



Community Engagement Strategy

October 2026



**North
Herts**
Council

Translation

If you have difficulty understanding this publication or English is not your first language, please contact the Strategic Planning Team on 01462 474000 and we will do our best to help you.

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਰਣਨੀਤਕ ਯੋਜਨਾਬੰਦੀ ਟੀਮ ਨਾਲ 01462 474000 'ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮਦਦ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ।

(Punjabi)

Jeżeli masz trudności ze zrozumieniem tej publikacji lub angielski nie jest Twoim językiem ojczystym, skontaktuj się z Zespołem Planowania Strategicznego pod numerem 01462 474000, a dołożymy wszelkich starań, aby Ci pomóc.

(Polish)

Dacă întâmpinați dificultăți în înțelegerea acestei publicații sau dacă engleza nu este limba dumneavoastră maternă, vă rugăm să contactați Echipa de Planificare Strategică la numărul de telefon 01462 474000 și vom face tot posibilul să vă ajutăm.

(Romanian)

Se avete difficoltà a comprendere questa pubblicazione o se l'inglese non è la vostra lingua madre, contattate il team di pianificazione strategica al numero 01462 474000 e faremo del nostro meglio per aiutarvi.

(Italian)

Ha nehezen érte ezt a kiadványt, vagy az angol nem az anyanyelve, kérjük, vegye fel a kapcsolatot a Stratégiai Tervezési Csoporttal a 01462 474000 telefonszámon, és mi mindent megteszünk, hogy segítsünk Önnek.

(Hungarian)

இந்த வெளியீட்டைப் புரிந்துகொள்வதில் உங்களுக்குச் சிரமம் இருந்தாலோ அல்லது ஆங்கிலம் உங்கள் தாய்மொழி அல்ல என்றாலோ, தயவுசெய்து 01462 474000 என்ற எண்ணில் வியூகத் திட்டமிடல் குழுவைத் தொடர்புகொள்ளவும், நாங்கள்

உங்களுக்கு உதவ எங்களால் முடிந்த அனைத்தையும்
செய்வோம்.

(Tamil)

જો તમને આ પ્રકાશન સમજવામાં મુશ્કેલી પડતી હોય અથવા અંગ્રેજી તમારી માતૃભાષા
ન હોય, તો કૃપા કરીને 01462 474000 પર સ્ટ્રેટેજિક પ્લાનિંગ ટીમનો સંપર્ક કરો અને
અમે તમને મદદ કરવા માટે અમારા શ્રેષ્ઠ પ્રયાસો કરીશું.

(Gujarati)

Jei jums sunku suprasti šį leidinį arba anglų kalba nėra jūsų gimtoji kalba,
susisiekite su Strateginio planavimo komanda telefonu 01462 474000 ir
mes padarysime viską, kad jums padėtų.

(Lithuanian)

Contents

Translation	2
Introduction	6
Our Engagement Vision	10
Local Plan timetable and consultation stages	13
How we will engage	16
Accessibility and inclusion	31
How we will use your feedback section	36
Duty to Co-Operate	39
Appendix A – Parish and Town Councils	42
Appendix B – Community Forums	43
Appendix C – Statutory Consultees	47
Appendix D – Duty to Co-Operate Bodies	48
Appendix E – Neighbouring Authorities	49

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Purpose of the Local Plan

North Hertfordshire is beginning the important and exciting process of preparing a new Local Plan that will help shape the future of our district. Our Local Plan is more than a collection of planning policies and documents; it will influence where homes, jobs, services and infrastructure are located, how our communities grow, and how we protect and enhance the places that make North Hertfordshire a great place to live, work and visit.

Purpose of the Engagement Strategy

The success of our Local Plan depends on the meaningful involvement of the people and organisations who know North Hertfordshire best. Residents, businesses, community groups, landowners, developers, service providers and other stakeholders all bring valuable knowledge and perspectives that can help shape our Plan. We are committed to working collaboratively throughout the plan-making process.

This Community Engagement Strategy supports the delivery of the North Hertfordshire [Council Plan](#)¹ priorities by ensuring that stakeholders have genuine opportunities to contribute to decisions about the future of our District. Through this approach, we will help deliver the Council's ambitions to:

- Support thriving, healthy and inclusive communities.
- Deliver sustainable and well-connected growth.
- Protect and enhance our environment and natural resources.

Why engagement matters

We want to involve people from the earliest stages of preparing our Local Plan, when ideas, evidence and local knowledge can have the greatest influence on its development. Through consultations, events, meetings and communications activities, we will provide a range of opportunities for people to share their views and help shape the future of North Hertfordshire.

This Strategy builds on feedback received during the initial [Scoping Document](#)² consultation undertaken between May and June 2026. It explains:

- The key stages in preparing our Local Plan.
- How consultation opportunities will be publicised.
- The different ways people can get involved.
- When engagement activities are expected to take place.

¹ <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-10/2024%20-%202028%20Council%20Plan%20FINAL.pdf>

² https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-05/Scoping%20Document%20-%20May%202026_0.pdf

- How stakeholders can stay informed throughout the process.

We welcome feedback on both our Local Plan and our approach to engagement. By working together, we can prepare a Plan that reflects the aspirations, priorities and needs of North Hertfordshire and provides a shared vision for our District's future.

Effective communication is essential to successful engagement. It helps us explain complex planning issues in an accessible way, encourages participation, and builds trust throughout the plan-making process.

We recognise that the ways people access information and communicate continue to evolve. While embracing new technologies and digital channels, we will also maintain traditional methods for those who prefer non-digital or more personal forms of communication.

Our programme will therefore use a range of channels, including digital platforms, social media, face-to-face events, community meetings, councillor surgeries, printed materials and direct stakeholder communications. This will help ensure information reaches a wide audience and that people can engage in ways that best suit their needs.

Our communications and engagement activities will be guided by the aims and principles set out in the Council's [Marketing and Communications Strategy 2024–2028](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-11/North%20Herts%20Council%20Marketing%20%26%20Communications%20strategy%202024%20-%202028.pdf)³.

Local Government Reorganisation

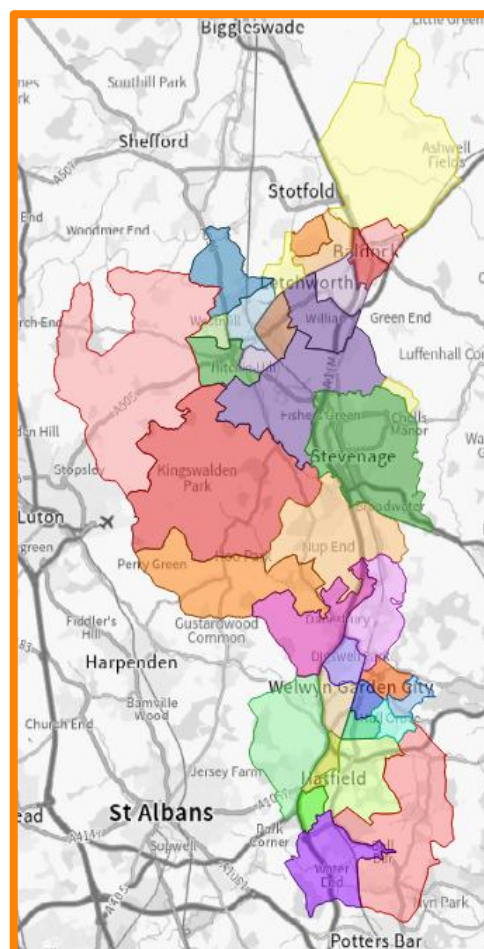
Local Government in England is undergoing significant change. In July 2026, Government confirmed that North Hertfordshire (minus five wards) will join with Stevenage Borough Council and Welwyn Hatfield District Council (minus one ward) to form Central Hertfordshire.

In May 2027 elections will take place to establish the Shadow Central Hertfordshire Authority, which will act as the interim governing body responsible for preparing Central Hertfordshire for operation.

The new Central Hertfordshire Unitary Authority is planned to come into full effect on 1 April 2028, known as Vesting Day. From this point, Central Hertfordshire will take on all responsibilities currently delivered by both Hertfordshire County Council, North Hertfordshire and Welwyn Hatfield District Councils and Stevenage Borough Council.

What this means for North Hertfordshire

North Hertfordshire still needs to plan for future growth during the transition to the new unitary arrangements. Our District must continue to guide where development should take place so that new



³ <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-11/North%20Herts%20Council%20Marketing%20%26%20Communications%20strategy%202024%20-%202028.pdf>

homes, jobs, and infrastructure come forward in the right locations and in a way that benefits local communities. Maintaining an up-to-date Local Plan is an important part of this.

Ahead of Central Hertfordshire preparing its own Local Plan, North Hertfordshire intends to ensure that a clear and effective planning framework remains in place. This will help to secure sustainable development that meets our District's needs, including housing, economic opportunities, and the delivery of essential infrastructure, while providing certainty for residents, businesses, and developers.

OUR ENGAGEMENT VISION

Our Engagement Vision

We want our engagement to be

- **Inclusive** - encouraging participation and partnership working throughout the plan-making process by highlighting opportunities to influence the future of North Hertfordshire and sharing examples of successful community participation.
- **Accessible** - providing information in formats and locations that are accessible to all members of the community and helping people understand what the Plan is, why it matters, and how it may affect them and their communities.
- **Transparent** - explaining how decisions are made and how feedback has informed the process. Promoting two-way communication through discussion, collaboration and ongoing dialogue, helping us and local communities work together to shape the future of our District.
- **Meaningful** - ensuring information is delivered to the right audiences at appropriate times and providing meaningful opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to decision-making, ensuring that views are listened to and considered throughout the preparation of our Plan.
- **Proportionate** - making efficient use of available resources.

Our Communication Principles

All communication and engagement activities undertaken as part of our Local Plan process will aim to be underpinned by three strategic priorities:

- **People First** - People are at the heart of the plan-making process. We will focus on providing information that is relevant, understandable and useful to local communities. Communications will be designed around the needs of residents and stakeholders, ensuring people can easily access the information they require and understand how they can become involved.
- **Digital First** - Digital engagement provides opportunities to communicate quickly, reach wider audiences and make participation easier and more convenient. We will make full use of our website, PlaceMaker platform, social media channels, online consultations and email communications to enable stakeholders to engage at a time and place that suits them.
- **Cross-Channel Engagement** - While digital engagement offers significant benefits, we recognise that it is not suitable for everyone. We will therefore adopt a cross-channel approach, using a combination of online and face-to-face engagement methods. This will help ensure that those who prefer traditional forms of communication are not excluded and that engagement remains as inclusive and accessible as possible.

Who We Will Engage With

Our Local Plan affects everyone living, working and investing in North Hertfordshire. We therefore aim to engage with a broad range of stakeholders, including:

- **General Audiences**
 - Residents
 - Businesses
 - Developers
 - Landowners
 - Community organisations
 - Infrastructure providers
- **Specific Stakeholders**
 - Parish and Town Councils
 - Community Forums
 - Statutory Consultees
 - Neighbouring Authorities
- Members of Parliament
- Councillors
- **Seldom-Heard Groups**
 - Young People
 - Faith Groups
 - Ethnic Minority Communities
 - LGBTQ+ Communities
 - Disabled People
 - Gypsy and Traveller Communities
 - Rural Communities
 - Small Businesses

By ensuring that information reaches the right people at the right time and through the most appropriate channels, we aim to maximise participation and ensure that a diverse range of views informs the preparation of our Local Plan.

LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE AND CONSULTATION STAGES

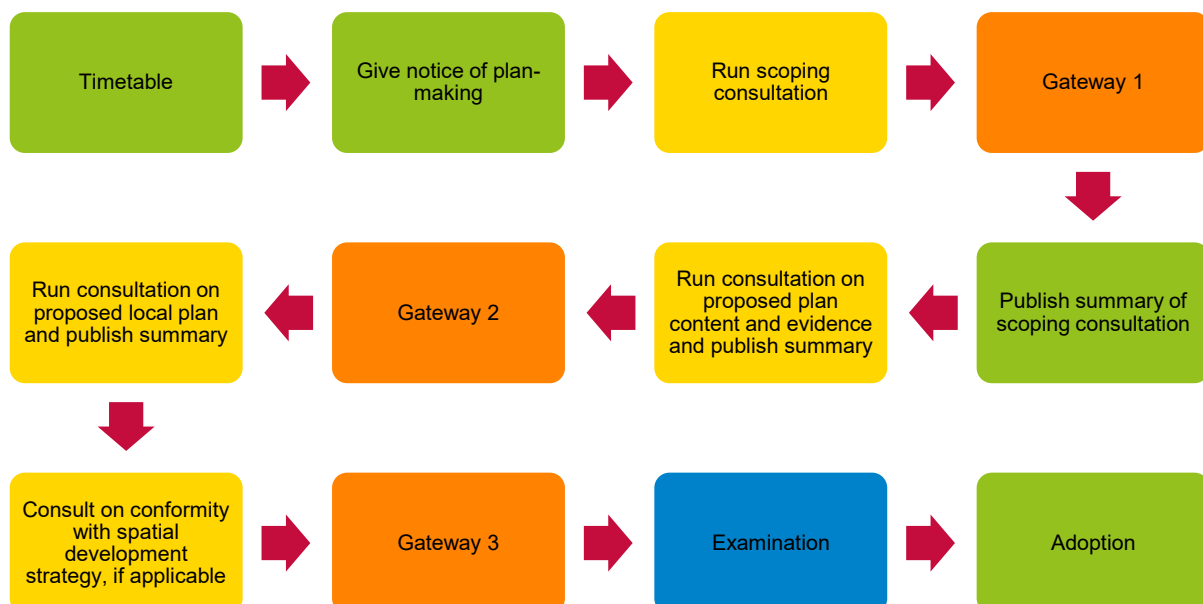
Local Plan timetable and consultation stages

Stages in the Preparation of the Local Plan

Preparing a Local Plan is a structured process that builds on evidence gathering, option development and consultation. As our Plan progresses, proposals will be refined in response to feedback and ongoing engagement.

Throughout the process, residents, businesses and other stakeholders will have opportunities to review information, share their views and contribute local knowledge. This helps ensure our Local Plan reflects the needs and priorities of North Hertfordshire.

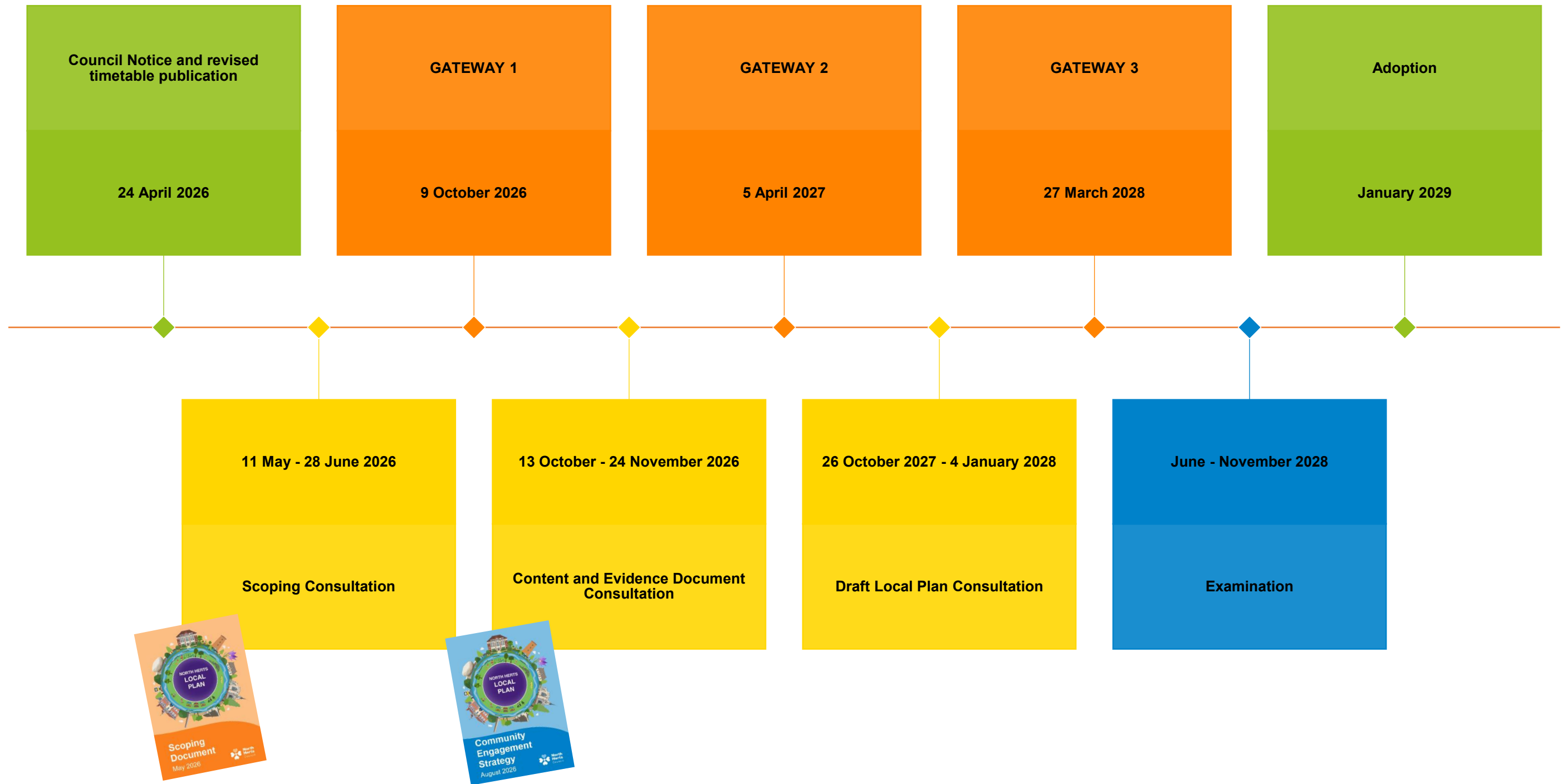
The diagram below illustrates the key stages of Local Plan preparation and the opportunities for involvement at each stage.



The preparation of our Local Plan is guided by a published [timetable](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/local-plan-timetable)⁴, which sets out the key stages and expected timescales for delivery.

The timetable provides transparency, helping communities, stakeholders and partner organisations understand when consultation activities will take place and how our Plan is progressing. A summary of the current timetable is provided in the diagram on the following page and will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

⁴ <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/local-plan-timetable>



HOW WE WILL ENGAGE

How we will engage

We recognise that different people prefer to engage in different ways. Some may choose to participate online, while others may prefer face-to-face discussions, local meetings or written correspondence. We also recognise that certain groups can sometimes be underrepresented in planning consultations.

To address this, we will use a variety of communication and engagement methods to maximise participation and make it as easy as possible for people to get involved. We will make particular efforts to engage with groups whose voices may otherwise be underrepresented, ensuring that our Local Plan is informed by a broad range of views and experiences.

Digital Engagement

Digital engagement allows us to reach a wide audience quickly and efficiently, giving residents, businesses, community groups, developers and other interested parties convenient access to information and opportunities to contribute to our Local Plan process.

We will use a range of digital tools and platforms, including:

- Our website and dedicated Local Plan webpages.
- Our PlaceMaker engagement platform, provided by Urban Intelligence.
- Online consultations and surveys.
- Interactive maps and consultation tools.
- Email newsletters and stakeholder updates.
- Social media channels.
- Virtual meetings and webinars, where appropriate.

These platforms will provide access to consultation materials, evidence documents and supporting information, while enabling participants to submit comments electronically. Digital engagement will complement, rather than replace, traditional methods to ensure the process remains inclusive and accessible.

Social Media

Social media is an important tool for raising awareness of our Local Plan and promoting opportunities to get involved.

We will use social media to:

- Announce consultations and engagement events.
- Encourage participation in consultations, surveys and public events.
- Direct people to our Local Plan webpages and PlaceMaker platform for further information.

Platforms may include



Facebook



YouTube



Instagram



LinkedIn



X (formerly Twitter)

Social media will form part of a wider communications programme to ensure information remains accessible to those who do not use these channels.

Email Updates

We maintain a consultation database of residents, businesses, community groups, landowners, statutory consultees and other organisations interested in our Local Plan.

Subscribers will receive updates on:

- Key milestones and upcoming stages of plan preparation.
- Publication of evidence-base documents.
- Consultation opportunities and engagement events.
- Examination hearings, where relevant.
- Consultation outcomes and next steps.

Anyone interested in the future development of our District can sign up via the [Local Plan](#)⁵ webpages and PlaceMaker platform to receive updates and notifications of consultation opportunities.

Online Publication of Documents

Local Plan consultation documents, supporting evidence and related information will be published online through our website and PlaceMaker platform.

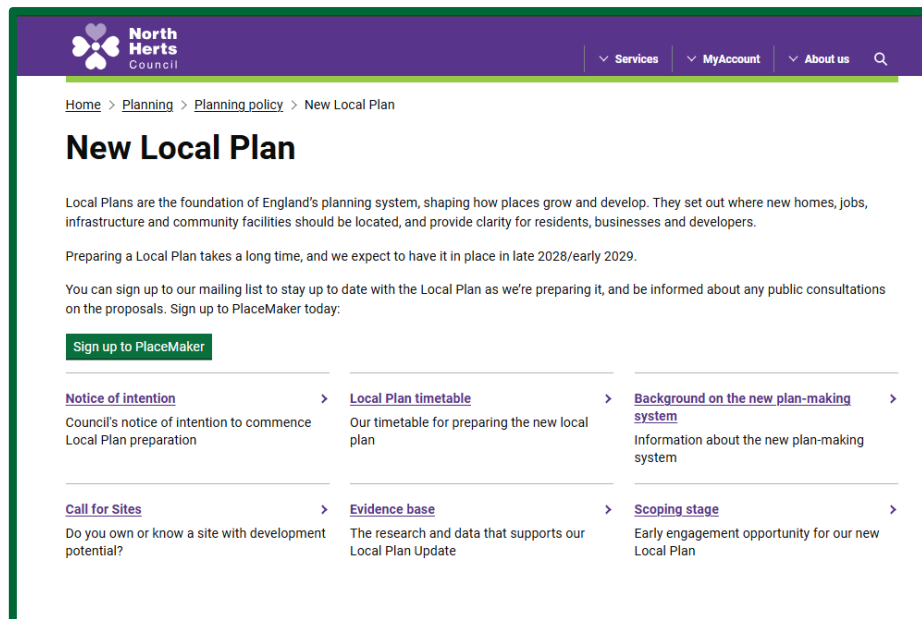
Consultation materials will be provided in accessible formats, including downloadable PDFs and Easy Read versions of key documents where appropriate. We will seek to ensure documents meet recognised accessibility standards and we will continue to review and improve the accessibility of consultation materials to ensure everyone has a fair opportunity to access information and provide feedback.

Our dedicated Local Plan webpages will provide a central source of information throughout the plan-making process. They will be regularly updated to help residents, businesses, community groups and other stakeholders stay informed and access opportunities to participate.

Key features of the webpages will include:

- Join Our Mailing List

⁵ <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/new-local-plan>



[Home](#) > [Planning](#) > [Planning policy](#) > [New Local Plan](#)

New Local Plan

Local Plans are the foundation of England's planning system, shaping how places grow and develop. They set out where new homes, jobs, infrastructure and community facilities should be located, and provide clarity for residents, businesses and developers.

Preparing a Local Plan takes a long time, and we expect to have it in place in late 2028/early 2029.

You can sign up to our mailing list to stay up to date with the Local Plan as we're preparing it, and be informed about any public consultations on the proposals. Sign up to PlaceMaker today:

[Sign up to PlaceMaker](#)

Notice of intention Council's notice of intention to commence Local Plan preparation	Local Plan timetable Our timetable for preparing the new local plan	Background on the new plan-making system Information about the new plan-making system
Call for Sites Do you own or know a site with development potential?	Evidence base The research and data that supports our Local Plan Update	Scoping stage Early engagement opportunity for our new Local Plan

- Call for Sites
- Evidence Library
- Local Plan Programme and Timetable
- Engagement Activities

Animations and Video Content

Planning can involve complex and technical information. To help explain key concepts clearly, we have produced a range of short animations and videos available through our Local Plan webpages and YouTube channel.



These resources provide an accessible and engaging way to understand the plan-making process and complement our written consultation materials. We will continue to explore opportunities to develop additional digital content to support understanding and participation throughout the preparation of our Local Plan.

Place-Based Engagement

We will hold a series of public engagement events across our District, providing residents, businesses, community groups and other stakeholders with opportunities to discuss our emerging Local Plan directly with us.

These events will coincide with the main consultation stages of our Local Plan process, currently proposed for:

- October to November 2026 – consultation on the emerging Local Plan, including the draft vision, spatial strategy and supporting evidence.
- October 2027 to January 2028 – consultation on the proposed draft Local Plan.

The events will provide information about our Local Plan, enable attendees to ask questions and discuss issues affecting their area.

To ensure accessibility, events will be held at a range of locations across our District. Details, including dates, times and venues, will be published on our Local Plan webpages at least four weeks in advance.

These events will complement online consultation activities by providing opportunities for face-to-face discussion.

Community Forums

Community Forums are established local engagement groups that bring together residents, local organisations, parish and town councils, community representatives and elected Members.

A member of our Strategic Planning team will attend Community Forum meetings wherever possible to:

- Share progress on our Local Plan.
- Explain upcoming stages and consultation activities.
- Respond to questions and requests for clarification.
- Gather local views and concerns relevant to plan preparation.

Using the existing Community Forum structure provides a valuable mechanism for ongoing engagement outside formal consultation periods.

Future meeting dates will be published through the Council's [Civic Calendar](#), with the anticipated dates for 2026/27 set out below.

Community Forum	Meeting Dates		
Baldock and Villages	14 September	7 December	22 March
Hitchin	15 September	8 December	23 March
Letchworth Garden City	30 September	16 December	3 March
Royston and Villages	23 September	9 December	24 February
Southern Rural	10 September	26 November	11 March

Councillor community surgeries

In addition to formal consultation events and Community Forums, Councillor Community Surgeries provide another opportunity to engage with residents.



A member of our Strategic Planning team will attend the sessions highlighted below to:

- Provide information about our Local Plan.
- Answer questions.
- Signpost consultation materials and opportunities to comment.
- Encourage residents to register for updates through PlaceMaker.

These informal sessions help reach people who may not otherwise engage through formal consultations or online channels and support a more inclusive consultation process.

The anticipated surgery dates for the remainder of 2026 are set out below.

Councillor community surgery	Baldock	Hitchin	Letchworth Garden City	Royston
Location	Outside Tesco	Market Place	Garden Square Shopping Centre	Market Hill Car Park
Time	10.30am - 12noon	10.30am - 12noon	10.30am - 12noon	10am - 11.30am
Dates	26 September	5 September	19 September	12 September
	31 October	3 October	17 October	14 November
	28 November	7 November	21 November	
		5 December	19 December	

Parish Council Meetings

Parish and Town Councils play an important role in representing local communities and providing insight into local issues, opportunities and priorities.

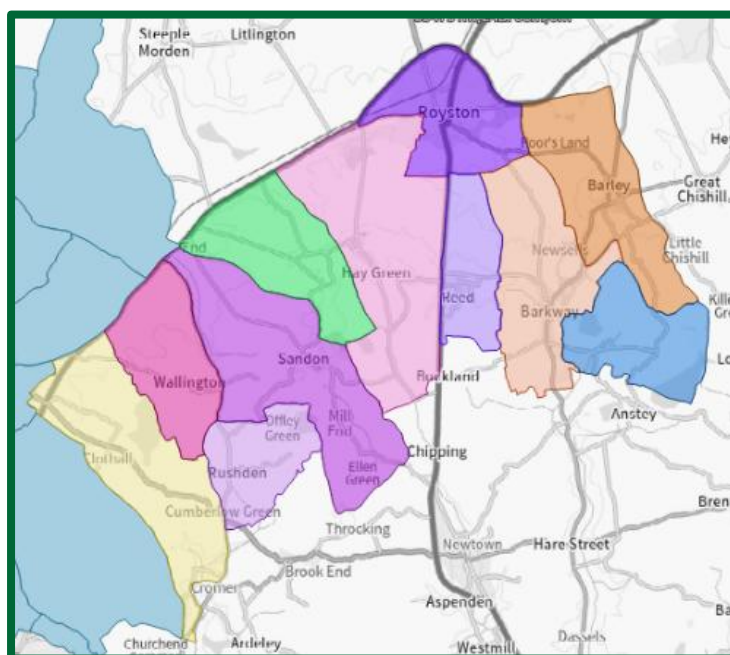
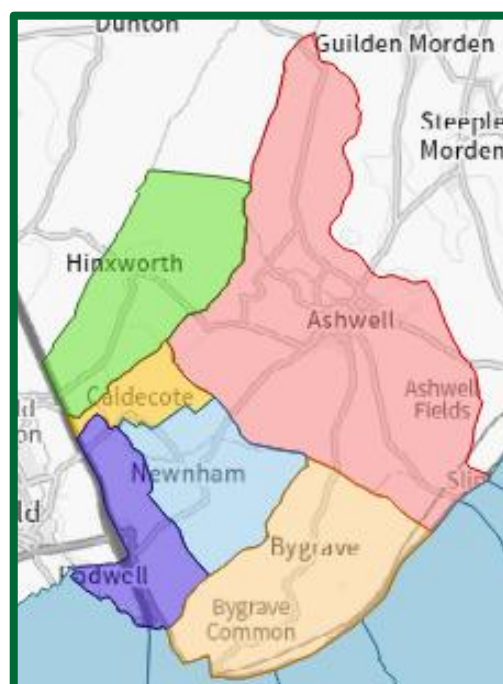
To support Local Plan preparation, we will engage with Parish and Town Councils through dedicated briefing sessions and targeted engagement activities. These will provide opportunities to:

- Share progress on our Local Plan.
- Discuss forthcoming consultation stages.
- Explore issues affecting different parts of our District.
- Gather local knowledge and evidence.
- Respond to questions and requests for clarification.

Where appropriate, discussions will be organised on an area basis to focus on matters of particular relevance to neighbouring communities:

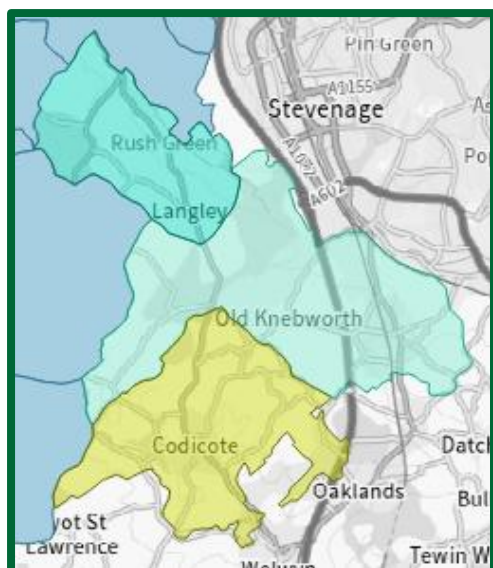
Northern

- Ashwell Parish Council
- Bygrave Parish Council
- Caldecote and Newnham Parish Council
- Hinxworth Parish Council
- Radwell Parish Meeting



Eastern

- Barkway Parish Council
- Barley Parish Council
- Clothall and Luffenhall Parish Meeting
- Kelshall Parish Meeting
- Nuthampstead Parish Meeting
- Reed Parish Council
- Royston Town Council
- Rushden and Wallington Parish Council
- Sandon Parish Council
- Therfield Parish Council

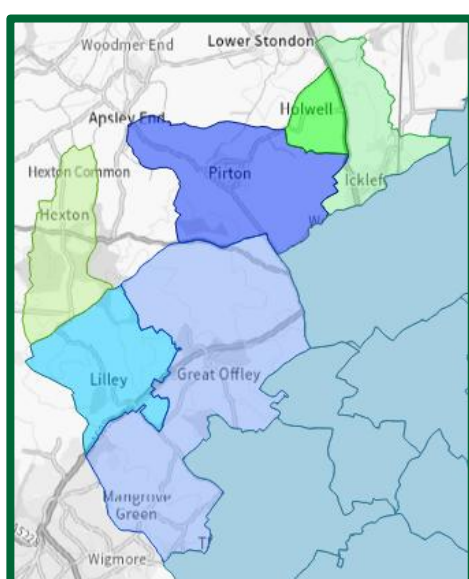
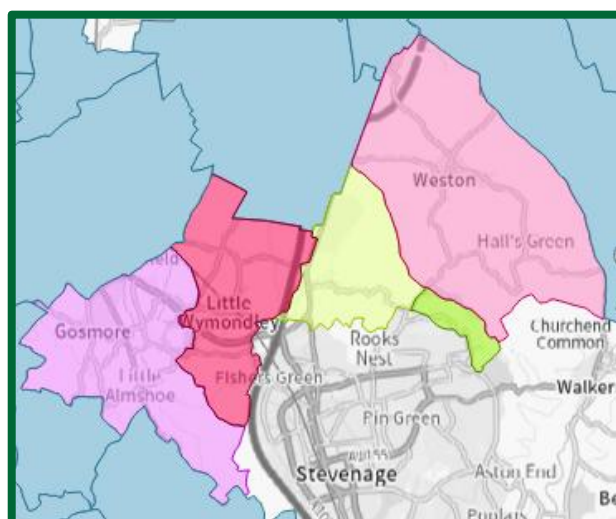


Southern

- Codicote Parish Council
- Knebworth Parish Council
- Langley Parish Meeting

Central

- Graveley
- Great Ashby Community Council
- St Ippolyts Parish Council
- Weston Parish Council
- Wymondley Parish Council



North Western

- Hexton Parish Meeting
- Holwell Parish Council
- Ickleford Parish Council
- Lilley Parish Council
- Offley (with Cockernhoe) Parish Council
- Pirton Parish Council

South Western

- Kimpton Parish Council
- Kings Walden Parish Council
- Preston Parish Council
- St Paul's Walden Parish Council



Details of, and invites to, meetings and briefing sessions, to be held at the Council offices, will be circulated directly to Parish and Town Councils, with supporting information provided in advance where necessary.

This approach will help ensure that local knowledge and community priorities continue to inform the preparation of our Local Plan.

Traditional communication methods

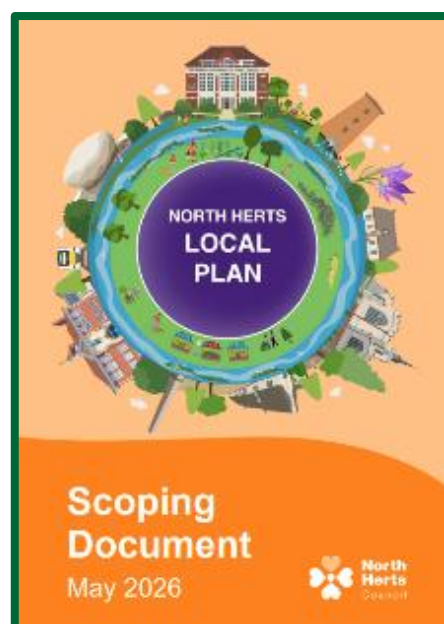
Hard copy documents

We recognise that some people prefer to access information in printed rather than digital formats. To support inclusive participation, hard copy, reference versions of key Local Plan consultation documents will be available for public inspection during consultation periods.

Printed reference copies will be available at:

- North Hertfordshire District Council Offices, Letchworth Garden City.
- Public libraries across North Hertfordshire.
- Consultation event venues, where appropriate.

These documents will not be available to take away from venues and are for reference use only. This is to ensure that other members of the public can access the documents also.



Individuals may also request printed copies of consultation documents from the Strategic Planning team. Charges may apply to cover printing and postage. Details of any charges will be published on our website and provided on request.

Where possible, documents will also be made available in alternative formats, including large print and other accessible versions.

Postal Letters

We maintain a database of stakeholders who have asked to receive information about our Local Plan by post. These contacts will receive the same key information provided through our email updates, including:

- Progress updates and key milestones.
- Publication of evidence documents.
- Consultation opportunities.
- Public meetings, engagement events and examination hearings, where relevant.
- Consultation outcomes and next steps.

While we encourage electronic communication where possible, we will continue to provide postal correspondence for those who prefer this method.

Posters and Advertising Materials

Printed publicity materials will complement our digital communications and help promote consultation opportunities to a wider audience.

Posters, leaflets and display materials may be distributed through a range of community locations, including:

- Public libraries.
- Community centres and village halls.
- Places of worship.
- GP surgeries and healthcare facilities.
- Schools and educational establishments.
- Leisure centres and sports facilities.
- Parish and Town Council offices.

These materials will be used to:

- Raise awareness of our Local Plan.
- Publicise consultations and engagement events.



- Community noticeboards.
- Council buildings and facilities.
- Local shops and businesses, where appropriate

- Signpost people to further information and consultation platforms.
- Explain how feedback can be submitted.

All publicity materials will be produced in accordance with the Council's corporate identity and accessibility standards and will provide details of alternative formats and support where appropriate.

Outlook Magazine

The Council's *Outlook* magazine will be used to communicate information about our Local Plan throughout its preparation. As it is delivered to households across North Hertfordshire, it provides an effective way of reaching residents who may not engage through digital channels.

Articles and updates will:

- Explain key stages of Local Plan preparation.
- Promote consultation opportunities and engagement events.
- Signpost readers to the Local Plan webpages and PlaceMaker platform.
- Provide information on alternative ways to access documents and submit comments.

Where appropriate, QR codes will be included to provide quick access to additional information online.

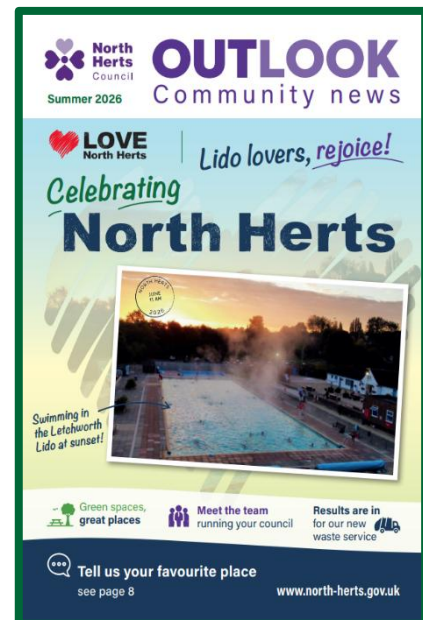


Table 1 - Overview of consultation communication methods for each stage of the plan-making process

Engagement/Consultation Stage	When?	With whom?	Method
Call for Sites	June – September 2025	District-wide	Local Plan webpages Mail out (Email and post)
Scoping Consultation	May – June 2026	District-wide	Community Forums Local Plan webpages Mail out (Email and post) Posters in Community areas (Community and Parish Halls, Libraries, Museums, GP Surgeries) Press Releases Outlook – magazine for residents Social Media 
Gateway 1	October 2026	District-wide	Local Plan webpages Monthly ENewsletter
Call for Sites submissions Map	September 2026	District-wide	Community Forums - Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Royston, Southern and Rural Councillor Surgery – Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Royston Mail out (Email and post) Local Plan webpages Monthly ENewsletter Press Releases Social Media 

Engagement/Consultation Stage	When?	With whom?	Method
Content and Evidence Consultation	October – November 2026	District-wide	Community Forums - Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Royston, Southern and Rural Councillor Surgery – Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Royston In person consultation events at different venues throughout our District Local Plan webpages Mail out (Email and post) Monthly ENewsletter Parish Council Meetings Posters in Community areas (Community and Parish Halls, Libraries, Museums, GP Surgeries) Press Releases Social Media     
Gateway 2	April 2027	District-wide	Local Plan webpages
Draft Local Plan	November 2027 – January 2028	District Wide	Community Forums- Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Royston, Southern and Rural Councillor Surgery – Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Royston In person consultation events at different venues throughout our District Local Plan webpages Mail out (Email and post) Monthly ENewsletter Outlook – magazine for residents Parish Council Meetings Posters in Community areas (Community and Parish Halls, Libraries, Museums, GP Surgeries) Social Media      Press Releases

Engagement/Consultation Stage	When?	With whom?	Method
Gateway 3	March 2028	District-wide	Local Plan webpages Monthly ENewsletter
Examination	June – November 2028	District-wide	Local Plan webpages Mail out (Email and post) Monthly ENewsletter Press Releases Social Media 

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

Accessibility and inclusion

We are committed to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access information about our Local Plan and participate in the consultation process. We recognise that people have different communication needs, preferences and circumstances, and we will seek to remove barriers to participation wherever possible.

Our aim is to ensure that all residents, businesses, community groups and stakeholders can access information, understand proposals and provide feedback in a way that works for them.

Easy Read documents

Consultation materials will be provided in accessible formats, including downloadable PDFs and Easy Read versions of key documents where appropriate. We will seek to ensure documents meet recognised accessibility standards through:

- Clear, readable fonts.
- Appropriate font sizes.
- High-contrast layouts.
- Accessible document structures.
- Compatibility with screen readers and assistive technology.
- Alternative formats on request.

Translation support

We recognise that language can sometimes be a barrier to participation and are committed to making information as accessible as possible.

Where there is an identified need, consultation documents and supporting information can be made available in alternative languages upon request. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the nature of the document, the level of demand and the resources available.

Residents and stakeholders who require information in an alternative language will be encouraged to contact the Strategic Planning team, who will work with them to identify the most appropriate support.

Accessible Venues

We will ensure that venues for consultation events will be easily accessible for all people.

When selecting venues for consultation events, workshops, exhibitions and public meetings, we will seek to ensure that locations are accessible to as many people as possible. This will include consideration of:

- Step-free access and appropriate facilities for people with mobility impairments.

- Accessible toilets and other essential amenities.
- Suitable public transport connections where available.
- Adequate parking, including accessible parking spaces.
- Safe and convenient pedestrian access.
- Appropriate seating and room layouts.
- Good lighting and clear signage.
- Hearing assistance facilities where available.

We will also consider the geographical distribution of venues across our District to ensure that residents living in both urban and rural areas have reasonable opportunities to attend events. Wherever possible, events will be held in well-known community venues that are familiar and easy to access.

If individuals have specific accessibility requirements, we encourage them to contact the Strategic Planning team in advance of an event. We will seek to make reasonable adjustments wherever possible to support participation.

Engaging with Seldom Heard Groups

Our Local Plan will be most effective if it reflects the needs, experiences and aspirations of the diverse communities across North Hertfordshire. To support this, we will use targeted approaches to engage with groups that may otherwise be under-represented by working closely with our Communities Team to raise awareness of the Local Plan and encourage participation from all seldom heard communities across our District. Through established community networks and contacts, we will share information about consultation opportunities and invite individuals and groups to become involved in the plan-making process.

We will contact each of our identified Seldom Heard Groups in our District (some of which are listed below), to offer to attend meetings and groups, and provide pop-up events where individuals and representatives can ask questions about the plan-making process and get involved in the different stages of consultation of our Local Plan. Where there is provision to include information about our Local Plan in electronic communication sent out by the community groups, we will endeavour to use this channel of communication also.

Young People

- Fearnhill School Maths and Computing College, Letchworth
- Hitchin Boys' School, Hitchin
- Hitchin Girls' School, Hitchin
- The Highfield School, Letchworth Garden City
- The Knights Templar School, Baldock
- The Priory School, Hitchin
- North Hertfordshire College, Hitchin
- Youth Action

Ethnic Minority Communities

- North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum, Hitchin
- Jaswant Lunch Clubs, Hitchin & Letchworth
- Khalsa Youth Football Academy, Letchworth

Faith Communities

- North Hertfordshire Inter Faith Forum, Hitchin
- Churches Together, Hitchin
- Hitchin Mosque
- Letchworth Dhamma Nikethanaya Buddhist Meditation Centre
- Tanki Buddhist Therapists Forum
- Ramgarhia Gurdwara, Hitchin
- Ravidassia Community Centre, Hitchin & Letchworth
- Society of Friends (Hitchin Quakers)

Disabled People

- North Herts Day Service (OPPD), Hitchin
- Always Bee You

LGBTQ+ Communities

- Queers and Peers, Hitchin
- North Herts Pride
- Impactful Lives

Gypsy and Traveller Communities

- GATE Herts (Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment)

Rural Communities

- CDA Herts
- Farming Community Network
- North Hertfordshire Ramblers
- Triangle Community Garden

Small Business Owners

- Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce
- Business Buzz Hertfordshire

- Hertfordshire Growth Hub
- Federation of Small Businesses

Residents

- North Herts 50 Plus
- Green & Growing

We will publicise consultation opportunities through a range of communication channels, including:

- Local Plan webpages.
- Social media.
- Email and postal updates.
- Outlook magazine.
- Community Forums.
- Public events and local publicity materials.

HOW WE WILL USE YOUR FEEDBACK

How we will use your feedback section

Recording responses

When you submit comments on any of our Local Plan consultations, regardless of the stage of plan preparation, your details and representations will be recorded on our consultation platform, PlaceMaker. This allows us manage the consultation process, maintain an accurate record of representations received, and meet the legal requirements associated with preparing a Local Plan.

The information we will record includes:

- Your name.
- Your email address and/or postal address.
- The comments and representations you submit.

We are required to retain this information as part of the statutory process for preparing our Local Plan.

Publishing responses

In line with statutory requirements, comments and representations submitted during Local Plan consultations will be made publicly available; ensuring that the plan-making process remains open and accountable.

However, personal information will not be published. To protect privacy, representations will be anonymised before they are made publicly available. Each responder will be assigned a unique reference number, and any published comments will be identified using this reference rather than personal contact details.

We are committed to handling personal information responsibly and in accordance with data protection legislation. Further information on how we collect, use and protect personal data is available in our [Privacy Notice](#).

We will also use your preferred method of communication to keep you informed about the progress of our Local Plan. This may include:

- Updates on key stages of plan preparation.
- Notifications of future consultation opportunities.
- Information on the publication of evidence and supporting documents.
- Details of our Local Plan Examination in Public.
- Updates on significant milestones and decisions relating to the Plan.

Reporting

We must publish summaries of each of our consultations stages before we can move onto the next stage of the plan-making process, setting out matters including:

- a summary of the feedback we received in response to the consultation
- an explanation of how we have considered the feedback from the consultation

DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

Duty to Co-Operate

Many of the challenges and opportunities facing North Hertfordshire extend beyond administrative boundaries. Issues such as housing, transport, flooding, climate resilience and environmental protection require cooperation between councils, public bodies and other organisations.

Although the formal Duty to Co-operate requirement has been removed under the new plan-making system, local planning authorities are still expected to work closely together on issues that cross administrative boundaries. Effective cooperation remains important to ensure that matters such as housing, employment, infrastructure, transport and environmental issues are considered and planned for in a coordinated way.

What This Means

- Homes for the future: Planning together ensures we meet housing needs across the wider region.
- Transport and travel: Strategic highways and rail connections affect everyone, so we coordinate to keep people moving safely and efficiently.
- Flooding and climate resilience: Rivers and weather systems cross boundaries, so our response must too.
- Heritage and environment: Protecting our historic sites and natural landscapes requires collaboration with national bodies.

How We Work

As we prepare our Local Plan, we will:

- Identify strategic cross-boundary issues.
- Work jointly to find solutions.
- Publish a Statement of Common Ground setting out areas of cooperation and progress on shared matters.

Who We Collaborate With

Our main partners include:

- Central Bedfordshire, East Herts, Luton, South Cambridgeshire, St. Albans, Stevenage, Uttlesford and Welwyn Hatfield
- Hertfordshire County Council
- The Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England
- Civil Aviation Authority, Homes England
- NHS Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board
- Anglian and Thames Water

- Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust

This collaborative approach helps ensure that our Local Plan is informed by wider strategic considerations and supports sustainable growth across the area.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Parish and Town Councils

Ashwell Parish Council

Barkway Parish Council

Barley Parish Council

Bygrave Parish Council

Caldecote and Newnham Parish Council

Codicote Parish Council

Graveley Parish Council

Great Ashby Community Council

Hinxworth Parish Council

Holwell Parish Council

Ickleford Parish Council

Kimpton Parish Council

Kings Walden Parish Council

Knebworth Parish Council

Lilley Parish Council

Offley (with Cockernhoe) Parish Council

Pirton Parish Council

Preston Parish Council

Reed Parish Council

Royston Town Council

Rushden and Wallington Parish Council

Sandon Parish Council

St Ippolyts Parish Council

St Paul's Walden Parish Council

Therfield Parish Council

Weston Parish Council

Wymondley Parish Council

Clothall and Luffenhall Parish Meeting

Hexton Parish Meeting

Kelshall Parish Meeting

Langley Meeting

Nuthampstead Meeting

Radwell Meeting

Appendix B – Community Forums

Baldock

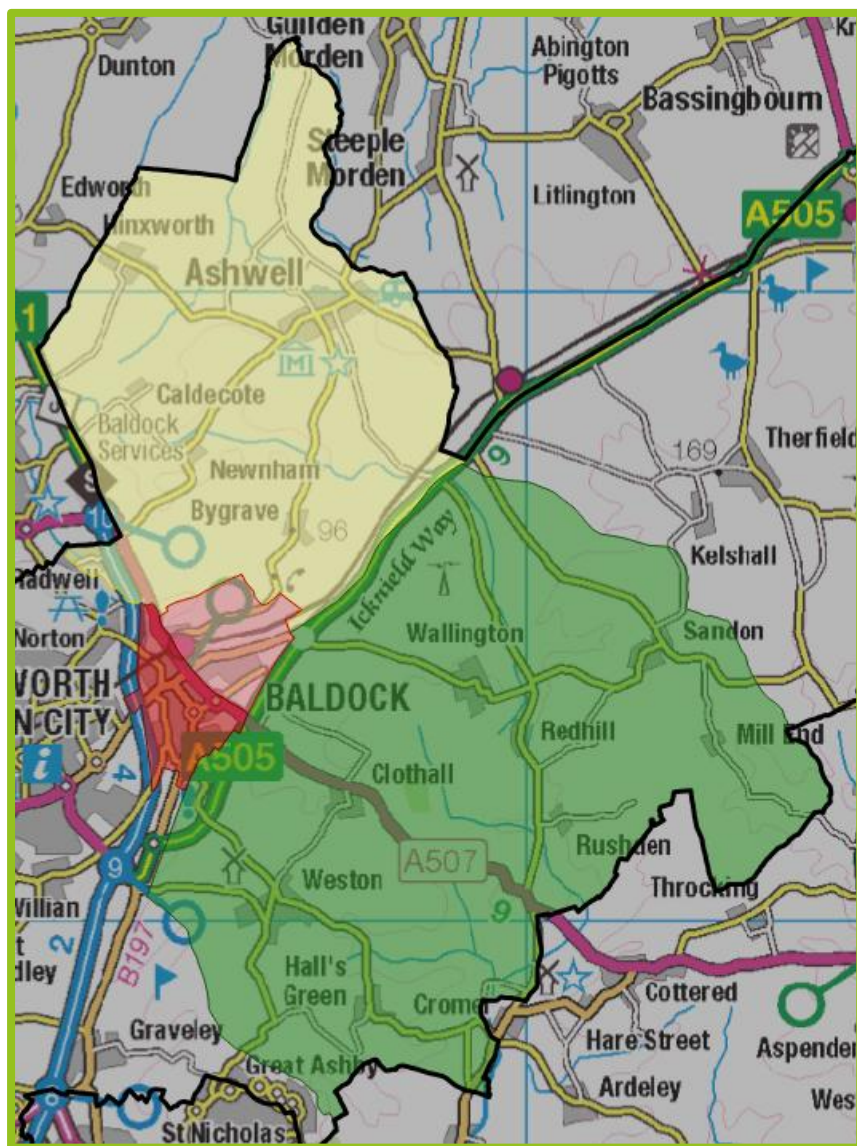
Hitchin

Letchworth Garden City

Royston and Villages

Southern Rural

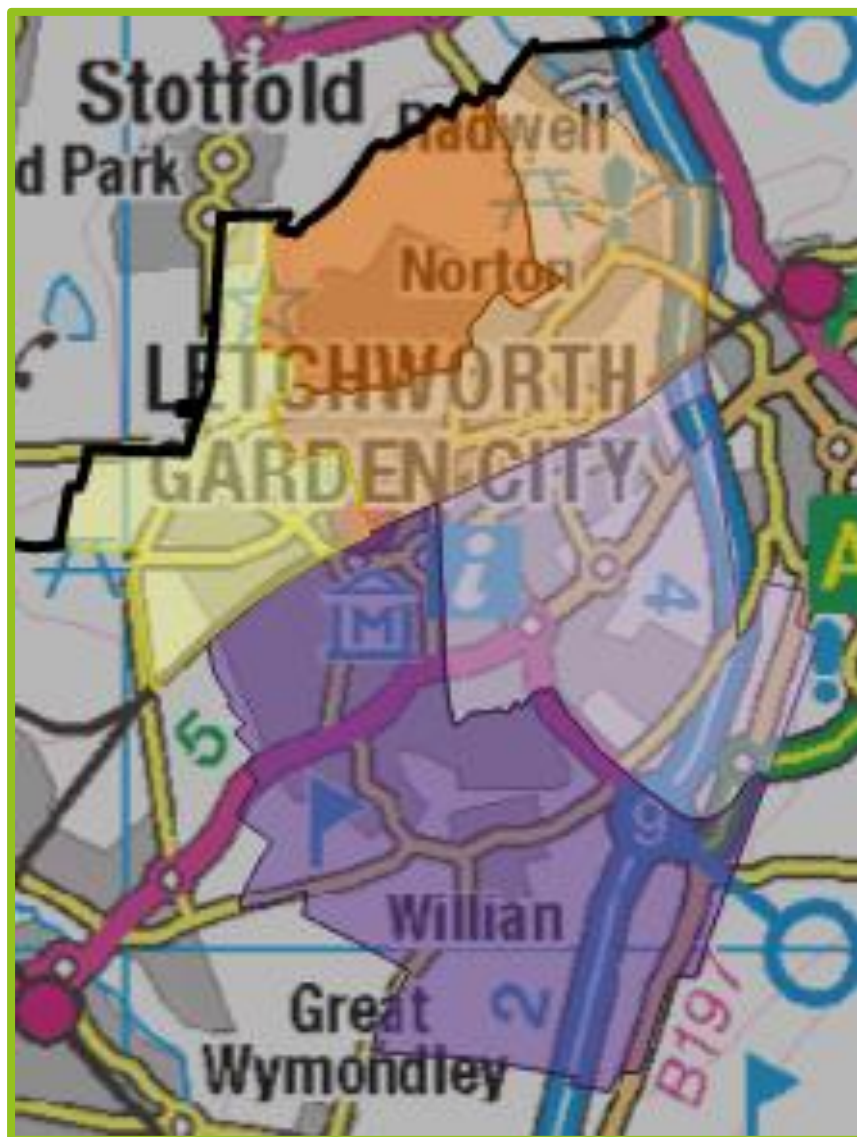
Baldock Community Forum Area



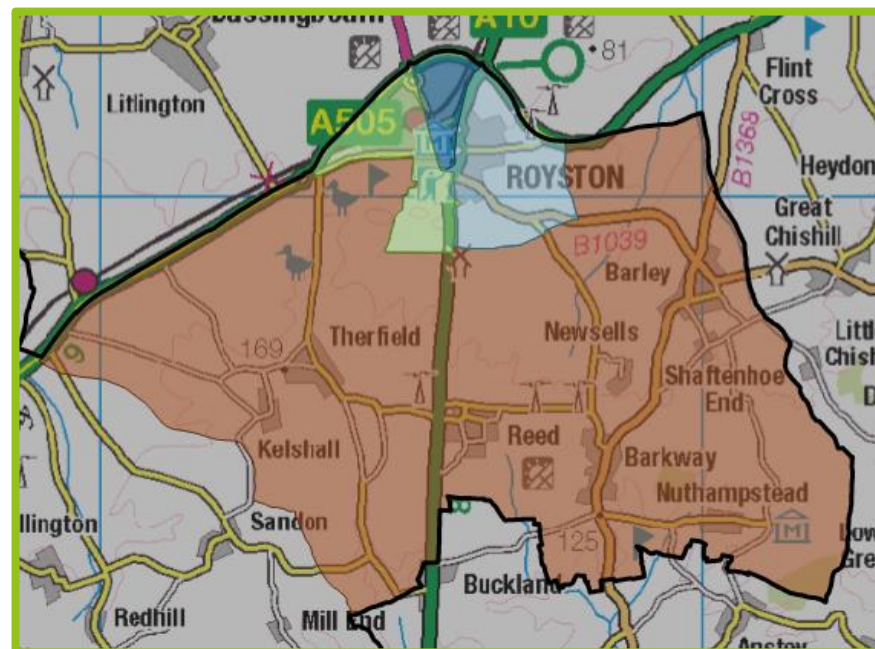
Hitchin Community Forum Area



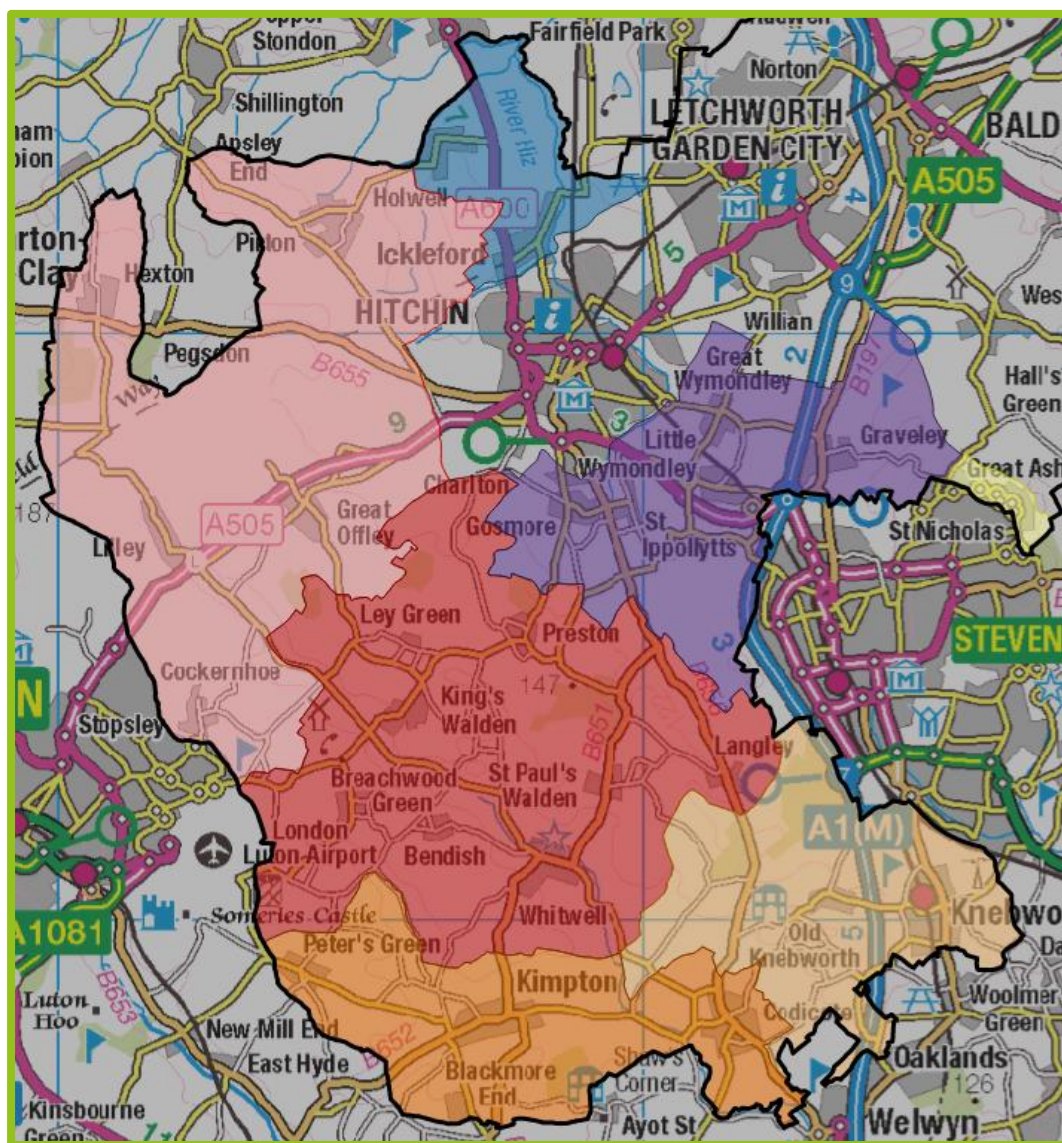
Letchworth Community Forum Area



Royston and Villages Community Forum Area



Southern Rural Community Forum Area



Appendix C – Statutory Consultees

Coal Authority

Environment Agency

Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as Historic England)

Marine Management Organisation

Natural England

Network Rail Infrastructure Limited

National Highways

All neighbouring authorities

- East Herts

- St. Albans

- Stevenage

- Welwyn Hatfield

- Central Bedfordshire

- Luton

- South Cambridgeshire

- Uttlesford

NHS Central East Integrated Care Board

UK Power Networks

Cadent Gas Ltd

Thames Water

Anglian Water

Affinity Water

Homes England

Active Travel England

Appendix D – Duty to Co-Operate Bodies

Environment Agency

Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as Historic England)

Natural England

Civil Aviation Authority

Homes England

NHS Central East Integrated Care Board

Office of Rail Regulation

Transport for London

Integrated Transport Authority

National Highways

All neighbouring authorities

- East Herts

- St. Albans

- Stevenage

- Welwyn Hatfield

- Central Bedfordshire

- Luton

- South Cambridgeshire

- Uttlesford

Marine Management Organisation

Hertfordshire Futures (previously Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership)

Appendix E – Neighbouring Authorities

Central Bedfordshire

East Herts

Luton

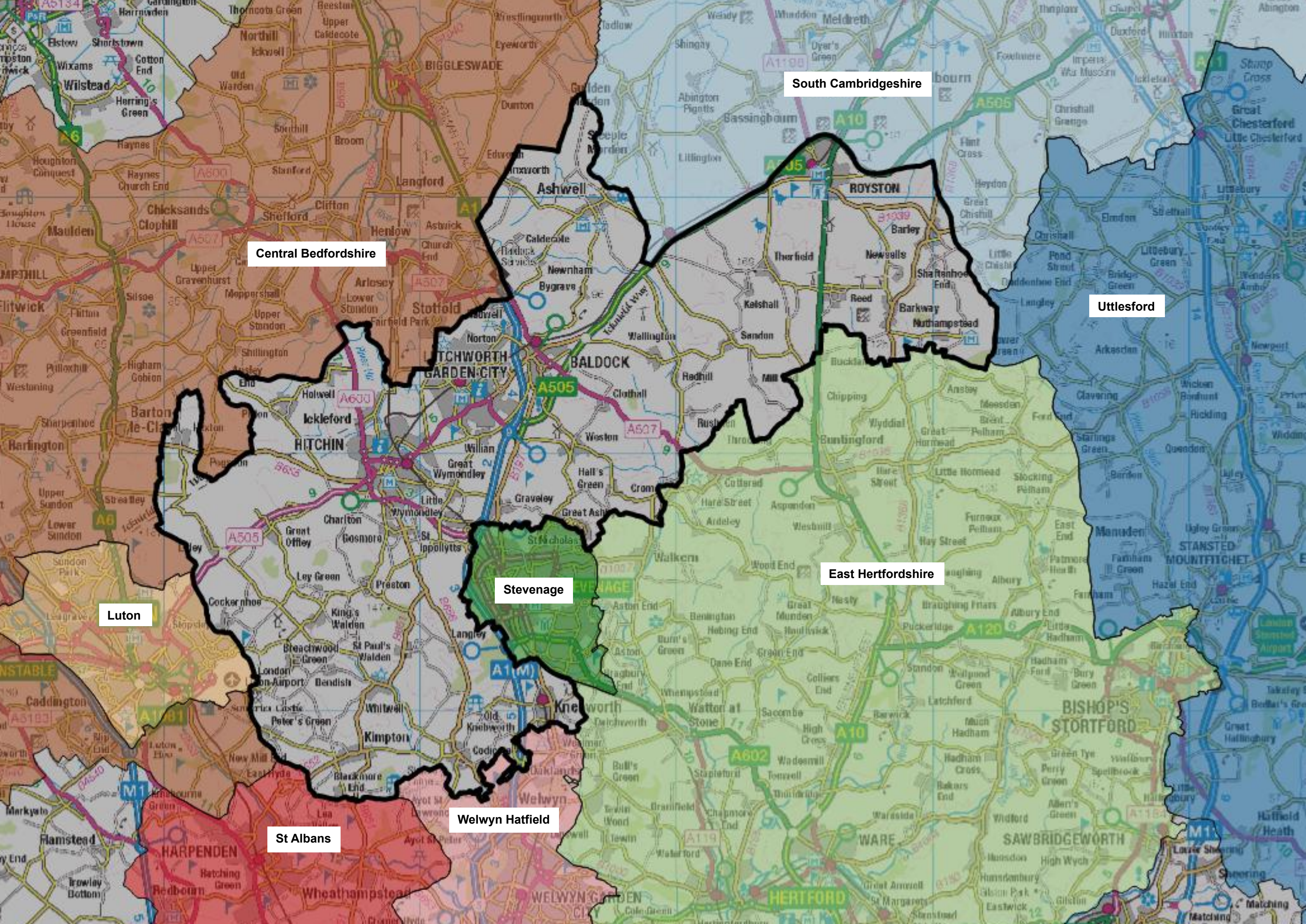
South Cambridgeshire

St. Albans

Stevenage* part of new unitary authority with North Herts

Uttlesford

Welwyn Hatfield* part of new unitary authority with North Herts



South Cambridgeshire

Central Bedfordshire

Uttlesford

Stevenage

East Hertfordshire

Luton

Welwyn Hatfield

St Albans