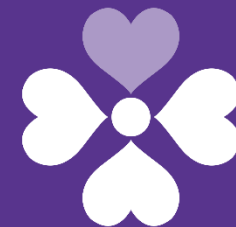




Local Development Scheme

November 2024



**North
Herts**
Council

Introduction



People first

1. North Hertfordshire Council is required to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS) under [section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) (as amended).
2. The LDS must specify (among other matters) the Development Plan documents (i.e. local plans) which will make up parts of the development plan for the District and the timetable for the production of these documents.
3. The LDS should also include details of other documents which form, or will form, part of the Development Plan for North Herts, such as Neighbourhood Plans.
4. We must ensure that the LDS is available publicly and kept up to date so that local communities and interested parties can keep track of progress.
5. We last published our LDS in November 2022 following the adoption of our Local Plan. This LDS replaces that previous version.

Planning Policy Context

6. At a national level, government planning policy is set out primarily within the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#), supported by the [Planning Practice Guidance](#) which is regularly updated.
7. The Development Plan for North Herts currently consists of the [Local Plan](#), together with a number of [made Neighbourhood Plans](#). In addition, it also includes the [Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan \(2007\)](#), [Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies \(2012\)](#) and the [Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations Document \(2014\)](#).
8. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
9. In addition to the Local Plan, we have existing [Supplementary Planning Documents \(SPDs\)](#) providing greater detail on the policies contained in the Plan.

10. In March 2021, Cabinet agreed that three new or revised SPDs will be produced in addition to the Developer Contributions SPD which had already been subject to public consultation.
11. These include a re-scoped Design SPD, a Sustainability SPD (incorporating elements of the previously approved Parking and Transport SPD) and a Biodiversity SPD. Since then, in March 2024, we took the view that a [Biodiversity SPD is not required](#) due to the amount of information that has been released on Biodiversity Net Gain etc. However, this view may change in time.
12. In March 2021, Cabinet resolved to not pursue a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for North Hertfordshire at that time pending greater certainty on Government reforms.
13. The adopted [Statement of Community Involvement \(SCI\)](#) sets out how external parties and members of the public will be involved. An [Authority Monitoring Report](#), which assesses the effectiveness of the policies contained within the Local Plan, is published each year in line with the series of indicators and targets to assess the impact of the policies set out in the Plan. Policy IMR1 sets out targets for housing delivery, and Policy IMR2 sets out that an early plan review will be undertaken by the end of 2023 to assess whether the Local Plan needs updating and to consider longer term requirements. Notwithstanding this, the 2023 NPPF requires local plans to be reviewed every five years.



14. The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 paves the way for reforms to the plan-making system, subject to parliamentary approval of the relevant regulations, together with the publication of national policy and guidance. The reforms propose a 30-month timeframe (plus a scoping and early participation stage) to prepare and adopt a Local Plan.
15. Recent announcements by the new Labour Government indicate its intention to implement the new system, as set out in the Levelling =-Up and Regeneration Act, from summer or autumn 2025. The Government intends to publish further details of its intentions around plan-making in due course.

Work Programme

16. Since the last LDS was published in 2022, the following documents have now been adopted:
 - Cabinet approved the updated [Statement of Community Involvement \(SCI\)](#) in September 2023. The SCI reflects changes to legislation, engagement practices as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and best practice in stakeholder engagement.
 - The [Developer Contributions SPD](#) was adopted in January 2023, replacing the previous Planning Obligation SPD from 2006.
 - The [Sustainability SPD](#) was adopted in September 2024.

Development Plan Documents

Local Plan Update

17. An update to the Local Plan, adopted in 2022, was resolved by [Council in January 2024](#). Any update to the Local Plan will also include updates to the strategic vision, objectives, policies, and site allocations in response to
 - Updated North Herts objectives and strategies, including, but not necessarily limited to
 - [Council Plan 2024 – 2028](#)

- [Council Delivery Plan 2023 – 2024](#)
- [North Herts Climate Change Strategy 2022 - 2027](#)
- [Active Communities Strategy, June 2023](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022 - 2027](#)

- Changes in the development context and market trends
- Updated NPPF, including any revised housing target.

18. The update also responds to the requirement outlined in the Local Plan [Inspector's Report](#), requiring an early review of the Local Plan.

Project Scale

19. The update of the Local Plan is a significant project, comprising a comprehensive evidence base update, interdepartmental and external collaborative work, extensive consultation and engagement, policy drafting and an Independent Examination (including public hearings) by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State.

20. We will require the full team resource through the remainder of 2024 through to 2027/28 and possibly beyond.

Design Code

21. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 requires the production of an Authority-Wide Design Code to safeguard the quality of future development in an area.

22. Recent consultation on revised changes to the NPPF have suggested a move away from an authority-wide approach, in favour of a series of more specific area-based codes. With this in mind, the District Design Code will be produced in a phased approach covering:

- strategic/major developments first,
- followed by medium/minor applications and
- finally householder.

23. The code will be produced in line with the [National Design Guide](#), [National Model Design Code](#) and [Buildings for Healthy Life Guidance](#) – setting quantifiable design parameters and expectations for development in the District.

Project Scale










24. The production of the Design Code for North Herts is a significant project, comprising a comprehensive evidence base update, interdepartmental and external collaborative work, extensive consultation and engagement, policy drafting and an Independent Examination (including public hearings) by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State
25. We will require the full team resource through the remainder of 2024 through to 2027/28 and possibly beyond.

| The North Herts Local Plan Update | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| <i>Subject</i> | <p>A Local Plan setting out a vision for the District and a framework for future development in the area, addressing needs and opportunities relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mitigating and adapting to climate change, • achieving well-designed places, • conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, • housing, • the economy, • community facilities and • infrastructure. | |
| <i>Geographical Area</i> | The administrative area of North Herts Council | |
| <i>Chain of conformity</i> | Must conform with National Planning Policy | |
| <i>Plan-making stage</i> | Description | Timetable |
| <i>Survey of area (S13 of the P&CP Act 2004)</i> | Matters which may be expected to affect the development of the area or the planning of its development | Keep under review |
| <i>Scoping and early participation</i> | Early engagement | 2024 - 2025 |
| <i>Gateway 1</i> | Independent, specialist support to ensure Plan sets off in the right direction, supporting early diagnosis of any potential issues including legal, procedural requirements and soundness | September 2025 |
| <i>Public consultation (Regulation 18 of the T&CP (LP) (England) Regulations 2012)</i> | We notify certain specified bodies or people of the subject of the Local Plan which we propose to prepare and invite representations about what our Local Plan should contain | October - November 2025 |
| <i>Evidence gathering</i> | This stage will include a Call for Sites | 2024 - 2026 |
| <i>Gateway 2</i> | Plan Inspector supports early resolution of potential soundness issues, ensuring legal and procedural compliance | September 2026 |

| | | |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| | and monitoring and tracking progress | |
| <i>Public consultation (Regulation 19 and 20 of the T&CP (LP) (England) Regulations 2012)</i> | We make available the proposed submission documents and a statement of representation procedure. Anyone may make representations about our Local Plan that we intend to submit to the Secretary of State by a specified date | October - November 2026 |
| Gateway 3 | Planning Inspector checks the Plan is ready to proceed to Examination having ensured legal and procedural compliance and monitoring and tracking progress | February 2027 |
| <i>Submission to the Secretary of State (Regulation 22 of the T&CP (LP) (England) Regulations 2012)</i> | We submit our Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination along with certain prescribed documents/statements including copies of the representations made a Regulation 20 | March 2027 |
| <i>Independent Examination (Regulation 23 and 24 of the T&CP (LP) (England) Regulations 2012)</i> | Our Local plan is independently examined by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State | March – November 2027 |
| <i>Publication of Inspectors Report (Regulation 25 of the T&CP (LP) (England) Regulations 2012)</i> | We publish the recommendations of the Inspector | November 2027 |
| <i>Adoption (Regulation 26 of the T&CP (LP) (England) Regulations 2012)</i> | We adopt the Local Plan, make it available and send the Adoption Statement to certain individuals | December 2027 |

Document Preparation Timetable

| | 2024 | | 2025 | | | | | | | | | | | | 2026 | | | | | | | | | | | | 2027 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| | N | D | J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | | |
| Local Plan Update | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Design Code | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Parking and Transport SPD | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Updated Developer Contribution SPD | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
|  | Evidence base development |
|  | Document drafting |
|  | Consultation |
|  | Submission |
|  | Examination |
|  | Adoption |
|  | Gateway 1 |
|  | Gateway 2 |
|  | Gateway 3 |