

# St Albans City & District Council Local Development Scheme

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## Introduction

**1.1** The Council has embarked on preparing a new Local Plan. The new Local Plan will replace the District Local Plan Review 1994. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Planning Act 2008 and Localism Act 2011) requires local planning authorities to prepare, maintain and publish a Local Development Scheme (LDS) as part of the plan-making process. This document seeks to fulfill this requirement.

### **What is the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and what must it include?**

**1.2** The LDS sets out the Council's timetable for the production of the Development Plan Documents (DPDs), including key production and public consultation stages. This enables the community, businesses, landowners/developers, service and infrastructure providers and other interested organisations to know which DPDs are to be prepared for the area and when they will be able to participate. The LDS must specify (as per the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by Section 111 of the Localism Act 2011)):

- a. the local development documents which are to be development plan documents;
- b. the subject matter and geographical area to which each development plan document is to relate;
- c. which development plan documents (if any) are to be prepared jointly with one or more other local planning authorities;
- d. any matter or area in respect of which the authority have agreed (or propose to agree) to the constitution of a joint committee under section 29; and
- e. the timetable for the preparation and revision of the development plan documents.

**1.3** These requirements are reiterated in the National Planning Practice Guidance on 'Plan-Making' paragraph 003 ID: 61-003-20190315.

### **What development plan documents are being prepared?**

**1.4** Development Plan Documents are planning strategies that contain policies for the use, protection and/or development of land. These must have regard to government guidance, in particular the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance. Development Plan Documents are:

- Local Plans for a council area (or for more than one council area if working together). Preparation of a Local Plan is a statutory requirement. A Local Plan may be a single document or a suite of documents, with some covering specific policy matters or specific geographical areas (for example Area Action Plans). In areas that have County and District Councils, the County Council has the responsibility for producing Minerals and Waste Local Plans. The new Local Plan 2041 will replace the District Local Plan Review 1994.

- Neighbourhood Plans are not compulsory, however when duly prepared they are a statutory document that forms part of the statutory development plan. They would be prepared by a relevant (qualifying) body. In parished areas, the relevant body would be a town or parish council or councils, and elsewhere this would be a neighbourhood forum. The plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the local plan and are prepared in a timescale that is set by the relevant body, not St Albans City and District Council. More information can be found on the Council's webpage<sup>(1)</sup>.

### Consultation

**1.5** There are no statutory consultation requirements stipulated for the preparation of a Local Development Scheme. The Secretary of State has the power to direct the Council to make such amendments to the LDS as they think appropriate for the purposes of ensuring full and effective coverage (both geographically and with regard to subject matter) of the authority's area by the development plan document (taken as a whole) for that area.

## Current Statutory Development Plan

**2.1** The Statutory Development Plan deals with spatial issues - relating to land use and physical development. It seeks to co-ordinate and plan for a range of activities likely to affect space, including housing, employment, transport, historic and natural environment, education, health, and shopping. It also plays a key role in integrating other policies and programs from across the Council and other government departments and agencies whose activities contribute to place shaping. It takes the form of a set of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that together form the statutory basis for determining planning applications for the District.

### Current Statutory Development Plan

**2.2** The statutory development plan is the set of Development Plan Documents that together form the statutory basis for determining planning applications for the District.

**2.3** On publication of this Local Development Scheme in February 2024, the statutory development plan comprises:

- Saved policies of the District Local Plan Review 1994
- The Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2007
- The Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012
- The Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations 2014
- Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan 2019

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning>

- Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan 2021
- St Stephen Neighbourhood Plan 2022
- Redbourn Neighbourhood Plan 2023
- Wheathampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2023

## Emerging Development Plan

**3.1** This Local Development Scheme is updating, the now out of date, Local Development Scheme (2022). A new program to deliver a range of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) is set out in this section, and these will comprise the statutory Development Plan once adopted.

### The Emerging Statutory Development Plan

**3.2** By the end of 2026 the statutory development plan would comprise:

- The new Local Plan
- The Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2007 (or any replacement adopted)
- The Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and Site Allocations Document (or any replacement adopted)
- Any Neighbourhood Development Plans made

### Local Plan Proposed Timescales

**3.3** The District Council can set a timetable only for Development Plan Documents it is preparing itself (or jointly with another Local Authority). The timetables for Neighbourhood Plans are set by the relevant body, such as Parish Councils, the timetables for the Minerals and Waste Local Plans are set by the County Council. Below provides indicative timescales for delivering a new Local Plan.

**3.4** The new Local Plan will set out the overall development strategy for the District. It will include strategic policies as well as broad locations for strategic housing and employment development and infrastructure. It will provide the strategic policy framework for potential Neighbourhood Plans. This document will also set out the development management policies and site allocations and will also include a Policies Map. The Policies Map will be updated to reflect the policies in the new Local Plan, including any changes to their extent.

## Local Development Scheme

|            | Regulation 18 Consultation | Regulation 19 Pre - Submission Publication | Submission | Examination           | Adoption   |
|------------|----------------------------|--|------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Local Plan | July – Sep 2023            | Oct – Dec 2024                             | March 2025 | March 2025 - Feb 2026 | March 2026 |

**3.5** When completed, the new Local Plan will comprise a single document, containing site allocations and development management policies in addition to strategic policies covering the development of the District. Some aspects of this timetable are not within the control of the Council, particularly the timing of the Examination Hearing and the length of time the Inspector takes to consider matters and issue their report.

### South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan

**3.6** Over the next few years the Council will also continue to work with neighbouring authorities on the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan. Joint working between neighbouring authorities continues to be encouraged by Government. This involves working together to provide the homes, jobs and infrastructure where people want to live.

**3.7** In Spring 2018, St Albans, Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three Rivers, and Watford Councils gave formal endorsement to begin work on a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South West Hertfordshire. Work on the JSP will progress in alignment with the agreed Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) that has been signed by all of the authorities.

**3.8** Each council will still be responsible for preparing its own Local Plan, but the JSP will provide the platform to consider how the challenges of growth in the wider South West Hertfordshire area can be addressed longer term (i.e. circa 2036 to 2050).

**3.9** By working together, the South West Hertfordshire Councils will also be in a stronger position to deliver, and better fund essential local transport links, health services and educational facilities that local people want to see alongside new homes and jobs.

**3.10** Preparation of the Joint Strategic Plan will take place alongside the local plans being undertaken by each respective council. This will provide a platform to consider the growth challenges in the wider South West Hertfordshire area can be addressed in the long term. The most up to date information on the SWH JSP can be found on its website at: <https://www.swhertsplan.com/>

|   | Informal Consultation : South West Herts – Your Future | Regulation 18: South West Hertfordshire 2050 – Realising Our Potential | Regulation 18: Options for the future pattern and scale of growth for the area | Regulation 19: Publication Plan Consultation | Submission | Examination | Adoption |
|---|--|--|--|--|------------|-------------|----------|
| South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan | Spring 2020  | Autumn 2022  | TBC  | TBC  | TBC        | TBC         | TBC      |

### Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

**3.11** Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide guidance and more detail on the application of Local Plan policies. Since the publication of the Planning Act 2008, such documents no longer need to be included in the LDS before they can be prepared. This provides considerable flexibility for the preparation of such documents as and when necessary.

### Evidence Base

**3.12** A range of technical studies have been, and are being prepared, to use as the evidence base to support production of the Local Plan 2041 and Joint Strategic Plan (JSP). The evidence base work will include:

- Sustainability Appraisal
- Habitat Regulations Assessment
- Green Belt Review
- South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Need Assessment
- Housing Employment Land Availability Assessment
- South West Hertfordshire Economic Study Update
- South West Hertfordshire Retail and Leisure Study
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Transport Assessments
- Playing Pitch Strategy
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Green Infrastructure Study including Open Space
- Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment
- Heritage Impact Assessment

## Resources, Monitoring and Review

### Resources

**4.1** The Council attaches high priority to the expeditious delivery of both the St Albans City and District Council new Local Plan and the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan process. Work on the new Local Plan will be undertaken by the Spatial Planning and Design Team. Evidence based work will be mix of in-house delivery and external consultancy commissions.

**4.2** Despite financial stringency the Council will maintain the necessary mainstream funding. Budgets will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis and appropriate provision made. Opportunities for additional funding sources such as grants from the Government's will also be pursued. Some funding has been secured from Government to help take forward the Joint Strategic Plan but further funding will continue to be required from both Government and Council budgets. This is to support the completion of the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan through to adoption.

### Monitoring and Review

**4.3** Progress on the preparation of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents will be monitored annually through the Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR). This report will:

- Specify how the Council is performing against the timescales set out within the Local Development Scheme and make changes to the timetable as may be required;
- Provide information on the extent to which adopted policies are achieving their intended goals;
- Propose updates to the Local Development Scheme – including any new Supplementary Planning Documents as may be considered necessary.

**4.4** This Local Development Scheme effectively outlines the work programme the Council intends to undertake on its Local Plan.



