



St Albans City and District

**Housing Delivery Test
Action Plan 2024 (published
February 2025)**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Government introduced a Housing Delivery Test (HDT) as the mechanism to monitor housing delivery locally. The HDT measures net additional dwellings delivered against the homes the Government requires each Local Planning Authority (LPA) in England to deliver. The HDT is measured over a three year rolling period, starting in the financial year 2019/22. The Government issues results on performance for each LPA on an annual basis. The HDT has three requirements:

- If delivery has been less than 95% of the housing target, the LPA should prepare an Action Plan to address the reasons for the shortfall.
- If delivery has been less than 85% of the housing target, the LPA should also include a 20% buffer in calculating its 5 years housing land supply.
- If delivery has been less than 75%, the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also engaged.

1.1.2 The latest Housing Delivery Test results were published by the Secretary of State in December 2024. St Albans delivered 52% of the Government's target. In response to this, the Council has produced this Housing Delivery Test Action Plan responding positively to the challenge of increasing its housing delivery.

1.1.3 The delivery of new homes remains a key national issue. The Council submitted its draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State on 29 November 2024, which if adopted, will deliver 14,601 homes over the plan period to 2041. The Plan also supports affordable housing, older persons accommodation, opportunities for self-build and custom-build homes, schools, GP surgeries, roads, cycleways, footpaths, public transport, country parks, children's play spaces, improved biodiversity, tree planting, access to nature and new sports pitches and.

1.1.4 The Government published the updated NPPF in Dec 2024, increasing the Council's annual housing target requirement from 885 homes a year to 1,660 a year, an increase of 87.5%. The Council took the decision to submit the Local Plan under the existing NPPF and meet its current needs in full. The decision being that, if the Council had postponed submission of the draft Local Plan, to plan for the significant uplift in the housing target, it would need to be submitted under the 'new Local Plan system' which would cause very significant delays in housing delivery.

1.1.5 This Action Plan has been prepared to show how the Council is responding to the challenge of ensuring that more homes are built in the District and faster. It has been prepared in accordance with the Government's Planning Practice Guidance¹. It analyses the reasons for the under-delivery of new homes against the Government's new requirements. It sets out clear actions to improve housing

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-supply-and-delivery#housing-delivery-test--action-plans>



delivery within the District. This is an update to the third Housing Delivery Test Action Plan published in 2022.

1.2 Purpose, Objectives and Status

1.2.1 In line with the Government's Planning Practice Guidance, this paper:

- Briefly reviews the housing market;
- Identifies the reasons for under delivery;
- Explores ways to reduce the risk of further under-delivery; and
- Sets out measures the Council intends to take to improve levels of delivery.

1.3 Relationship to other plans/strategies and Council activities

1.3.1 This Action Plan complements existing Council plans, policies and strategies which provide a framework for the delivery of the Council's housing priorities. This includes the following:

- **Plan making in the District**
The Council has submitted its draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State on 29 November 2024, which if adopted by March 2026, will deliver 14,601 homes over the plan period to 2041. In addition, the Council is working with its neighbouring authorities of Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three Rivers and Watford to prepare a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South West Herts for the time period 2036-2050.
- **Corporate Plan (2025-2029²)**
The Corporate Plan has a key priority to increase the delivery of social housing.
- **Housing Strategy (2023-2026³)**
The Strategy has been developed to set out how the Council will respond to the challenges in delivering and managing high quality housing across all tenures in the District in the next 3 years.

The proposed pledges are to:

1. Deliver new housing on Council-owned sites that meet the needs of the social housing register
2. Promote sustainability and energy efficiency in housing stock of all tenures.
3. Ensure a sufficient supply of temporary accommodation
4. Support the delivery of a Local Plan to maximise the future delivery of affordable housing
5. Meet the accommodation needs of vulnerable people.

²

<https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/St%20Albans%20City%20And%20District%20Council%20Plan%202024-2029%20FINAL.pdf>

³ <https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/SADC%20-%20Housing%20Strategy%202023-26.pdf>



1.4 Approach and methodology

- 1.4.1 The Action Plan has been informed by the Council's Authority Monitoring Report (AMR), which reports the yearly housing delivery in the District.



2. LOCAL HOUSING MARKET

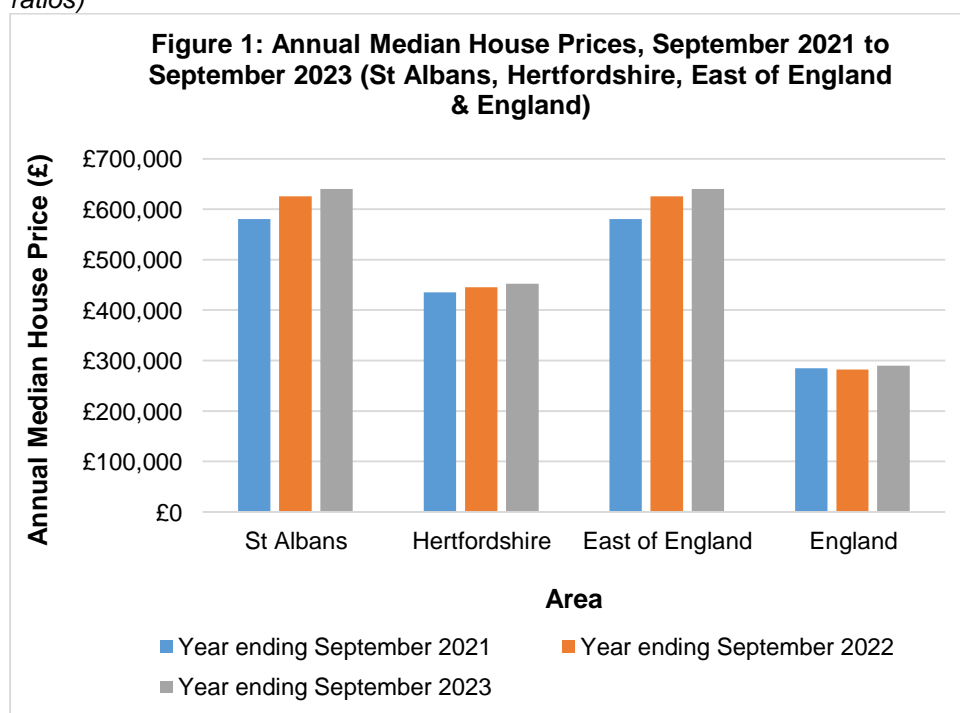
2.1 Property prices and affordability

2.1.1 The St Albans City and District area (the District) is an affluent district in the south east of England. It is within a Housing Market Area which includes its neighbours in the South West Hertfordshire area. St Albans District is a popular place to live in and was rated as one of the happiest in the East in 2024⁴. The District is connected to London by fast rail links and has attractive features such as a rich fabric of historical buildings and good parks and other green spaces.

2.1.2 Reflecting its popularity, the median house price in the District in September 2023 was £640,000, an increase of £60,000 compared to September 2021.⁵

2.1.3 Figure 1 below continues to show that the District has markedly higher house prices compared to the rest of Hertfordshire County, the East of England and England nationally.

Figure 1 - Comparison of annual median house price trends between end of September 2021 and end of September 2023 (source: ONS House price to workplace-based earnings ratios)



2.1.4 The District's median house price to median earnings ratio in 2023 was 17.61.

2.1.5 The District's median gross annual workplace-based earnings in 2023 was £36,353.

⁴ <https://www.stalbansreview.co.uk/news/24768663.hitchin-st-albans-ranked-among-happiest-places-live/>

⁵ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>



2.2 Housing stock

2.2.1 The District's housing stock as at 2023 is 62,738 dwellings, an increase of 715 dwellings from 2021 (source: Table 125 published by DLUHC⁶).

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>



3. HOUSING DELIVERY

3.0.1 The adopted Local Plan for St Albans City and District is the District Local Plan Review (November 1994). Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the policies in the adopted Local Plan were automatically 'saved' for three years. Subsequently the Government agreed to some policies being saved for longer; effectively until they are replaced by a new Local Plan.

3.0.2 The Council monitors housing delivery through its annual Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) and uses a framework setting out core measures and indicators of progress on implementation of the Plan. In relation to housing, the core measures and indicators are shown in the following table.

3.1 Net additional dwellings completed

3.1.1 Since 1994/95 the District has delivered an average of 396 net dwellings each year, a slight increase to the previous reported HDTAP average of 395. The average delivery over the past 5 years has been 421 net dwellings each year.

3.1.2 Table 1 shows the delivery history, including the delivery of affordable housing, since the Plan was adopted.

Table 1 – Authority's Monitoring Report 2024: Historic Affordable Housing Completions C3 Use Class (Net) Through District Local Plan Review 1994 Policies (1994/95 – 2023/24)

Monitoring Year	Dwelling Completions (Net)				Percent Affordable (%)
	Annual Total	Affordable Housing			
		Policy 7A/8	Other Policy	Total	
1994/95	418	26	70	96	23
1995/96	474	125	45	170	36
1996/97	238	8	49	57	24
1997/98	415	35	-41	-6	-1
1998/99	529	58	66	124	23
1999/00	600	32	-7	25	4
2000/01	415	4	26	30	7
2001/02	356	44	20	64	18
2002/03	301	26	19	45	15
2003/04	248	0	7	7	3
2004/05	601	206	37	243	40
2005/06	329	18	10	28	9
2006/07	377	0	10	10	3
2007/08	293	17	19	36	12
2008/09	398	85	7	92	23
2009/10	272	119	10	129	47
2010/11	382	102	13	115	30



2011/12	380	12	8	20	5
2012/13	320	75	30	105	33
2013/14	375	27	-69	-42	-11
2014/15	313	8	62	70	22
2015/16	396	83	14	97	24
2016/17	340	38	21	59	17
2017/18	385	95	11	106	28
2018/19	624	71	11	82	13
2019/20	437	24	7	31	7
2020/21	516	177	-8	169	33
2021/22	314	67	4	71	23
2022/23	401	60	8	68	17
2023/24	438	129	0	129	29
Total (1994/95 to 2023/24)	11,885	1,771	459	2,230	~
Average per year (1994/95 to 2023/24)	396	59	15	74	19

3.1.3 During the monitoring years 2022/23 and 2024/25 a total of 401 and 438 net C3 dwellings were completed respectively. Most of the development continues to be developed in St Albans City. This figure is lower than the figure calculated using the Government's standard methodology of 1,992 dwellings per annum. The latest Housing Trajectory shows a five year housing land supply of 1.9 years (including the 20% 'buffer' as required by the NPPF) as of 1 April 2024. The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing land supply.

3.1.4 A new Local Plan has been drafted, which is scheduled for Examination Hearing Sessions in Spring 2025. The new Plan will propose a significant increase to the delivery of homes to meet the District's housing need to 2041. A new Local Development Scheme (LDS) was adopted in September 2024⁷ which sets out the timetable for preparation of the Local Plan. The Council also continues to progress the South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan, together with the four other Local Authorities, for the period 2036-2050⁸.

3.2 Council housing completions

3.2.1 There were several completions in 2022/24 period and are set out below:

- Noke Shot Garages East, 35a and 35b Porters Hill, 46 Noke Shot and land rear of 38-40 Noke Shot, Harpenden - 10 new dwellings comprising eight 3-bed semi-detached houses and two 2-bed detached bungalows. Four dwellings have been delivered for social rent.

⁷ <https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/local-development-scheme>

⁸ <https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/south-west-herts-joint-strategic-plan>



- Civic Centre Opportunity Site (South), Victoria Street, St Albans – 93 apartments, of which 33 apartments have been delivered for social rent.
- Former Sopwell Youth Centre, Cottonmill Lane, St Albans – seven dwellings for market sale have been delivered.

3.3 Council housing developments in the pipeline

- Ridgeview Lodge, Barnet Road, London Colney – Redevelopment of a site as a hostel to deliver 44 apartments, of which 25 apartments are to be delivered for social rent.
- The Hedges, Woollam Crescent, St Albans - 12 dwellings comprising six 3-bed semi-detached houses and six 2-bed flats, following demolition of existing temporary accommodation. 12 dwellings will be delivered as social rent. The development will result in a net gain of two dwellings.
- The King Offa PH, Norman Close, Wallingford Walk, St Albans – 14 dwellings, of which all are to be delivered for social rent



4. REVIEW OF KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

4.0.1 Current delivery rates are below thresholds as set out in the Government's Housing Delivery Test guidelines.

4.0.2 In order to better understand the key factors influencing and driving the (lower than Standard Methodology) delivery rates the Council has gathered a range of evidence and views from key stakeholders involved in the planning and housing supply process. This evidence has been considered alongside direct knowledge of local sites, land and development activity. A number of key themes emerge from this and are considered below.

4.1 Planning process

4.1.1 Whilst there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, the perception of some stakeholders is that individual planning decisions do not always reflect this, and that this can adversely affect housing delivery in the District.

4.1.2 Furthermore, anecdotal evidence from applicants and agents suggests that the process of agreeing developer contributions to affordable housing and infrastructure through legal agreements (Section 106 agreements) can delay delivery.

4.2 Site availability

4.2.1 Table 2 shows that the majority of development in St Albans District is on previously developed land (PDL). Development on PDL comprises 87% of gross dwelling completions between 2001/02 and 2021/22. This equates to an average of 392 gross dwellings per year on PDL and 57 gross dwellings per year on greenfield land.

Table 2 – Authority's Monitoring Report 2022: SADC Historic Dwellings Completions (Gross) on Previously Developed Land (2001/02 – 2023/24)

Monitoring Year	Dwelling Completions (Gross)			Percent Previously Developed Land (%)
	Previously Developed Land	Greenfield	Total	
2001/02	371	21	392	95
2002/03	295	54	349	85
2003/04	267	25	292	91
2004/05	612	34	646	95
2005/06	368	11	379	97
2006/07	437	3	440	99
2007/08	317	22	339	94
2008/09	457	9	466	98
2009/10	327	3	330	99
2010/11	433	61	494	88
2011/12	413	55	468	88



2012/13	217	183	400	54
2013/14	342	162	504	68
2014/15	321	77	398	81
2015/16	408	49	457	89
2016/17	358	46	404	89
2017/18	456	37	493	92
2018/19	677	62	739	92
2019/20	395	78	473	84
2020/21	526	78	604	87
2021/22	239	133	372	64
2022/23	308	139	447	69
2023/24	428	62	490	87
Total (2001/02 to 2023/24)	8,972	1,404	10,376	~
Average per year (2001/02 to 2023/24)	390	61	451	86

N.B. Previously Developed Land / Greenfield status not known for 1 dwelling (gross) in 2018/19, 2 dwellings (gross) in 2019/20, 6 dwellings (gross) in 2021/22, 1 dwelling (gross) in 2022/23 and 2 dwellings (gross) in 2023/24. Total (gross dwelling completions) differ for following monitoring years: 2018/19, 739 dwellings; 2019/20, 475 dwellings; 2021/22, 378 dwellings; 2022/23, 448 dwellings; 2023/24, 492 dwellings. Sources: SADC and HCC.

- 4.2.2 Over 81% of the land in the District is Green Belt and this is a limiting factor in land available for development. Redeveloping brownfield sites provides its own challenges, such as clearance/ demolition and remediation costs which can make development less attractive to developers.
- 4.2.3 A windfall topic paper has been prepared to support the draft Local Plan⁹. The windfall allowance is forecasted to provide over 2,000 net dwellings. The Council has also identified and allocated brownfield sites, which will contribute circa 900 net dwellings.
- 4.2.4 The previous HDTAP reported a decrease in office floor space requirements by companies. The South West Hertfordshire Economic Study 2024¹⁰ concluded that there is a high level of availability in the locations in highest demand in St Albans and that no new office space is required over either the 2021-41 or 2041-50 period.
- 4.2.5 As reported in the previous HDTAP, the Government in 2020 introduced national measures in response to Covid-19. In a bid to stimulate the housing market, incentives were introduced such as the Stamp Duty Land Tax (STLT) exemption and extension of the Help to Buy scheme. These measures aimed to support delivery in the short term and ensure resilience in the property market. This may have led to developers delivering more housing as during this period there was a higher delivery rate than in previous years. This higher rate of delivery was

⁹ [https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Planning%20Policy/HOU/HOU%2001.02%20-%20SADC%20Housing%20Land%20Supply%2C%20Windfall%20%26%20Capacity%20Evidence%20Paper%20\(2024\).pdf](https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Planning%20Policy/HOU/HOU%2001.02%20-%20SADC%20Housing%20Land%20Supply%2C%20Windfall%20%26%20Capacity%20Evidence%20Paper%20(2024).pdf)

¹⁰ [https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Planning%20Policy/EMP/EMP%2001.01%20-%20South%20West%20Herts%20Economic%20Study%20\(2024\).pdf](https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Planning%20Policy/EMP/EMP%2001.01%20-%20South%20West%20Herts%20Economic%20Study%20(2024).pdf)



achieved despite the limited number of office to residential developments that added to supply in previous years 2018/19 and 2019/20. The Stamp Duty holiday ended in April 2021 and the Help to Buy Scheme (launched in 2013) ended in October 2022.

- 4.2.6 The Government announced in the Autumn 2024 budget of changes to the SDLT, which will take effect from 1 April 2025. This adjusts the SDLT thresholds and increases the cost for existing homeowners and first time buyers to buy new homes.
- 4.2.7 There are also negative pressures on the economy as a whole and is reflected by the latest ONS GDP estimates in 2024¹¹.
- 4.2.8 Given that house prices are high relative to income, that interest rates remain high in comparison to recent years, and government incentives which are aimed at developers and first time buyers have been withdrawn, there is likely to be further downward pressures on housing supply and delivery.
- 4.2.9 Much of the land in the District has high heritage and conservation value. There are over 800 listed buildings and 19 conservation areas. The District has a wealth of archaeology, ranging from internationally significant sites to those of more local interest. There are three types of protected archaeology within the St Albans District: Scheduled Monuments, Archaeological Sites for Local Preservation, and Archaeological Sites Subject to Recording Conditions. The District therefore has a distinctive landscape with significant landmarks and strategic views. The presence of these landscape and heritage characteristics places constraints on development opportunities for delivering new housing.

4.3 Review of key issues

- 4.3.1 The national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)¹² sets out recommendations that local authorities can review as part of the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan. The details for reviewing key issues and challenges are set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Areas suggested for review from the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and St Albans City and District Council (SADC) review

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Suggested areas for review	Analysis review of key issues – in St Albans City & District Council (SADC)
Barriers to early commencement after planning permission is granted and whether such sites are delivered within permitted timescales.	There is no evidence that there are any significant barriers to early commencement in the District.

¹¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/bulletins/gdpmonthlyestimateuk/november2024>

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-supply-and-delivery#housing-delivery-test-action-plans>



Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Suggested areas for review	Analysis review of key issues – in St Albans City & District Council (SADC)
Barriers to delivery on sites identified as part of the 5 year land supply (such as land banking, scheme viability, affordable housing requirements, pre-commencement conditions, lengthy section 106 negotiations, infrastructure and utilities provision, involvement of statutory consultees etc.).	There is no evidence that there are any significant barriers to delivering sites that have obtained planning permission.
Whether sufficient planning permissions are being granted and whether they are determined within statutory time limits.	<p>The step-change in the Government's housing requirements can only be delivered through the adoption of a new Local Plan that will almost certainly require the council to release Green Belt. Until that time sufficient permissions to deliver an average of 885 homes per annum are not being granted. Planning applications are being determined in time in the very large majority of instances.</p> <p>The planning performance tables below show that the Council is meeting most of MHCLG's performance targets (with the exception of determinations for householder applications). Where it is shown that the average determination period is higher than the statutory determination target, this is likely due to the council requesting additional details / amendments – often in order to give a positive recommendation. In these instances Extensions of Time (EOT's) have been agreed.</p>
Whether the mix of sites identified is proving effective in delivering at the anticipated rate.	There is no evidence that the mix of sites approved is negatively affecting delivery.
Whether proactive pre-planning application discussions are taking place to speed up determination periods.	The Council is undertaking proactive pre-planning application for many major development schemes.



Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Suggested areas for review	Analysis review of key issues – in St Albans City & District Council (SADC)
The level of ongoing engagement with key stakeholders (for example, landowners, developers, utility providers and statutory consultees), to identify more land and encourage an increased pace of delivery.	<p>The Council undertook a Regulation 19 technical consultation between October to November and subsequently submitted the Local Plan for Examination on 29 November 2024.</p> <p>On-going engagement has played a key part to ensure that key issues were discussed and using the Duty to Cooperate matrix to track and respond to issues. A series of Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) are being prepared.</p> <p>As mentioned in the previous HDTAP, as part of the Urban Capacity Study work the Council reached out to landowners and received positive responses for brownfield sites for future development. These sites were included in the Local Plan for Examination.</p>
Whether particular issues, such as infrastructure or transport, could be addressed at a strategic level - within the authority, but also with neighbouring and upper tier authorities where applicable.	Infrastructure and transport have been addressed at the strategic level in work with HCC and with neighbouring and nearby authorities.

4.4 Planning Performance

4.4.1 Tables 4 and 5 below shows the Council's performance and trend against Government targets.

Table 4 – Development Management performance against nationally set Housing and Communities Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) 2 yearly targets¹³

Colour coding for table: Green – performance above threshold.

	Bigger or Smaller is Better	Performance Against Current Assessment Period (so far)	Performance Against previous thresholds and assessment period	MHCLG's current thresholds and assessment period	
Speed of major development	Bigger	100.0%	82.1%	60%	

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-planning-performance-criteria-for-designation>



(% determined in time)		(Oct 2024 to Nov 2024)	(Oct 2023 to Sept 2024)	(Oct 2024 to Sept 2025)	
Quality of major development (% overturned at appeal)	Smaller	8.7% (Apr 2023 to Nov 2024)	2.9% (Apr 2022 to Mar 2024)	10% (Apr 2023 to Mar 2025)	
Speed of non-major development (% determined in time)	Bigger	87.8% (Oct 2024 to Nov 2024)	70.3% (Oct 2023 to Sept 2024)	70% (Oct 2024 to Sept 2025)	
Quality of non-major development (% overturned at appeal)	Smaller	1.2% (Apr 2023 to Nov 2024)	1.2% (Apr 2022 to Mar 2024)	10% (Apr 2023 to Mar 2025)	

* % of decisions overturned at appeal – appeal decisions are scrutinised by officers to inform future decision making.

Table 5 - Development Management performance against statutory determination periods¹⁴

Application Type	Target	Average % in time 24-25 (so far)	Average % in time 23-24	Average July – Sept 24-25	Average Apr – June 24-25	Average Jan – Mar 23-24	Average Oct - Dec 23-24
Major Applications	13 weeks (national) 60% in time	85.7%	84.6%	36.3 weeks	34.4 weeks	43.6 weeks	42.8 weeks
Minor Applications	8 weeks (national) 65% in time	76.3%	64.3%	20.8 weeks	24.4 weeks	28.9 weeks	27.5 weeks
Householder Applications	8 weeks (national) 80% in time	81.0%	63.9%	13.6 weeks	16 weeks	18.8 weeks	20.6 weeks

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/determining-a-planning-application#what-are-the-time-periods-for-determining-a-planning-application>



5. THE WAY FORWARD

5.2 Improved planning process and consistency in decision making

5.2.1 The Council recognises the importance of its planning service in enabling and supporting growth. It is committed to ensuring the delivery of an efficient and effective service. To successfully deliver the larger strategic sites, experienced Planning Officers have been recruited to process applications and address any issues or barriers raised by developers, landowners and residents. These will be especially needed once the new Local Plan is adopted.

5.2.2 The details for actions and responsibility for delivery are set out in Table 6 below:

Table 6 - Areas suggested for action from the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and St Albans City and District Council (SADC) actions and outcomes

Suggested Actions from the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)	St Albans City & District Action	Expected Outcomes	Key roles and responsibilities
Working with developers on the phasing of sites, including whether sites can be subdivided.	The draft Local Plan also sets out preliminary requirements to ensure the site can be developed as quickly as possible.	It is expected that this would lead to the housing delivery targets being met during the new Local Plan period.	Community & Place Delivery - Major Projects and Development Management Teams
Offering more pre-application discussions to ensure issues are addressed early.	Review and improve S106 procedures including ensuring a consistent approach to negotiations, decision making and streamlining of internal processes.	It is expected that this would lead to the housing delivery targets being met during the new Local Plan period.	Community & Place Delivery - Development Management Team and Hertfordshire County Council
Considering the use of Planning Performance Agreements.	Continue to use and refine Planning Performance Agreements as a way of managing and resourcing larger and/or more complex schemes. This should include where appropriate a specific focus on ensuring efficient use of and then discharge of conditions to support quicker commencement on site.	A reduction in the time taken for construction work to commence after permission has been granted.	Community & Place Delivery – Major Projects and Development Management Teams



Suggested Actions from the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)	St Albans City & District Action	Expected Outcomes	Key roles and responsibilities
Revising site allocation policies in the development plan, where they may act as a barrier to delivery, setting out new policies aimed at increasing delivery, or accelerating production of an emerging plan incorporating such policies.	Detailed site selection work was undertaken, and sites allocated to meet Local Housing Need (as of 2023) in full.	It is expected that this would lead to the housing delivery targets being met during the new Local Plan period. It is expected that densities would increase whilst keeping design quality.	Community & Place Delivery - (Planning Policy Team)
Engaging regularly with key stakeholders to obtain up-to-date information on build out of current sites, identify any barriers, and discuss how these can be addressed.	Continue to monitor build out rates through annual monitoring survey and publish results through the Authorities Monitoring Report. Engage with stakeholders on-site and make note of barriers to development (where development has stalled). To monitor on-site and review stalled development sites with the aim of supporting delivery. Engage and discuss delivery at least once a year with professional agents, including through regular Agents Forum.	Ensures barriers to delivery can be identified and discussions held to enable development to progress.	Community & Place Delivery - (Planning Policy Team)
Establishing whether certain applications can be prioritised, conditions simplified or their discharge phased on approved sites, and	Consider whether certain applications can be prioritised, conditions simplified or their discharge phased on approved sites, and	Ensures that the Community & Place Delivery - Development Management Team can support future housing delivery	Community & Place Delivery - Development Management Team



Suggested Actions from the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)	St Albans City & District Action	Expected Outcomes	Key roles and responsibilities
standardised conditions reviewed.	standardised conditions reviewed. Council has implemented new software (Plan X) to speed up application processes by reducing planning enquiries and improving self-service.	and wider growth through ongoing service improvements.	
Ensuring evidence on a particular site is informed by an understanding of viability.	Draft Local Plan recent evidence work on viability shows that viability is generally strong across the District.	Ensures that when the site is put forward it is robustly assessed for viability that can be addressed at an earlier stage of development.	Community & Place Delivery - (Planning Policy Team)
Considering compulsory purchase powers to unlock suitable housing sites.	No current evidence to suggest CPO will boost delivery. Potential use of CPO will be kept under ongoing review.		Community & Place Delivery - Development Management Team
Revisiting the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) / Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) to identify sites potentially suitable and available for housing development that could increase delivery rates, including public sector land and brownfield land.	Detailed site selection work was undertaken, and sites allocated to meet Local Housing Need (figures as of 2023) in full.	It is expected that this would lead to the housing delivery targets being met during the new Local Plan period.	Community & Place Delivery - (Planning Policy Team)



Additional Actions

5.3 Working with neighbouring authorities

5.3.1 The Council is committed to working with neighbouring and relevant nearby authorities. For example, it is working closely with Dacorum, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Futures and the landowners with regard developing a cross-boundary Garden Community at Hemel Garden Communities, which is allocated in the Local Plan for Examination

Actions

- Actively co-operate with neighbouring local authorities to identify and bring forward sites, including potential cross-boundary opportunities such as Hemel Garden Communities.
- Adopt the emerging new Local Plan.
- Immediately review the new Local Plan, once adopted, to consider the new standard method for Local Housing Need.
- Progress the SWH Joint Strategic Plan - to address the approach to the five LPA South West Herts area, including over the longer term 2036 to 2050.

5.4 Improve communications between agents and developers

5.4.1 The Planning Department holds a meeting every six months with planning agents to discuss topics of mutual interest and these will continue.

Actions

- Continue with the Agents Forum to help identify what is needed to reduce barriers to delivery.
- Ensure that pre application meetings are actively promoted and carry out a satisfaction survey to identify any process improvements required.

5.5 Next Steps

5.5.1 The actions set out above will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis. Monitoring information will be collected from a variety of sources. This includes the Authority Monitoring Report, the Corporate Plan, Quarterly Returns, appeals monitoring and housing trajectory along with any other relevant documents.

5.5.2 The Council will continue to maintain a strong housing-related evidence base and set future goals for housing delivery to support increased housing delivery.

