

Duty to Cooperate

Statement of Common Ground – St Albans District Council with National Highways

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 National Highways (NH).

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.

Context

SADC and NH have worked collaboratively on a number of matters that are relevant. Engagement has included discussions relating to Hemel Garden Communities Stakeholder Steering Group and Transport Steering Group which NH have attended since 2019; the SADC Local Plan Duty to Cooperate workshop attended by NH colleagues in September 2022; and Comet Transport modelling discussions that are ongoing.

Introduction

This statement is provided without prejudice to other matters of detail that parties may wish to raise during the Examination.

Duty To Cooperate

SADC has continuously engaged with National Highways through the evolution of the draft Local Plan 2041. The parties agree that SADC has discharged its Duty to Cooperate for the Local Plan 2041.

1. List of parties involved	St Albans City and District Council (SADC) National Highways (NH)
2. Signatories	NH Janice Burgess Spatial Planner

	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>12 February 2025</p> <p>SADC – Chris Briggs – Spatial Planning Manager</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>12 February 2025</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 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 • 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 Joint Strategic Plan – Reg 18 consulted on autumn 2022 <p>Planning for gypsy & traveller needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach to accommodating unmet traveller needs. • Strategic matter between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SW Herts local authorities ○ Hertfordshire County Council ○ National Highways <p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>SADC and NH both support the strategic approach in SADC’s Regulation 19 draft Local Plan to Gypsy and Traveller provision to meeting needs within SADC’s area. SADC and NH had useful officer discussions about existing sites that may impact on the NH network on 1 November 2024, which are very limited; and SADC commit to ongoing discussion about Gypsy and Traveller sites and any potential impacts with NH, which again are likely to be very limited.</p> <p>Planning for transport infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SW Herts local authorities ○ Central Bedfordshire Council

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hertfordshire County Council ○ Luton Borough Council ○ National Highways ○ Homes England ○ Hertfordshire Futures <p><u>Conclusion</u> SADC and NH both support the approach in SADC’s Regulation 19 draft Local Plan to planning for transport infrastructure. This includes provision within and beyond Hemel Garden Communities.</p> <p>This support from NH is contingent upon SADC continuing with joint transport workstreams up to and beyond adoption of the draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Strategic Rail Freight Interchange</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SW Herts local authorities ○ Hertfordshire County Council ○ Network Rail ○ National Highways <p><u>Conclusion</u> SADC and NH both support the approach in SADC’s Regulation 19 draft Local Plan to the allocation of the Government-permitted Strategic Rail Freight Interchange.</p>
<p>5. Common ground</p>	<p>There is common ground between SADC and NH on the strategic geography and what comprises the strategic cross-boundary matters.</p> <p>Further details of Common Ground are set out under section 4 above.</p>
<p>6. Matters of disagreement</p>	<p>There are currently no matters of disagreement between SADC and NH on the strategic geography or what comprises the strategic cross-boundary matters.</p>
<p>7. Ongoing review and co-operation</p>	<p>SADC will continue to work with NH on strategic and cross-boundary matters up to and beyond adoption of the new SADC Local Plan. The SOCG will be reviewed on a regular basis up to the time the SADC Local Plan is adopted and will continue cooperation beyond that time.</p>

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	Joint work has been undertaken on employment needs across South West Hertfordshire.	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓													✓		
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 SANGs and 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 on the highway network, including the M1 and M25.	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓							✓		✓				✓		

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Minerals	Existing and potential future mineral extraction – primarily sand and gravel	✓				✓			✓									✓							
Chilterns National Landscape	Consideration of the Chilterns National Landscape in its current boundary and from its potential extension, including into St Albans City & District.	✓											✓												
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																									