



Duty to Cooperate meeting between St Albans DC and Central Bedfordshire C

VENUE: Via MS Teams

DATE: 28 October 2024 @ 10.00

Meeting Notes

1. Introductions

SADC – Christine Traill, Chris Briggs

CBC – Caroline Danby, Lynsey Hillman-Gamble, Dominique Brockbank, Jodie Irwin

2. Update on St Albans Local Plan

a. Timetable for new Local Plan

CB – outlined LP Regulation 19 Publication now live from 26 Sep until 8 Nov; aiming to Submit circa 29 November or 2 December

b. SADC current Local Plan Reg 19 Publication

CB – LP content largely similar to Regulation 18 Consultation version in 2023 – same Broad Locations but capacities for some updated; policies largely similar but updated

LHG – query about why SANG only required for some sites but not all – CB explained that only a relatively small proportion of St Albans District on the west side falls within the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC 12.6km Zone of Influence and only those sites (and windfall in that area) are affected.

LHG – CBC in Reg 19 response will raise some matters of detail – will be in the comments

JI – CBC has undertaken lots of transport work relating to the potential Luton Airport expansion

JI – SADC COMET report really helpful – including site related model runs

JI – most of the journey time routes stop short of the CBC boundary – looks like the work has been done – eg A1081 and Lower Luton road – CBC would like to see the extracts – would allow CBC to comment in more detail

JI – CBC support SADC's LP Reg 19 sustainable transport focus – but CBC may want some wording in the SoCG – there are some junction delays and the journey and volume plots where it would be helpful to

have further detail – hopefully most of the relevant data is already available from the work undertaken on COMET by HCC/WSP
JI – will put a description together to give to CB to ask HCC/WSP to respond to

LHG – Reg 19 closing date 8 November – CB – SADC happy to allow follow-up comments on the Highways side if needs be – would be preferable to have the overall CBC Reg 19 comments on time by 8 November and (if needed due to time for HCC/WSP to respond and CBC time to consider the response) a caveat about more transport work to come – CD / LHG – agreed

LHG – generally supportive of SADC LP

c. NPPF paragraph 146 - *Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries¹*

CB – as in previous DtC discussions, outlined SADC have limited non-Green Belt capacity so the draft LP allocates circa 10,000 houses and other uses in the Green Belt – can CBC assist SADC so SADC will not need to use Green Belt?

LHG – same as previously – CBC early stages in new LP process; no current prospect of helping SADC meet needs

d. Statement of Common Ground inc. updated DtC Matrix

JI – Luton Airport – query what is the detail that sits behind the wording in the SoCG – NB: the recent DCO application is still live

JI/CD – Luton Airport is generally just dealt with in regard to planning applications rather than Local Plans for both SADC and CBC – CB – agree – SADC will tweak the SoCG to reflect this position, setting out something like “there are no direct implications currently for SADC’s LP and consultation responses to planning applications will be treated on their merits”

CD – CBC will have wording in the Reg 19 response to protect its position until the Comet Transport work from HCC / WSP has been received and understood

CB – there will be a slightly updated version of the SoCG sent out next Tuesday 5 November as some tweaks have been requested from Natural England and Watford in DtC meetings – they don’t directly affect CBC – SADC will also pick up the tweak in relation to Luton Airport as well

CB/LHG/CD – SoCG hopefully to be agreed ahead of Submission on 29 November

3. Update on Central Bedfordshire Local Plan

a. Timetable for new Local Plan

LHG – still at early stages – not got an agreed Plan period yet – will be taken through CBC Committees in early 2025

LHG – Reg 18 Spring 2026, Submission by end of 2027, early 2028

b. CBC draft Local Plan

LHG – started some technical work – SA, GB Review, Landscape work, Gypsy & Traveller work etc.

LHG – Grid capacity study just gone out to tender

LHG – had an 8 week soft public consultation launch – good response rate

LHG – focus on youth and trying to increase response rates from young people

LHG – focus on access to Green Space

LHG – “call for sites” starting soon – Brownfield sites initially

LHG – got some Proptech funding – looking at access to infrastructure

4. A.O.B and Date of Next Meeting

All – agreed no need to arrange another meeting currently. A short discussion may be needed depending on what the Comet data shows.

¹ NPPF paragraph 146 - Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This will be assessed through the examination of its strategic policies, which will take into account the preceding paragraph, and whether the strategy... has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.