



## Duty to Cooperate meeting between St Albans DC and Dacorum BC

**VENUE: Via MS Teams**

**DATE: 5 February 2021 @ 10.00**

### Meeting Notes

#### 1. Introductions

##### Attendance

##### St Albans District Council

Cllr Day

Chris Briggs, Spatial Planning  
Manager (CB)

Charlotte Morphet, Team Leader  
Spatial Planning and Design (CM)

##### Dacorum Borough Council

Cllr Sutton

James Doe, Assistant director, planning  
development infrastructure and  
regeneration (JD)

Alex Robinson – Strategic Planning  
Manager (AR)

- Cllr Day confirmed that SADC will produce a draft note of meeting.
- CM noted started in September 2020.

#### 2. Update on St Albans Local Plan

- CB provided an update that SADC withdrew its Local Plan on 23 November 2020 following issues raised at examination in relation to the Duty to Cooperate.
- A new Local Development Scheme has been prepared and taken to Planning Policy Committee and the intention is to consultant on a Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan in January 2022.
- Aim is to adopt a new Local Plan before the end of 2023.
- Starting with 'blank sheet of paper' including new Sustainability Appraisal and Green Belt Review. Noted that some other evidence base (e.g. joint South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Need Assessment) can be used for new Local Plan. Consultation on Statement of Community Involvement, Sustainability Appraisal Scoping and Call for Sites went live on 25 January 2021.
- Draft Vision, Strategic Priorities and Objectives paper has been taken to Planning Policy Committee. Emphasis for new Local Plan is on Climate Crisis and sustainability, recognising the Council has called a Climate Emergency
- JD asked about the Green Belt Review in relation to Leverstock Green and East Hemel and asked that SADC liaise with DBC on the Green Belt Review.

### 3. Update on Dacorum Local Plan

- JD updated on Local Plan. Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan is currently out for consultation. The consultation has been extended due to the pandemic and now closes on 28 Feb at 23:59.
- AR stated it is a detailed draft Local Plan supported by a suite of Topic Papers.
- Currently working on detail studies with Highways England and Hertfordshire County Council, Topic papers on emerging work on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, Infrastructure Delivery Plan etc.
- CB updated on SADC draft response on Local Plan. Generally supportive and queries on specific details. CB asked about land north of Tring beyond the AONB and GB and stressed (as per previous SADC correspondence) SADC's view that this land be given full positive consideration as it is the only land in South West Herts beyond the GB/AONB. AR stated that opportunities for standalone new settlements have been considered as one of the Plan's 'reasonable alternative's but been assessed as not deliverable. This is detailed in the Development Strategy Development Topic Paper and Supporting SEA/SA.

### 4. Potential Strategic Cross Boundary Issues, inc.

#### a) Duty to Cooperate – General inc. SW Herts Area

- Cllrs and officers all supportive of the South West Hertfordshire approach to Duty to Cooperate, evidence base and the Joint Strategic Plan. Agreed approach to collective SWH Statement of Common Ground.
- Cllrs and officers all supportive of the good joint cross-boundary work on Hemel Garden Communities (HGC).
- CB – following SADC Inspectors' approach, SADC asking DBC if you have any capacity to meet SADC's housing need or appropriate land for an SRFI. SADC will send a follow-up letter asking formally in due course. JD – DBC no such capacity and will respond as expected to a future letter in due course.

#### b) Housing

- CB stated that SADC approach is seeking to meet circa 900 pa housing need set out in the standard methodology within the District - subject to technical work.
- Green Belt Review expected in summer 2021.
- AR updated that the standard method figure continues to stay at circa 1,000 pa and had not been reduced to circa 900 pa following the Government consultation. DBC considering next steps and intending to address circa 1,000 figure.

#### c) Gypsy and Traveller

- CB updated on the Gypsy and Travellers Study. It has been completed relatively recently and states there is a need for circa 70 pitches across the Plan period. SADC is seeking to meet that need in full in the District - subject to technical work.
- AR stated that DBC have a reasonably high need but that many don't meet the Government's updated planning definition of Gypsy and Travellers.

- Cllr Sutton / JD stated Gypsy and Travellers are cross boundary issue and updated that on-going discussions are taking place with HCC. Cllr Day / CB agreed to wider discussions about Gypsy and Traveller provision.
- JD stated that there is a separate PPA process for East Hemel and this needs to make sure fully address optimal site location for the Gypsy and Travellers within the site – which SADC agreed.

#### d) Employment

- CB stated that SADC would seek to meet its employment need in full - subject to technical work and may have capacity to support other South West Hertfordshire districts in meeting their need. SADC acknowledged the strong relationship between the potential Employment area at East Hemel in St Albans and the existing Maylands site in DBC.
- An update was provided on the permitted Strategic Rail Freight interchange. The direction of travel is to follow advice from Inspectors in the recent examination to allocate the site - subject to technical work. Work ongoing to understand the reasonable allocation between meeting national and local employment need.
- JD stated DBC cannot meet employment need within Borough and need support from SADC on land to the East of Maylands.
- JD - Additionally mentioned the importance of EnviroTech, off site manufacturing, R&D and office space/ flexible working space within East Hemel area. DBC would like off site manufacturing to be mentioned as a policy ambition for the potential employment area in St Albans at East Hemel.
- JD – Herts IQ - just about to publish demand study for HIQ – points towards lots of flexible space needs – CB – SADC also very supportive of that

#### e) Transport

- Discussion on HCC COMET Model and updates to the GTPs. Brief discussion around the A414 and MRT
- Cllr Sutton emphasised the importance of green transport options to reach employment opportunities.
- AR stated that transport modelling was becoming critical for Local Plan and working with HCC and Highways England on bespoke modelling work.
- AR identified that DBC were looking to prepare a Paramics transport model for Hemel and invited SADC to participate in this work.

#### f) Education

- CB stated that SADC intends to meet own need within the District – subject to technical work.
- AR highlighted HCC's view that Secondary school provision is needed to support the growth of Hemel and the emerging option may be within SADC. There are equally pressures for primary school provision in south Hemel (Apsley) with no identified solution as yet. CB - SADC open-minded that there may be a role for SADC to assist DBC on Hemel secondary school needs – but HCC work so far doesn't evidence that a site within SADC is needed. All agreed ongoing liaison and need to see further evidence from HCC on the issue

g) Health

- CB stated seeking to meet GP need within SADC; SADC generally supportive of approach to the improvements proposed for the 3 hospitals at Watford, St Albans and Hemel
- JD updated on hospital provision and stated that West Herts Hospital Trust and CCG have gone through strategic outline case. Autumn 2021 will submit the outline business case to Department of Health and NHS England. This includes remodelling current hospital in Hemel which is in both existing and emerging Local Plan.

h) Green Infrastructure

- Discussion around the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation in particular the potential risks posed for DBC Local Plan and Hemel Garden Communities. The main issues currently relate to recreation rather than air quality. DBC have been working with Natural England on the issue and detailed Habitats Regulations Assessment underway. Conditions survey and detailed visitor surveys will be undertaken and DBC will further consider what mitigation is required in the Plan, including Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space.
- Additionally agreed to consider how best to link up green open space between the two authorities.

i) Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SFRI)

- CB - An update was provided on Strategic Rail Freight interchange. The direction of travel is to follow advice from Inspectors in recent examination to allocate the site - subject to technical work. Recognise that it is a complex issue and seeking as much certainty from landowners/developers as possible.

j) Potential sites near LPA boundaries – HGC – inc. Infrastructure;

Housing; Education; Employment; Gypsy & Traveller provision; HWRC; Affordable Housing Allocations; SANGs

- Discussion around Hemel Garden Communities. HGC Board and officer working considered by all to be functioning well and joint work continues to be supported

k) Potential unmet needs from Watford BC

- Both parties agreed currently no capacity to meet any potential Watford Borough Council's unmet housing need
- CB stated SADC may be able to assist WBC on the employment need, subject to further work, but that this needs to be decided taking an overall South West Hertfordshire basis into account.

**5. Arrangements for future DTC working and SOCG**

- Agreed that South West Hertfordshire joint approach will be followed.

**6. A.O.B and Date of Next Meeting**

- Summer 2021