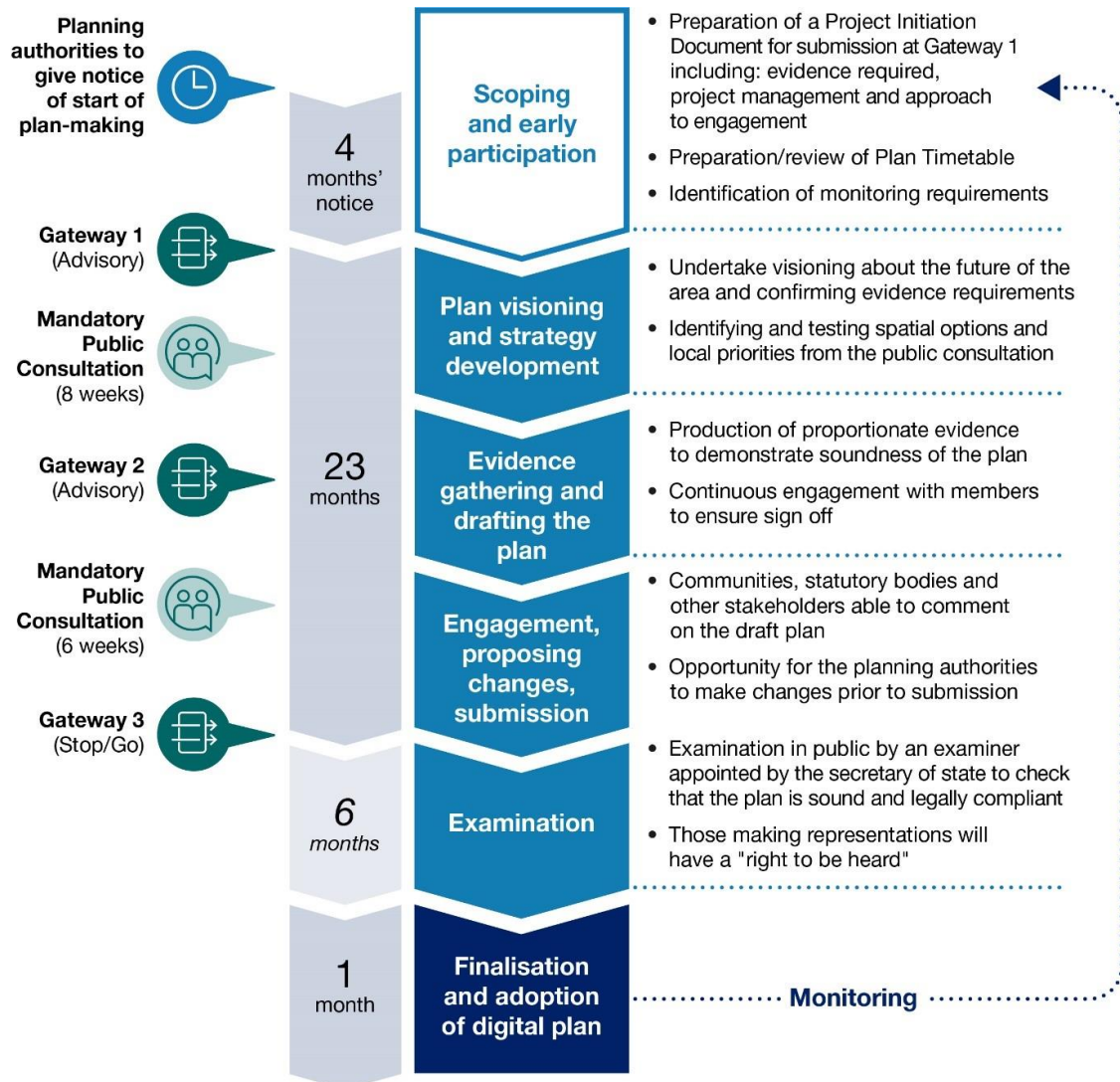
Policy IMR2 of the Local Plan requires us to undertake a review of the Local Plan by the end of 2023. This means that we had to assess the policies in the Plan in order to make an initial determination as to whether the Plan required updating. It was concluded that an update was required and in January 2024, Cabinet agreed that a full review and update of the North Herts Local Plan is undertaken.

The North Herts Local Plan update will set out the vision for our District for the next 15 years and will include planning policies to help achieve this. The Local Plan has an important role in shaping how North Herts' looks and feels, promoting inclusion, reducing inequality, enhancing the environment, tackling climate change and securing sustainable places.

The updated Local Plan will ensure that North Herts continues to have robust, effective and up-to-date planning policies that respond to changing circumstances and the District's uniqueness. It will contribute to the delivery of the ambitions identified in the Council Plan and other local priorities set out in plans and strategies prepared by us.

The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 sets out the overall process under which we should produce our Local Plan. It sets out an ambitious shorter timescale for the production and adoption of Local Plans which requires us to work to a 30-month timescale once we give notice and reach the first 'gateway'.

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Secondary legislation is due to be published later this year which will provide further guidance detailing the requirements of the process. We cannot provide notice or start the 30-month process until this is published. The Government may also provide additional guidance telling authorities when their plan-making should start.

Whilst we await this guidance, we continue to work on updating our evidence studies for the District which will help inform any opportunities for our Local Plan.

Work has commenced on a consolidation and desktop review of our Green Belt, working with neighbouring authorities to ensure a robust assessment of the Green Belt in the District.

This does not mean that we are making plans to release Green Belt land to make way for potential future development; it does mean that we are ensuring that our current evidence base for the Green Belt is robust and accurate. It also means that we can work with our neighbouring authorities to help ensure that cohesive areas of Green Belt are provided for within and without the District where it is appropriate.

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This will be followed up by a consolidation and review of our landscape evidence including Natural England’s revised Chilterns National Landscape (previously AONB) boundary, as appropriate to the District.

The Strategic Planning and Projects Team are in the process of updating the retail studies for the Town Centres and this will feed into our evidence for retail and employment in the District.

Engagement with the District, Areas and Parishes will take place once we have received further guidance from Central Government.

Strategic Sites in Southern Rural Area

The table below sets out the planning status of Local Plan sites in the Southern Rural Area of the District.

Local Plan sites	Status
EL1 – Luton East (west)	An allocation-wide masterplan is being prepared by The Crown Estate and Bloor Homes in consultation with the Council.
EL2 – Luton East (east)	
EL3 – Land north east of Luton	Public consultation took place in January and February 2024. An update consultation is scheduled by the landowners / developers for 11 July 2024. The masterplan is expected to be presented for approval later in the year. Planning applications covering most of the site remain ‘live’ (planning references 16/02014/1 and 17/00830/1) and are likely to be amended to reflect the outcomes of the masterplan process
CD1 – Land south of Cowards Lane, Codicote	Outline planning permission for up to 83 units granted November 2022 (17/01464/1) Reserved matters application for 80 dwellings granted to Croudace Homes by Planning Control Committee, June 2024 (23/00743/RM)
CD2 – Codicote Garden Centre, High Street, Codicote	Planning permission granted 20 January 2023 (19/01448/FP) for 66 units in total. Under construction by Taylor Wimpey as “The Vale”. 18 homes complete as of 1 April 2024
CD3 – Land north east of The Close, Codicote	Outline planning application by Manor Oak Homes for up to 42 homes is currently being considered (23/02895/OP)
CD5 – Land south of Heath Lane Codicote	Planning permission for 167 homes (18/02722/FP) granted on appeal September 2021.

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	Site under construction by Taylor Wimpey as “The Heath”. 47 homes complete as of 1 April 2024
GA1 – Land at Roundwood, Great Ashby	Full planning application for 292 homes by Croudace Homes is currently being considered (23/02492/FP)
GA2 – Land off Mendip Way, Great Ashby*	Pre-application masterplan is currently being prepared by the landowner, Picture Estates Ltd in consultation with the Council. Public consultation held May 2024. The masterplan is expected to be presented for approval later in the year
IC1 – Land off Duncotts Close, Ickleford	Site allocated for estimated 8 homes. No progress
IC2 – Burford Grange, Bedford Road, Ickleford	Planning permission for 48 units granted February 2023 (19/01106/FP). Site under construction by Cala Homes . 15 homes complete as of 1 April 2024
IC3 – Land at Bedford Road, Ickleford	Site allocated for estimated 150 homes. No progress
KM3 – Land north of High Street, Kimpton	Outline planning application for 15 homes under consideration (21/00541/OP)
KB1 – Land at Deards End, Knebworth	Initial work on a masterplan was carried out in 2022/3.
KB2 – Land at Gipsy Lane, Knebworth	Public consultation by Knebworth Estates and Countryside Homes on their latest proposals is expected to take place in Summer 2024
KB4 – Land east of Knebworth	Outline application by Gladman Developments for up to 200 homes on that part of the site south of Watton Road is currently being considered (23/01552/OP)
PR1 – Land off Templars Lane, Preston	Planning permission for 18 units granted May 2022 (21/02076/FP) Site under construction by Osprey Homes as “Chiltern View”. 14 homes complete as of 1 April 2024
SI1 – Land south of Waterdell Lane, St Ippolyts	Application for 52 dwellings by Countryside Homes granted permission, subject to completion of a legal agreement, by Planning Control Committee in February 2024 (20/02412/FP)
SI2 – Land south of Stevenage Road, St Ippolyts	Full planning application for 14 homes by Valais Ltd is currently being considered (19/01669/FP)

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**WY1 – Lan to the south of
Little Wymondley**

Outline planning application for up to 300 homes by
Welbeck Land is currently being considered
(22/00956/OP)

*Site mainly lies within neighbouring Weston parish / Weston & Sandon ward

Further details on relevant planning applications can be found by search the reference numbers provided above on the Council's website, <https://pa2.north-herts.gov.uk/online-applications/>