

Statement of Common Ground

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that strategic policy-making authorities should prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these.

This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) sets out the strategic geography and strategic matters as agreed between St Albans City and District Council (SADC) and our Duty to Co-operate partner organisations. More detailed matters specific to SADC and individual Duty to Co-operate partner organisations will be covered by individual Statements of Common Ground between SADC and the relevant organisation.

This SoCG is based on a template produced by the Planning Advisory Service and takes into account relevant sections of the NPPF, NPPG, Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Localism Act 2011.

1. List of parties involved	St Albans City and District Council (SADC) Hertsmere Borough Council Three Rivers District Council Dacorum Borough Council Watford Borough Council Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council North Hertfordshire District Council Central Bedfordshire Council Hertfordshire County Council Luton Borough Council Buckinghamshire Council Mayor of London Civil Aviation Authority Natural England Environment Agency Historic England Network Rail National Highways Transport for London Homes England NHS England Herts and West Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) Office of Rail Regulation Hertfordshire Futures Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership
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<p>2. Signatories</p>	<p>All of the organisations set out in this Statement of Common Ground have agreed to their inclusion as a relevant partner for the SADC Local Plan.</p>
<p>3. Strategic geography</p>	<p>SADC, along with Watford, Dacorum, Hertsmere and Three Rivers are adjoining authorities in Hertfordshire and together form the group of five South West Hertfordshire local authorities.</p> <p>SADC also borders Welwyn Hatfield and North Hertfordshire local authorities, and Central Bedfordshire. All neighbouring authorities bar Central Bedfordshire lie within Hertfordshire.</p> <p>The five South West Hertfordshire local authorities fall within the same Housing Market Area (HMA) and Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA). The local authorities within the HMA and FEMA have a history of positively cooperating on spatial planning and related matters and as part of the South West Hertfordshire Group (SWHG) of local authorities are working together on the production of a Joint Strategic Plan for South West Hertfordshire (JSP).</p> <p>St Albans District is very well connected by railway and road, and is close to international airports. The Midlands Main Line from London to Nottingham and Sheffield passes through the District, with the fast Thameslink service connecting directly to central London. There is also a low-service local rail route (branch line) known as the Abbey Line that connects St Albans and Watford. The rail options to London underpin the popularity of commuting out of the District. The District is also very well connected by key national road routes, with the M25 running east west through the south of the District, paralleled by the A414 dual carriageway, while the M1 runs down the west and the A1M is just outside the District to the east. Luton Airport is approximately five miles north of the District. As such the strategic geography for the impacts of planned growth and infrastructure requirements extend to all neighbouring local authorities and Luton Borough.</p> <p>Parts of the District lie within the Zone of Influence for the Chilterns Beechwood Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Chilterns Beechwood SAC zone of influence extends into Dacorum Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire.</p> <p>In view of the above, SADC consider that the area covered by this SoCG (principally the South West Hertfordshire local authorities and Hertfordshire; but also extending for some matters to include North Hertfordshire District, Welwyn Hatfield</p>

	<p>Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Luton Borough) is the most appropriate strategic geography of the area.</p>
<p>4. Strategic matters</p>	<p>Status of Local Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Albans – Local Plan adopted 1994 • Dacorum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategic Policies adopted 2013 ○ Site Allocations adopted 2017 ○ Local Plan adopted 2004 • Hertsmere <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategic Policies adopted 2013 ○ Site Allocations and Development Management Policies adopted 2016 • Three Rivers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategic Policies adopted 2011 ○ Site Allocations adopted 2014 ○ Development Management Policies adopted 2013 • Watford – Local Plan adopted October 2022 • North Hertfordshire – Local Plan adopted November 2022 • Welwyn Hatfield – Local Plan adopted October 2023 • Central Bedfordshire – Local Plan adopted July 2021 • Luton – Local Plan adopted 2017 • Hertfordshire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Waste Strategic Policies and Development Management Policies adopted 2012 ○ Waste site allocations adopted 2014 ○ Minerals Local Plan adopted 2007 • SW Herts Strategic Plan – Reg 18 consulted on autumn 2022 <p>Relationship between emerging Local Plans and the JSP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring consistency and alignment in the production of emerging Local Plans alongside the production of the JSP - noting that some Local Plans may not be adopted until after the adoption of the JSP and that plan periods may differ. • Strategic matter between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SW Herts local authorities ○ Hertfordshire County Council <p>Planning for housing needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach to accommodating unmet housing needs that may exist within the wider Housing Market Area. • Strategic matter between:

- SW Herts local authorities

Planning for employment needs

- Further joint work is required on employment needs across South West Hertfordshire. Also, any economic links to Luton Airport should be considered.
- Strategic matter between:
 - SW Herts local authorities
 - Luton Borough Council
 - Hertfordshire Futures

Approach to retail provision

- Approach to meeting retail related needs in the area and considering any impacts of proposals on retail provision in other areas.
- Strategic matter between:
 - SW Herts local authorities

Planning for gypsy & traveller needs

- Approach to accommodating unmet traveller needs.
- Strategic matter between:
 - SW Herts local authorities
 - Hertfordshire County Council
 - National Highways

Approach to Green Belt

- Approach to exceptional circumstances.
- Strategic matter between:
 - SW Herts local authorities
 - Welwyn Hatfield District Council
 - North Hertfordshire District Council
 - Historic England

Mitigating the impact of development on Chiltern Beechwoods SAC

- 12.6km Zone of Influence announced by Natural England where mitigation for new residential development will be required with either SANGs or SAMMs.
- Strategic matter between:
 - SADC
 - Dacorum Borough Council
 - Three Rivers District Council
 - Central Bedfordshire Council
 - Buckinghamshire Council

Primary and secondary school provision.

- Need for secondary school provision arising from new development.
- Strategic matter between:
 - SW Herts local authorities
 - Hertfordshire County Council

Planning for transport infrastructure

- Plans for a Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transit (HERT) which will run along the A414 corridor. It will also be necessary to consider the potential impacts of growth on traffic congestion on the highway network, including the M1 and M25.
- Strategic matter between:
 - SW Herts local authorities
 - Central Bedfordshire Council
 - Hertfordshire County Council
 - Luton Borough Council
 - National Highways
 - Homes England
 - Hertfordshire Futures

Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

- The Government-permitted Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at the former Radlett Aerodrome site on Green Belt land and any potential alternative locations.
- Strategic matter between:
 - SW Herts local authorities
 - Hertfordshire County Council
 - Network Rail
 - National Highways

Luton Airport and other Airport/airspace impacts

- Including cross-boundary impacts from flights – eg noise and air quality – and from access – eg road and rail network impacts.
- Strategic matter between:
 - SADC
 - Dacorum Borough Council
 - North Hertfordshire District Council
 - Central Bedfordshire Council
 - Luton Borough Council

Hemel Garden Communities

- Joint bid for Hemel Garden Communities approved in March 2019 for official garden town status and funding. Aims to deliver up to 11,000 homes and 10,000 jobs, subject to the Local Plan process. Approach to housing, employment and infrastructure delivery.

- Strategic matter between:
 - SADC
 - Dacorum Borough Council
 - Hertfordshire County Council
 - Homes England
 - Hertfordshire Futures

Strategic impacts of planned growth

- The impacts of the final Reg 19 proposed growth strategy will be assessed to determine any strategic and cross boundary issues.
- Strategic matter between:
 - SW Herts local authorities
 - Welwyn Hatfield District Council
 - North Hertfordshire District Council
 - Central Bedfordshire Council
 - Luton Borough Council

Strategic infrastructure requirements of planned growth

- The infrastructure requirements of the final Reg 19 proposed growth strategy will be assessed to determine any strategic and cross boundary issues.
- Strategic matter between:
 - SW Herts local authorities
 - Welwyn Hatfield District Council
 - North Hertfordshire District Council
 - Central Bedfordshire Council
 - Luton Borough Council

Other cross-boundary growth locations

- Subject to the outcome of the final Reg 19 site selection and plan-making processes, it may prove necessary to consider the approach to the planning and delivery of any other growth (outside of Hemel Garden Communities) located cross-boundary or adjacent to neighbouring local authorities.
- Strategic matter between:
 - SADC
 - Dacorum Borough Council
 - Hertsmere Borough Council
 - Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
 - Central Bedfordshire Council

Green and blue infrastructure

- Approach to the provision of green and blue infrastructure, and consideration of county-wide strategy.
- Strategic matter between:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SADC ○ Dacorum Borough Council ○ Watford Borough Council ○ Hertfordshire County Council ○ Environment Agency <p>Water and wastewater capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consideration of the supply of water and the wastewater capacity to accommodate the future needs of development. ● Strategic matter between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SADC ○ Dacorum Borough Council ○ Watford Borough Council ○ Environment Agency <p>Household waste recycling facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arrangements for future facilities linked to growth across the county and potentially to service future growth of Hemel Hempstead. ● Strategic matter between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SADC ○ Dacorum Borough Council ○ Hertsmere Borough Council ○ Hertfordshire County Council <p>Minerals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Existing and potential future mineral extraction – primarily sand and gravel. ● Strategic matter between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SADC ○ Dacorum Borough Council ○ Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council ○ Hertfordshire County Council
<p>5. Common ground</p>	<p>There is common ground between SADC and the Duty to Co-operate partners on the strategic geography and what comprises the strategic cross-boundary matters.</p> <p>Further bilateral statements of common ground will provide further detail on matters between SADC and individual partners, as appropriate.</p>
<p>6. Matters of disagreement</p>	<p>There are currently no matters of disagreement between SADC and the Duty to Co-operate partners on the strategic geography or what comprises the strategic cross-boundary matters.</p>

	Further bilateral statements of common ground will provide further detail on matters between SADC and individual partners, as appropriate.
7. Ongoing review and co-operation	SADC will continue to work with our partners on strategic and cross-boundary matters up to and beyond adoption of the new SADC Local Plan.

Duty to Cooperate potential strategic cross boundary issues matrix

Potential strategic cross-boundary issues	Description / summary of issues	Duty to Cooperate bodies																								
		Dacorum BC	Hertsmere BC	Three Rivers DC	Watford BC	Welwyn Hatfield BC	North Hertfordshire DC	Central Bedfordshire Council	Hertfordshire County Council	Luton BC	Buckinghamshire Council	Mayor of London	Civil Aviation Authority	Natural England	Environment Agency	Historic England	Network Rail	National Highways	Transport for London	Homes England	NHS England	Herts Valleys CCG	Office of Rail Regulation	Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership	Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership	
Relationship between emerging Local Plans and the JSP	Ensuring consistency and alignment in the production of emerging Local Plans alongside the production of the JSP - noting that some Local Plans may not be adopted until after the adoption of the JSP and that plan periods may differ	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓																	
Planning for housing needs	Approach to accommodating unmet housing needs that may exist within the wider Housing Market Area.	✓	✓	✓	✓																					
Planning for employment needs	Further joint work is required on employment needs across South West Hertfordshire. Also, any economic links to Luton Airport should be considered.	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓														✓		
Approach to retail provision	Approach to meeting retail related needs in the area, and considering any impacts of proposals on retail provision in other areas.	✓	✓	✓	✓																					
Planning for gypsy & traveller needs	Approach to accommodating unmet traveller needs	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓									✓								
Approach to Green Belt	Approach to exceptional circumstances.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓									✓										
Mitigating the impact of development on Chiltern Beechwoods SAC	12.6km zone of influence announced by Natural England where mitigation for new residential development will be required with either SANGs or SAMMs.	✓		✓				✓				✓														
Primary and secondary school provision	Need for secondary school provision arising from new development. The 2018/2019 IDP identified a need for new secondary and primary school(s).	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓																	
Planning for transport infrastructure	Plans for a Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transit (HERT) which will run between Hemel Hempstead and West Watford along the A414 corridor. It will also be necessary to consider the potential impacts of growth on traffic congestion	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓								✓		✓				✓		

Potential strategic cross-boundary issues	Description / summary of issues	Duty to Cooperate bodies																							
		Dacorum BC	Hertsmere BC	Three Rivers DC	Watford BC	Welwyn Hatfield BC	North Hertfordshire DC	Central Bedfordshire Council	Hertfordshire County Council	Luton BC	Buckinghamshire Council	Mayor of London	Civil Aviation Authority	Natural England	Environment Agency	Historic England	Network Rail	National Highways	Transport for London	Homes England	NHS England	Herts Valleys CCG	Office of Rail Regulation	Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership	Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership
	potentially to service future growth of Hemel Hempstead																								
Minerals	Existing and potential future mineral extraction – primarily sand and gravel	✓				✓			✓																
Climate change	Potential issues to be identified through the production of the draft Local Plan	Potential associated DtC bodies to be determined through the production of the draft Local Plan																							
Infrastructure provision																									
Affordable housing																									