

Public Document Pack

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of East Hertfordshire District Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Wallfields, Hertford on Wednesday 10th June, 2026 at 7.00 pm, for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the Agenda below, and you are hereby summoned to attend.

Date this 2 day of June 2026

Jonathan Geall
Director for Communities
and Monitoring Officer

This meeting will be live streamed on the Council's Youtube page:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/EastHertsDistrict>

AGENDA

1. Chair's Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Chair.

2. Apologies for Absence

To receive any Members' apologies for absence.

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Members' declarations of interest.

4. Executive Report - 2 June 2026 (Pages 5 - 8)

To receive a report from the Leader of the Council and to consider recommendations on the matters below:

(A) Local Plan Timetable and Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation (Pages 9 - 25)

(B) Local Plan Scoping Consultation (Pages 26 - 48)

(C) Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report (Pages 49 - 180)

5. Proposal from Millstream Property Investments Ltd to sell the company to enable disposal of all its properties (Pages 181 - 195)
6. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Part II business has been notified for this meeting. The Chairman may move:- That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of item 7 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

A Member, present at a meeting of the Authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Authority, with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in any matter to be considered or being considered at a meeting:

- must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;
- must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;
- must disclose the interest to the meeting, whether registered or not, subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011;
- if the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;
- must leave the room while any discussion or voting takes place.

Public Attendance

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The Council operates a paperless policy in respect of agendas at committee meetings and the Council will no longer be providing spare copies of Agendas for the Public at Committee Meetings. The mod.gov app is available to download for free from app stores for electronic devices. You can use the mod.gov app to access, annotate and keep all committee paperwork on your mobile device.

Visit [Political Structure, Scrutiny and Constitution | East Herts District Council](#) for details.

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Agenda Item 4

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date Of Meeting: Wednesday, 10 June 2026

Report By: Councillor Ben Crystall, Leader of the Council

Report Title: Executive Report – 2 June 2026

Ward(S) Affected: All

Summary

- This report details the recommendations to Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 2 June 2026.

1.0 Item considered and recommended to Council

1.1 The Executive met on 2 June 2026. At this meeting the Executive considered and supported recommendations for Council on the following items:

1.1.1 Local Plan Timetable and Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation

1.1.2 Local Plan Scoping Consultation

1.1.3 Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report

1.2 This report sets out the recommendations for the above items, and a Council decision is required by 30 June 2026.

2.0 Local Plan Timetable and Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation

2.1 East Herts Council has a statutory duty to produce the East Herts Local Plan. The government published details of a new plan making system in November 2025. Regulations¹ to implement the new system came into force on the 25 March 2026.

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026

- 2.2 The Executive considered the report which sought to initiate the first two stages of the new plan-making system, namely the publication of the East Herts Local Plan Timetable and Notice of Intention to Commence the East Herts Local Plan.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- A) That the East Herts Local Plan Timetable, attached at Appendix A, be approved for publication; and**
- B) The Notice of Intention to Commence the East Herts Local Plan, attached at Appendix B, be published on the Council's website.**

3.0 Local Plan Scoping Consultation

- 3.1 The Executive considered the report which sought to initiate will initiate the third stage of the new plan-making system, the scoping consultation. The scoping consultation follows the first two stages – publishing a local plan timetable and publishing a notice of intention to commence local plan preparation.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- A) Subject to the publication of the Notice to Commence Local Plan Preparation and the Local Plan Timetable, the East Herts Local Plan – Scoping Consultation document (Appendix A) is made available to relevant stakeholders and the wider community to begin a discussion about the district's new Local Plan, and to seek comments in accord with the Regulations;**
- B) Engagement on the Scoping Consultation document should commence, taking place between June 11 and July 10 2026, through a range of different forums, including online on the Council's website; and**
- C) Any minor amendments required to the content of the Scoping Consultation document prior to the consultation period be delegated to the Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth;**
- D) A further report detailing any feedback is prepared for**

Executive following engagement, with the intention of informing the Local Plan content and evidence stages of the plan-making process.

4.0 Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report

4.1 East Herts has a duty to produce the East Herts Local Plan. In preparing a local plan the local authority is required by the Town and Country Planning Regulations (Local Planning) (England) 2026 and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended) to prepare a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SEA will identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the local plan and any potential reasonable alternatives to the proposed plan. Executive considered the content of the proposed SA/SEA Scoping document.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- A) That subject to the publication of the ‘Notice to Commence Local Plan Preparation and the Local Plan Timetable’, the content of the SA/SEA Scoping document (Appendix A) is approved;**
- B) That the SA/SEA Scoping document be formally consulted upon with the Environment Agency (EA), Historic England (HE) and Natural England (NE) in accordance with statutory requirements;**
- C) That subject to the approval of the ‘Local Plan Scoping Consultation’, the SA/SEA Scoping document will be made available alongside the Local Plan Scoping Consultation, and will include a period of activity between 11 June 2026 and 10 July 2026 through a range of different forums, including online on the Council’s website; and**
- D) Any minor amendments required to the content of the SA/SEA Scoping document prior to the consultation period be delegated to the Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.**

5.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

5.1 Executive – 2 June 2026

District Planning Executive Panel - 19 May 2026

Contact Member

Councillor Ben Crystall – Leader of the Council

Ben.Crystall@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

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Information Governance, Tel: 01992 531441.

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Agenda Item 4a

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date of meeting: Wednesday, 10 June 2026

Report by: Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward – Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Report title: Local Plan Timetable and Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Summary

- East Herts Council has a statutory duty to produce the East Herts Local Plan. The government published details of a new plan-making system in November 2025. Regulations¹ to implement the new system came into force on the 25 March 2026.
- This report initiates the first two stages of the new plan-making system, namely the publication of the East Herts Local Plan Timetable and Notice of Intention to Commence the East Herts Local Plan.
- This report was considered at the District Planning Executive Panel on [19 May 2026](#) and Executive on [2 June 2026](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:

- A) That the East Herts Local Plan Timetable, attached at Appendix A, be approved for publication; and**
- B) That the Notice of Intention to Commence the East Herts Local Plan, attached at Appendix B, be published on the Council's website.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to publish the East Herts Local Plan Timetable. This sets out the key stages and milestones for preparing the new East Herts Local Plan. Publication of the timetable will in turn enable the Council to publish the statutory Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation, as required under the new plan-making system.
- 1.2 The report also provides the context for, and links directly to, the accompanying report on the 'Local Plan Scoping Consultation'. That report sets out the first stage of formal engagement under the new plan-making system and explains how the Council will gather early views on the scope, issues and priorities that the new Local Plan should address.
- 1.3 The Scoping Consultation will invite stakeholders, statutory bodies, community groups and residents to comment on the key themes the Local Plan should cover, the challenges the district faces, and the opportunities for shaping its long-term growth strategy.
- 1.4 Together, the two reports will ensure that Members have a clear understanding of both the statutory requirement to publish the Timetable and Notice and the immediate next step in the plan-making process, which is to undertake focused, early-stage consultation to inform the development of the new Local Plan.
- 1.5 Both reports will be considered by the District Planning Executive Panel (DPEP) for scrutiny and comment prior to being referred to the Executive for consideration and recommendation. The Executive will then determine whether to recommend the reports to full Council for approval, in accordance with the Council's constitution and decision-making framework.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Government has introduced a new plan-making system designed to deliver faster, clearer and more accessible Local Plans across England. The reforms were announced through a Written Ministerial Statement in November 2025. The new system introduces a 30-month statutory timetable for preparing and adopting a Local Plan, replacing the longer, less structured timelines under the previous arrangements.

- 2.2 Before the formal 30-month period begins, local planning authorities are required to complete a prescribed ‘getting ready’ period of at least four months. During this stage, authorities must publish a Local Plan timetable, establish governance and project management arrangements, begin early engagement, set out the anticipated content of the plan, and commence work on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). These preparatory tasks must be demonstrated through the Gateway 1 self-assessment before the formal plan-making process can start.
- 2.3 A key requirement of the new system is that authorities must publish a Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation. This Notice acts as the formal signal that the plan-making process is starting and must be issued before or at the same time as the Scoping Consultation, the first formal stage of public engagement. Its purpose is to ensure communities and stakeholders understand when the Local Plan process is beginning and how they can participate. The Notice must also be published in a clearly accessible format on the Council’s website.
- 2.4 Collectively, these changes are intended to simplify and standardise plan-making while improving transparency, engagement, and the speed at which Local Plans are produced. The publication of the Local Plan timetable and Notice, along with the Scoping Consultation, mark the first formal steps for East Herts in implementing this new national plan-making framework.

Local Government Reorganisation

- 2.5 Members should note that local government reorganisation in Hertfordshire remains subject to a decision by the Government. While no decisions have yet been made, the Government has been clear that councils should continue to progress local plans to support plan-led decision-making. Advancing the East Herts Local Plan will maintain an up-to-date and robust planning framework, provide clarity and certainty for local communities on future growth and development, and ensure that key evidence, policies and local priorities are in place to inform and support any future changes to governance or plan-making arrangements.

3.0 Reason(s)

Local Plan Timetable

- 3.1 The publication of the East Herts Local Plan timetable is a requirement of the new plan-making system and must occur before or on the same day as the publication of the Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation.
- 3.2 The timetable provides a clear and publicly accessible schedule of the stages involved in preparing the new Local Plan, including early engagement, the Gateway assessments, formal consultation stages, examination, and adoption. It sets out the key milestones the Council must achieve within the statutory 30-month plan-making period, offering transparency for communities, stakeholders, developers and statutory bodies regarding when and how they can participate in plan-making.
- 3.3 The timetable also forms one of the prescribed elements of the 'getting ready' phase that must be demonstrated before the Council can pass through Gateway 1. It underpins project management and governance arrangements by setting expectations for resource planning, evidence commissioning and consultation activity.
- 3.4 Publication of the timetable ensures the Council complies with the requirements of the new plan-making system and establishes a clear structure for the programme of work that will follow. The Council will be required to maintain this timetable and update as appropriate in accordance with the regulations.
- 3.5 The East Herts Local Plan Timetable is attached at **Appendix A** and provides a detailed schedule of the key stages, milestones and statutory processes involved in preparing the new Local Plan.

Timescales

- 3.6 It should be noted that the dates included in the timetable are indicative and may be affected by a range of factors outside the Council's control. For example, it is not possible at the outset to predict either the volume or the nature of representations received during consultation stages. In addition, certain elements of the process, such as the availability of external examiners, are not within the Council's control and may affect progress against the timetable.

- 3.7 As set out above Hertfordshire is also undergoing local government reorganisation during the preparation of the East Herts Local Plan. This may affect the programme for plan preparation, as changes to governance arrangements, decision-making structures and electoral cycles could influence the timing of key decisions and stages in the process. As a result, some elements of the timetable may need to be reviewed as local government reorganisation progresses.

Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation

- 3.8 The Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation must include the following elements:

1. *A clear statement that the Council is commencing preparation of a new Local Plan.* The notice must explicitly state that the Council is preparing a new Local Plan and that this marks the start of the formal plan-making process.
2. *The area to which the Local Plan will apply.* The notice must identify the administrative area covered by the Local Plan. This ensures that communities and stakeholders understand the geographic scope of the plan.
3. *The expected date for starting the 30-month plan preparation period (Gateway 1).* The notice should set out when the Council expects to pass through Gateway 1, as this marks the beginning of the statutory 30-month preparation period. The notice must be given at least four months before this point.
4. *Publication of the Local Plan timetable.* The Local Plan timetable must be published before or on the same day the Notice is issued and should therefore be referenced or linked within the Notice.
5. *How stakeholders can access information.* The Notice must be published on the Council's website as text on a webpage (not solely as a PDF). This is required to ensure accessibility and transparency for all users.

6. *Contact information for further enquiries.* The Notice should include contact details through which stakeholders can request further information or clarification about the Local Plan.

3.9 The Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation is attached at **Appendix B**. This provides the wording proposed for publication on the Council's website, including the required information on the Local Plan area, the expected timing of Gateway 1, and the link to the East Herts Local Plan timetable.

4.0 Options

4.1 *Option 1: Do Not Publish the Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation.* Not publishing the Notice would place the Council in breach of national requirements that the Notice must be issued before the 30-month plan-making process can begin, preventing the Scoping Consultation from taking place and blocking progress through Gateway 1. This would cause significant delays to starting the new Local Plan, and undermine transparency and stakeholder confidence.

4.2 *Option 2: Publish the Notice but Not the Local Plan Timetable.* Publishing the Notice without the Local Plan timetable would still result in non-compliance, as the timetable must be published at the same time, and would leave the Council unable to demonstrate completion of the required preparatory work for Gateway 1. Stakeholders would lack clarity on key milestones, the effectiveness of engagement would be reduced, and internal project management risks would increase due to uncertainty in the programme.

4.3 *Option 3: Publish Neither the Notice nor the Timetable.* Failure to publish both documents would prevent the Council from initiating the Local Plan process under the new legal plan-making framework, leaving it unable to commence the Scoping Consultation or progress toward Gateway 1. This would create a high risk of non-compliance with statutory plan-making duties, weaken the policy position for development management, expose the district to speculative development, and cause reputational harm with stakeholders and government bodies.

4.4 *Option 4: Publish both the Notice and the Local Plan Timetable.* Publishing both the Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation and the Local Plan Timetable would ensure full compliance with the statutory and national plan-making requirements and enable the Council to formally initiate the 30-month Local Plan preparation period. This option would allow the Scoping Consultation to proceed. Publication of both documents would provide transparency and clarity for stakeholders, set out a clear programme and key milestones, support effective engagement, and strengthen internal project management and governance. This option represents the most robust and appropriate approach to commencing preparation of the new Local Plan.

5.0 Risks

5.1 Local planning authorities must give notice before starting the 30-month plan preparation process, and this notice must be published on the Council's website as required under national guidance. Failure to do so would put the Council in breach of the legal duty to give notice.

5.2 The 30-month statutory period begins when the Council passes Gateway 1. Authorities must give notice at least four months' notice before passing Gateway 1. If notice is not given, the Gateway 1 self-assessment cannot be completed, delaying the formal start of plan preparation.

5.3 The purpose of publishing the notice is to alert communities, statutory bodies, and stakeholders to the start of plan-making and give them advance warning of when and how they can participate. Without the notice, stakeholders would not be aware of the process or upcoming consultations, undermining inclusive and effective engagement.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 The Local Plan Timetable and Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation are prescribed in guidance/regulations and are therefore not subject to public consultation. However, preparation of the Local Plan itself will include three rounds of public consultation.

- 6.2 Following publication of the Notice, the Council will undertake a Scoping Consultation, which is the first formal stage of engagement under the new plan-making system. National guidance specifies that the Notice must be issued before or at the same time as this consultation to ensure that stakeholders are aware that plan-making has formally begun.
- 6.3 The Scoping Consultation is fully detailed in the accompanying 'Local Plan Scoping Consultation Report', which sets out the proposed scope, objectives and approach to early engagement. This consultation forms a key part of the required 'getting ready' phase prior to Gateway 1, during which authorities must begin early engagement and initial assessment work.

Community Safety

Preparation of a new Local Plan can positively influence community safety by shaping policies on design quality, public realm, lighting, and layout of developments to discourage crime and anti-social behaviour. Early plan-making helps ensure community safety considerations are embedded from the outset.

Data Protection

The Notice does not involve processing of personal data beyond standard consultation contact details managed under existing council protocols. No new data protection risks arise from commencing Local Plan preparation.

Equalities

Local Plans must advance equality of opportunity in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Commencing preparation enables the Council to develop policies that for example address accessibility, inclusive design, Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs, and equitable access to housing, facilities, and employment. An Equalities Impact Assessment will accompany the Plan's development.

Environmental Sustainability

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to sustainable development. Preparation of the East Herts Local Plan must balance three overarching objectives – economic, social and environmental. This includes supporting climate resilience, conserving natural resources, protecting biodiversity, and reducing carbon emissions. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is legally required and will evaluate

the positive and negative impacts of policy options throughout the plan-making process.

Financial

Formal commencement of the Local Plan entails resource implications, including staff time, evidence commissioning, public consultation, and statutory examination. These costs are planned for within the Council's budget for Planning Policy work.

The Council has also received £108,474.57 from the government to support Local Plan implementation. Acceptance of this funding is based on the Council's commitment to the following milestones:

- Publishing a Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan preparation by 30 June 2026; and
- Publishing our Gateway 1 self-assessment by 31 October 2026.

Health and Safety

There are no direct health and safety implications arising from this report.

Human Resources

Preparation of the new Local Plan requires continued staffing within the Planning Policy team. Workload demands may require prioritisation of tasks or temporary specialist support depending on the scale of evidence production and consultation activity.

Human Rights

The decision to commence Local Plan preparation does not infringe on the rights set out in the Human Rights Act 1998. The plan-making process includes statutory opportunities for public participation, supporting rights relating to consultation and fair process.

Legal

Issuing the Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation formalises the Council's compliance with the new plan-making system and associated regulations.

Specific Wards

All

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 **Appendix A** : East Herts Local Plan Timetable

7.2 **Appendix B**: Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation

Contact Member Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward, Executive Member for Planning and Growth.
vicky.glover-ward@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer Sara Saunders, Director for Place, Tel: 01992 531656. sara.saunders@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author Claire Sime, Assistant Director for Place Shaping. Tel: 01992 531626.
claire.sime@eastherts.gov.uk

EAST HERTS LOCAL PLAN REGULATION 4 TIMETABLE

Plan Summary Timeline: Version 1 (June 11, 2026)

PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE

Local planning authorities are required to prepare and maintain a local plan timetable so that communities and stakeholders can understand when a plan will be prepared and how and when they can get involved.

Plan-making regulations require timetables to be prepared consistently across all local planning authorities, so that progress is reported against the same set of milestones. The dates specified at stages (a) to (l) in the table below represent the defined stages of the plan-making process. The timetable will be updated at each stage to ensure it remains accurate and up to date.

In addition to these defined stages, the timetable also indicates when other required elements of the process are expected to take place, particularly reporting following engagement or assessment stages.

The timetable must be made available before, or alongside, the publication of the Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan preparation.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON TIMESCALES

The dates included in the timetable are indicative and may be affected by a range of factors outside the Council's control. For example, it is not possible at the outset to predict either the volume or the nature of representations received during consultation stages. In addition, certain elements of the process, such as the availability of external examiners, are not within the Council's control and may affect progress against the timetable.

Hertfordshire is also undergoing local government reorganisation during the preparation of the East Herts Local Plan. This may affect the programme for plan preparation, as changes to governance arrangements, decision-making structures and electoral cycles could influence the timing of key decisions and stages in the process. As a result, some elements of the timetable may need to be reviewed as local government reorganisation progresses.

Appendix A

Reg. 4 ref	Activity	Indicative Start: Month/ Year	Indicative End: Month Year
(a)	The date on which the local planning authority will make their notice of intention to commence local plan preparation available under regulation 19(1) ¹	June 11, 2026	No later than 30 June 2026
(b)	The date on which the local planning authority will make a notice of scoping consultation available under regulation 20(1)(b)	June 11, 2026	No later than 30 June 2026
(c)	The date on or before which representations will have to be received by the local planning authority in accordance with regulation 20(4) (scoping consultation)	July 10, 2026	
(d)	The date on which the local planning authority will make their self-assessment summary available under regulation 21(3) <i>To follow the meeting of the Council scheduled for October 14.</i>	October 15, 2026	No later than October 31, 2026
	Publish ' <i>summary of scoping consultation</i> '		By February 19, 2027
(e)	The date on which the local planning authority will make a notice of plan content and evidence consultation available under regulation 23(1)(a)	w/c February 22, 2027	
(f)	The date on or before which representations will have to be received by the local planning authority in accordance with regulation 23(4) (consultation on proposed local plan content and evidence)	w/c April 5, 2027 <i>Six weeks after commencemen t</i>	

¹ 'Regulations' in this table refers to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026

Appendix A

Reg. 4 ref	Activity	Indicative Start: Month/ Year	Indicative End: Month Year
	Publish ' <i>summary of consultation on local plan content and evidence</i> '.		By October 29, 2027
(g)	The date on which observations and advice will be sought under section 15CA(3) of the Act ² in accordance with regulation 26 (gateway 2) <i>Anticipated to take 4-6 weeks</i>	w/c November 1, 2027	By December 18, 2027
	Publish observations and /or advice in relation to gateway 2 and comply with Regulation 26(5).		By December 31, 2027
(h)	The date on which the local planning authority will make a notice of proposed local plan consultation available under regulation 27(1)(a),	w/c February 21, 2028	
(i)	The date on or before which representations will have to be received by the local planning authority in accordance with regulation 27(4) (consultation on the proposed local plan),	w/c April 17, 2028 <i>Eight weeks after commencement</i>	
	Publish ' <i>summary of consultation on the proposed local plan</i> '		
(j)	The date on which observations and advice will be sought under section 15CA(3) of the Act in accordance with regulation 31 (gateway 3: prescribed requirements assessment) <i>Anticipated to take 4-6 weeks</i>	w/c July 24, 2028	By w/c September 4, 2028

² 'The Act' in this table is the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023. Schedule 7 section 15CA(3) states, 'The local planning authority must, at such times as may be prescribed, seek observations or advice in relation to a proposed local plan, from a person appointed by the Secretary of State'.

Appendix A

Reg. 4 ref	Activity	Indicative Start: Month/ Year	Indicative End: Month Year
	Publish observations and /or advice in relation to gateway 3 and comply with Regulation 31(5) and, where prescribed requirements are met, Regulation 31(6).		By September 29, 2028
(k)	The date on which the local planning authority will submit their proposed local plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination under section 15D(1) ³ of the Act	w/c October 2, 2028	
	Independent Examination <i>Anticipated to take up to 5 months</i>	October 2028	March 2029
(l)	The date on which the local planning authority will consider adopting the proposed local plan under section 15EA ⁴ of the Act.	w/c April 2, 2029	

³ Section 15D(1) of the Act states, 'A local planning authority must submit their proposed local plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination if a person appointed by the Secretary of State under section 15CA(3) advises that the prescribed requirements are met in relation to the plan'.

⁴ Section 15EA of the Act deals with the circumstances under which a plan may be adopted.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO COMMENCE LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION

PLANNING AUTHORITY PREPARING THE LOCAL PLAN

The East Herts Local Plan is being prepared by East Hertfordshire District Council.

IDENTIFYING DETAILS FOR THE LOCAL PLAN

Title of the plan: East Herts Local Plan (2029 – 2044).

The Local Plan will set out the planning framework for East Herts District up to the year 2044.

The Local Plan will not incorporate any part of a minerals and waste plan. Minerals and waste planning will continue to be addressed through separate arrangements led at a county level.

AREA COVERED BY THE LOCAL PLAN

The East Herts Local Plan will cover the entire administrative area of East Hertfordshire District Council (ONS code E07000242). The area is shown on the map overleaf.

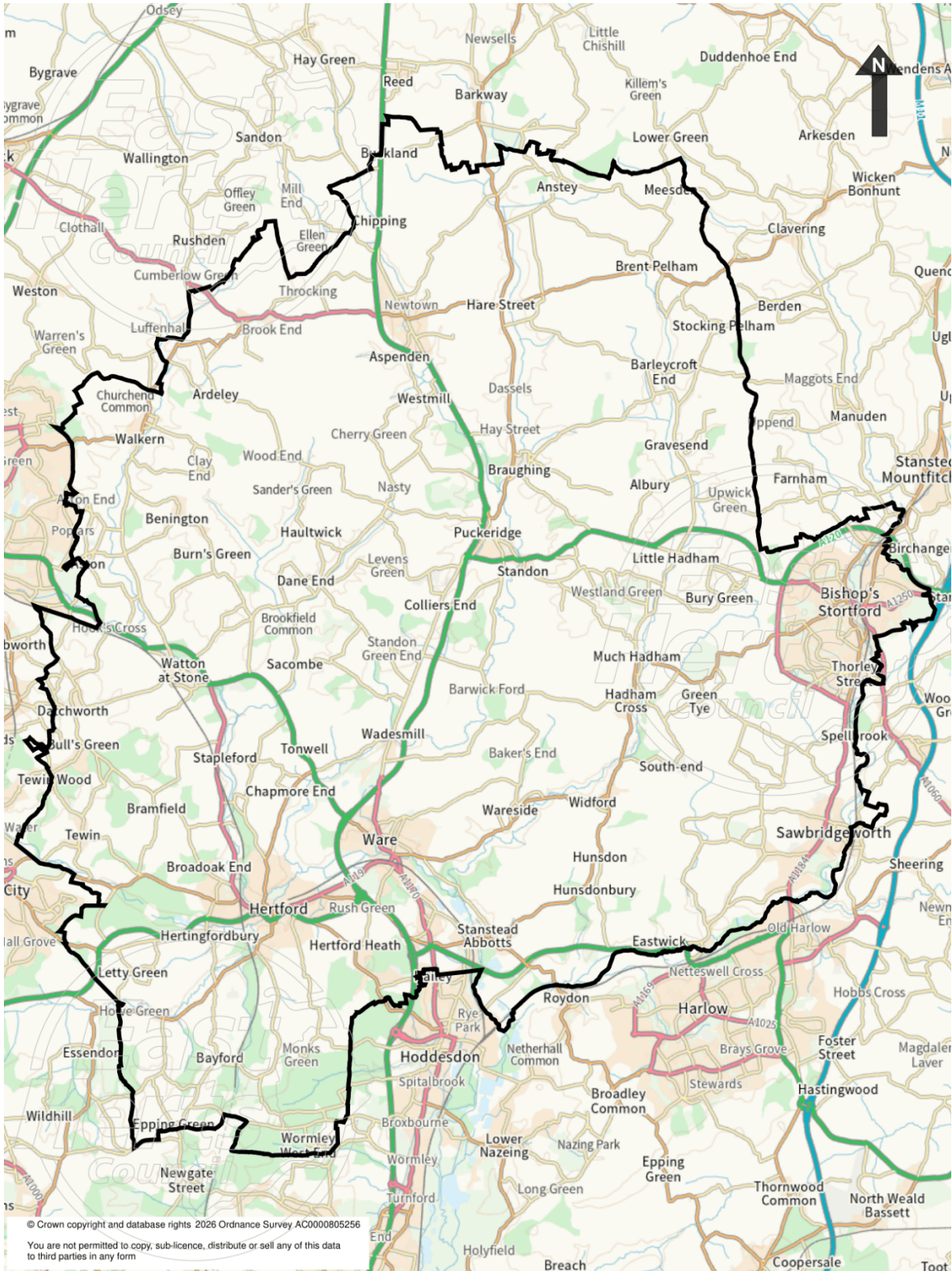
LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE

The East Herts Local Plan timetable has been prepared in line with national guidance. This sets out the key stages and anticipated timescales for preparing the Local Plan. You can view the timetable here: *[link to webpage]*.

EXPECTED START OF LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION

East Hertfordshire District Council expects to commence plan-making after passing through the Gateway 1 Self-Assessment on October 15, 2026.

AREA COVERED BY THE EAST HERTS LOCAL PLAN



CONTACT INFORMATION FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES

Further information is available from the Planning Policy Team at planningpolicy@eastherts.gov.uk, who can provide advice on the Local Plan timetable and the wider programme of work associated with preparing the new East Herts Local Plan.

AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS

This Notice and the Local Plan timetable will be published on the Council's website. The documents can also be inspected at Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8EQ during normal office opening hours.

DATE THIS NOTICE WAS PUBLISHED

11 June 2026

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, 10 June 2026

Report by: Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward – Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Report title: Local Plan Scoping Consultation

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Summary

- East Herts Council has a statutory duty to produce the East Herts Local Plan. The government published details of a new plan-making system in November 2025. Regulations¹ to implement the new system came into force on the 25 March 2026.
- This report will initiate the third stage of the new plan-making system, the scoping consultation. The scoping consultation follows the first two stages – publishing a local plan timetable and publishing a notice of intention to commence local plan preparation – which are the subject of a separate paper on this agenda.
- The scoping consultation is intended to provide meaningful early engagement in the plan-making process and invite representations on matters including what the plan should contain and how future engagement on the plan should be carried out. The consultation must take place alongside publishing the notice of intent to commence local plan preparation and prior to the fourth stage, the Gateway 1 Assessment.
- This report was considered at the District Planning Executive Panel on [19 May 2026](#) and Executive on [2 June 2026](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026

- A) Subject to the publication of the Notice to Commence Local Plan Preparation and the Local Plan Timetable, the East Herts Local Plan – Scoping Consultation document (Appendix A) is made available to relevant stakeholders and the wider community to begin a discussion about the district’s new Local Plan, and to seek comments in accord with the Regulations;**
- B) Engagement on the Scoping Consultation document should commence, taking place between June 11 and July 10 2026, through a range of different forums, including online on the Council’s website; and**
- C) Any minor amendments required to the content of the Scoping Consultation document prior to the consultation period be delegated to the Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth;**
- D) A further report detailing any feedback is prepared for Executive following engagement, with the intention of informing the Local Plan content and evidence stages of the plan-making process.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the content of the Scoping Consultation document and to undertake a scoping consultation on the content of the plan and the means of engaging with our communities and stakeholders, after publishing a notice of intention to commence plan-making.
- 1.2 The report links directly to the accompanying report on the Local Plan Timetable and Notice of Intention to Commence Plan-Making, which need to happen prior to the initiation of the scoping consultation.
- 1.3 The Scoping Consultation will invite stakeholders, statutory bodies, community groups and residents to comment on the key themes the Local Plan should cover, the challenges the district faces, and the opportunities for shaping its long-term growth strategy.

- 1.4 Together, the two reports will ensure that Members have a clear understanding of both the statutory requirement to publish the Timetable and Notice and the immediate next step in the plan-making process, which is to undertake focused, early-stage consultation to inform the development of the new Local Plan.
- 1.5 Both reports will be considered by the District Planning Executive Panel (DPEP) for scrutiny and comment prior to being referred to the Executive for consideration and recommendation. The Executive will then determine whether to recommend the reports to full Council for approval, in accordance with the Council's constitution and decision-making framework.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The background to the Government's changes to the plan-making system, recently confirmed through the publication of new Regulations in March 2026, is discussed in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 of the accompanying report on this agenda dealing with the Notice of Intention and the Local Plan Timetable.
- 2.2 The scoping consultation is a key part of the 'getting ready' period undertaken within the four-month period prior to the formal 30-month timeline for completing a local plan, and comes immediately after giving Notice of Intention to Commence a Plan and the publication of the Local Plan Timetable.
- 2.3 The Regulations specify both the bodies to be invited to make representations during the scoping consultation and the matters about which representations should be made. They do not specify the length of time that the scoping consultation should progress for, other than it being between the time that the notice is given and plan-making formally commencing, although it must be at least 21 days.
- 2.4 The Council is required to prepare a summary of the representations received to the scoping consultation, but this cannot be published prior to the commencement of formal plan-making ('Gateway 1'), the date of which is set out in the Local Plan Timetable. It is therefore anticipated that any comments received during the scoping consultation will be available in Winter 2026/2027. These comments will inform the local plan

content.

Local Government Reorganisation

2.5 Members should note that local government reorganisation in Hertfordshire remains subject to a decision by the Government. While no decisions have yet been made, the Government has been clear that councils should continue to progress local plans to support plan-led decision-making. Advancing the East Herts Local Plan will maintain an up-to-date and robust planning framework, provide clarity and certainty for local communities about on future growth and development, and ensure that key evidence, policies and local priorities are in place to inform and support any future changes to governance or plan-making arrangements.

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 This report sets out the details for the scoping consultation. This is the first period of engagement in the new plan-making system and takes place before the start of formal plan-making.

3.2 The aim of the scoping consultation is to provide meaningful early engagement in the plan-making process from invited groups and members of the community, including local residents. Representations can be made about:

- Matters relevant to the preparation of the local plan, including what the plan should contain;
- How the authority should engage with stakeholders and the community in the preparation of the plan.

3.3 This consultation is proposed to run from Thursday June 11 to Friday July 10, 2026. This period would commence on the day that notice is given and conclude prior to the start of summer school holidays. This period is eight days longer than the minimum period of 21 days. The period between the end of the consultation and the start of formal plan-making can be used to assess the responses received and to prepare the summary of representations.

3.4 Beyond the points set out at para 3.2 above and the direction given in respect of the bodies to be consulted, there is no further advice as to the form of the consultation in terms of the level of

detail and the extent of material to accompany it. As this is a new plan-making system, and East Herts is among the front-runners, there are also very few precedents for this scoping consultation.

- 3.5 Officers consider that the consultation needs to be strategic and at a high level. It needs to strike a balance between engaging as wide an audience as possible and encouraging constructive, focused feedback that will meaningfully inform the next stages of plan-making, while avoiding disproportionate administrative burdens associated with logging, analysing and responding to representations. To this end, a Scoping Consultation document (Appendix A) has been prepared which aims to deliver short, focused responses having set out:
- why the plan is being made and the purpose of the consultation;
 - the challenges and opportunities of the district that are expected to be addressed within the plan;
 - a proposed Vision Statement;
 - the ways in which the Council considers engagement can be conducted with respect to the plan;
 - the requirement to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 3.6 The document includes within it 14 focused questions that cover these categories and ask for general views on the Vision Statement, the important issues for the plan and the way in which people would like to be involved. The challenges and opportunities section of the document provides a short introduction to some of the common planning-related matters that affect the district, including housing numbers, the approach to the green belt and sustainability. It seeks feedback on which issues are considered to be of most importance and whether any key issues have been omitted.
- 3.7 The proposed Vision Statement, included within the Scoping Consultation document, is part of the wider 'East Herts Strategic Vision' which was approved by the Council on May 14, 2025. This Strategic Vision was prepared prior to the new Regulations, and engagement on it has been postponed twice during 2025, firstly because of a pre-election period prior to a local election and secondly on the advice of the MHCLG, who cautioned against

engaging on material related to a new plan prior to the introduction of the Regulations.

- 3.8 Officers consider that the Vision Statement agreed in 2025 remains fit for purpose and relevant for the progression of the plan. It has therefore been incorporated into the Scoping Consultation document as a core part of the engagement, largely as was intended in 2025. A link to the Strategic Vision is provided in the Scoping Consultation document.
- 3.9 The final two sections of the Consultation Scoping document cover engagement and the SA/SEA. The first seeks feedback on the preferred methods of engagement that potential respondents would prefer to use as the plan develops. Using this feedback, the Council will need to set out its approach to engagement in respect of the local plan at the commencement of formal plan-making later in the year. This replaces the previous requirement to prepare a Statement for Community Involvement. The second provides an opportunity to consider the SA/SEA Scoping document and feedback any comments on its content at this stage. The SA/SEA is undertaken in a number of stages and runs alongside the preparation of the Local Plan, and any comments made will inform this ongoing process.
- 3.10 The planning policy team have been working with the corporate comms team to develop a series of events and messages around the scoping consultation. This will include a press release, a newsletter to those signed up to the planning policy page on the Council's website and an online portal to drive responses. The consultation period will be managed principally by the planning policy team using a stand-alone digital platform designed to manage planning policy consultations of this kind.
- 3.11 The scoping consultation will provide information from the community on their priorities for the local plan. This will inform the formal start of plan-making and be reflected in the Gateway 1 assessment, which is the next stage of the plan-making process. A report on the scoping consultation will be prepared prior to the next formal engagement on the plan, which is anticipated in early 2027.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 Undertaking the scoping consultation is subject to publishing the Notice of Intention to Commence and the Local Plan Timetable. The scoping consultation must take place after the publication of both. If either one of these was not published, the Council could not proceed with the scoping consultation, and would be in breach of the Regulations if it did.
- 4.2 Assuming that Notice and the Timetable are published, the Council is required by the Regulations to undertake the scoping consultation prior to the Gateway 1 assessment, which is a period of not less than four months. There is a minimum defined period for the scoping consultation of 21 days. This report suggests a period of consultation between June 11 and July 10, 2026. This achieves the required minimum engagement period whilst also allowing a further eight days to raise interest and awareness, and avoids consultation taking place within the school holiday period when those interested in responding to the plan may not be available. This period also allows an opportunity to review responses received before the Gateway 1 assessment in October.
- 4.3 The Council could choose to have a longer consultation period, or different start and / or end dates, but these would risk complaints from the community about the timing of consultation, and – dependent on the volume of responses – place resourcing pressures on the planning policy team to respond to the consultation and maintain momentum on the production of the plan.
- 4.4 The Consultation Scoping document takes a high-level view of the Local Plan at this early stage which is proportionate to the requirement to begin a conversation on the plan. It allows the opportunity to set out the context and the broad issues affecting the district and the plan without getting into significant details about the site allocations and policy structure. The Council could decide to deliver a more detailed and lengthier document, which could set out a greater amount of certainty, or deliver a much shorter document with less information within it. The former would take much more time to prepare and likely lead to a greater number of more complicated responses, whilst the latter may be too limited, and fail to sufficiently interest people about the plan and its process.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 The Scoping Consultation document will be available for consultation following the publication of the Notice and the Timetable. Any delay to this publication will delay the scoping consultation and may impact the overall plan-making timetable. Any delay may see the engagement come into conflict with periods of traditional holiday time, which could be detrimental to the consultation overall.
- 5.2 Because the scoping consultation will be dealing with planning and the future of the district, opinions are likely to be many and varied. The Scoping Consultation document aims to manage the type and nature of responses by including focused questions with a request for explanations of opinions. There is a risk that responses will be received that react to concerns that are not covered by the Scoping Consultation, which may generate additional work and administrative effort. Responses may be generated through means such as AI, which could increase the number of responses that are received. As well as adding further administrative time, this also risks responses that are poorly focused.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 Following publication of the Notice, the Council will undertake a Scoping Consultation, which is the first formal stage of engagement under the new plan-making system. National guidance specifies that the Notice must be issued before or at the same time as this consultation to ensure that stakeholders are aware that plan-making has formally begun.
- 6.2 The Scoping Consultation forms a key part of the required 'getting ready' phase prior to Gateway 1, during which authorities must begin early engagement and initial assessment work.

Community Safety

Preparation of a new Local Plan can positively influence community safety by shaping policies on design quality, public realm, lighting, and layout of developments to discourage crime and anti-social behaviour. Early plan-making helps ensure community safety considerations are embedded from the outset.

Data Protection

The scoping consultation will involve the management and processing of personal data. This will be carried out within a bespoke, closed platform designed to manage this type of planning engagement and will contact people and organisations that are either defined as general or specific consultation bodies within the context of the Regulations, or have specifically opted into notifications of such engagement via the bespoke platform. Advice will be taken from the Information Governance and Data Protection Manager and Data Protection Officer where required.

Equalities

Local Plans must advance equality of opportunity in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Commencing preparation enables the Council to develop policies that for example address accessibility, inclusive design, Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs, and equitable access to housing, facilities, and employment. An Equalities Impact Assessment will accompany the Plan's development.

Environmental Sustainability

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to sustainable development. Preparation of the East Herts Local Plan must balance three overarching objectives – economic, social and environmental. This includes supporting climate resilience, conserving natural resources, protecting biodiversity, and reducing carbon emissions. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is legally required and will evaluate the positive and negative impacts of policy options throughout the plan-making process.

Financial

Formal commencement of the Local Plan entails resource implications, including staff time, evidence commissioning, public consultation, and statutory examination. These costs are planned for within the Council's budget for Planning Policy work.

Health and Safety

There are no direct health and safety implications arising from this report.

Human Resources

Preparation of the new Local Plan requires continued staffing within the Planning Policy team. Workload demands may require prioritisation of

tasks or temporary specialist support depending on the scale of evidence production and consultation activity.

Human Rights

The decision to commence Local Plan preparation does not infringe on the rights set out in the Human Rights Act 1998. The plan-making process includes statutory opportunities for public participation, supporting rights relating to consultation and fair process.

Legal

Issuing the Scoping Consultation document following the Notice to Commence Plan Preparation and the Local Plan timetable formalises the Council's compliance with the new plan-making system and associated regulations.

Specific Wards

All

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 Appendix A: Scoping Consultation Document

Contact Member Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward, Executive Member for Planning and Growth.
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Scoping Consultation

East Herts Local Plan

11 June – 10 July 2026

EAST HERTS LOCAL PLAN

SCOPING CONSULTATION

1. INTRODUCTION

East Herts District Council is preparing a new Local Plan to guide development in the district over the coming years. The Local Plan will cover the period up to 2044 and will set out the vision, objectives, and planning policies that will shape how East Hertfordshire grows and changes. It will address matters such as housing, employment, infrastructure, the natural and historic environment, and the health and wellbeing of communities.

Planning authorities are required to review their Local Plans at least once every five years to ensure that planning policies remain up to date. This review process gives us a chance to look at what's changed locally, ensure ongoing conformity with national planning policy, and respond to new or emerging social, environmental, and economic priorities. The preparation of the new Local Plan will be informed by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

Purpose of the Scoping Consultation

This Scoping Consultation is the first stage of engagement in the preparation of the new Local Plan. Its purpose is to provide meaningful early engagement with stakeholders and the local community, including residents, businesses, infrastructure providers, and other organisations, to help shape the direction of the Local Plan.

The council is seeking views on:

1. Matters that are relevant to the preparation of the new Local Plan;
2. What the new Local Plan should contain;
3. How the council should engage with stakeholders and the community during the plan-making process; and
4. The content of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping document.

Feedback received through this consultation will help to inform the scope, evidence base, and approach to preparing the new Local Plan.

Consultation Period

This Scoping Consultation will run from **11 June to 10 July 2026**.

2. HOW TO GET INVOLVED AND RESPOND

The best way to respond is through the council's online consultation platform.

Comments can also be submitted by email or post as follows:

Email:

planningpolicy@eastherts.gov.uk

Post:

Planning Policy Team

East Herts Council

Wallfields

Pegs Lane

Hertford, SG13 8EQ

All responses received during the consultation period will be considered and will help inform the next stages of Local Plan preparation. A summary of comments and how they have been taken into account will be published as part of the engagement process.

3. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The preparation of a new Local Plan presents both challenges and opportunities for East Hertfordshire. In particular, the Plan will need to balance the need to deliver new housing, alongside other forms of development, with the protection, preservation, and enhancement of the district's valued characteristics, including its distinctive landscape and the character and identity of towns and villages. Ensuring that growth respects local distinctiveness and responds positively to its surroundings will be a key consideration.

The Local Plan will also need to make sure there is infrastructure in place to support new homes and development. This includes transport and movement, addressing how people travel within and beyond the district, as well as ensuring that essential services and community facilities, such as healthcare, education, utilities, and open space, are maintained and provided in the right locations and at the right time.

Supporting a strong and resilient economy will be another important challenge. The plan will need to consider how to retain existing jobs, attract new businesses and investment, and support economic growth, while also nurturing small businesses, promoting innovation, and maintaining the diversity of the district's rural economy.

In addition, the Local Plan must respond to wider global and national trends that will affect East Hertfordshire over the plan period. These include changing technology, increased home and flexible working, changes in how people shop and access services, and ongoing cost-of-living pressures. Anticipating how these trends may influence future development needs, settlement patterns, and infrastructure

requirements will be essential in ensuring the Local Plan is flexible and future-focused.

CONSULTATION QUESTION

1. What do you consider to be the main challenges and opportunities facing East Hertfordshire over the plan period, and how should the new Local Plan respond to them?

The new Local Plan will need to respond to a range of issues affecting East Hertfordshire. Some of these are set out below, and the council is seeking views on whether these reflect the issues that matter most to local communities and stakeholders.

Housing

The Government sets the minimum housing requirement for each local planning authority through national planning policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated guidance. In recent years, the housing requirement for East Hertfordshire has increased significantly, reflecting national priorities to boost housing supply and improve affordability.

East Herts is a largely rural district characterised by a constrained landscape, extensive Green Belt and a network of distinctive and historic market towns. In this context, the new Local Plan will need to establish an appropriate strategy to deliver the required number of homes. This means deciding where new housing should go, how it should be spread across the district, and what impact it will have on infrastructure, the environment, and existing communities.

The Plan will also need to address the diverse housing needs of the district's population. This includes providing a suitable mix of housing types, sizes, and tenures, including affordable housing, in locations where need is anticipated. Specific consideration will be given to the needs of different groups, including older people and those who require care or support, Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities, and people at different stages of life.

Green Belt and the Introduction of 'Grey Belt'

The Green Belt has five defined purposes, including preventing urban sprawl, stopping neighbouring towns from merging, and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. It is not intended to protect specific landscapes or habitats, which are covered by other planning policies.

National planning policy has recently changed the approach to Green Belt reviews through local plans, including the introduction of the concept of 'grey belt'. Grey belt

refers to areas of Green Belt that perform less strongly against certain Green Belt purposes and may therefore be more suitable for development, subject to wider planning considerations.

In East Herts, the Green Belt covers the southern third of the district, surrounding the towns of Hertford, Ware, Sawbridgeworth and Bishop's Stortford. It also forms part of the separation between the district and neighbouring towns including Stevenage, Welwyn Garden City, Hoddesdon and Harlow.

As part of preparing the new Local Plan, the council is required to review the Green Belt to identify areas that may meet the definition of grey belt.

Employment

The main towns of East Hertfordshire are significant employment centres, providing jobs for residents and those commuting into the district. They accommodate a range of employment uses, including offices, industrial premises, and service-based businesses, located within town centres and across wider built-up areas.

The district's villages and rural areas also play an important role in supporting employment. Traditional activities such as farming and rural crafts remain important alongside growing diversification. This includes the reuse of rural buildings to support small-scale businesses, start-ups and relocations, often reflecting changes in working practices and business models.

East Herts benefits from a strong strategic location, with access to major transport routes including the M11 and A1(M), proximity to Stansted Airport, and links to centres of innovation in neighbouring areas such as Harlow, Cambridge, and Stevenage. Many residents also commute to and from London, reflecting the district's role in a wider labour market.

The new Local Plan will need to support a balanced and resilient local economy. This includes providing a range of employment opportunities, supporting existing businesses, and aligning employment growth with housing, infrastructure, and environmental considerations.

Town Centres

The district's town centres provide a wide range of retail, service, leisure, and community functions, including shops, food and drink uses, cultural venues, and facilities such as libraries. Many are set within distinctive historic environments that contribute strongly to character and sense of place.

Town centres continue to play a vital role in supporting local communities and the economy but face significant change. The growth of online shopping and

home-based entertainment has reduced footfall for some traditional uses and affected long-term viability.

There have also been shifts in the location of activities, with some leisure and service uses increasingly locating outside town centres. In addition, the district's centres face challenges linked to their historic form, such as access, servicing, and parking constraints.

The new Local Plan will need to consider how town centres can adapt while maintaining a strong mix of uses, supporting vitality and viability, and reinforcing their role as focal points for community life.

Recreation and Leisure

Successful and sustainable communities are supported by access to leisure, recreational and community facilities. Good-quality open spaces and services contribute to health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

The new Local Plan will need to ensure that existing facilities, including open spaces, parks, sports facilities, swimming pools, and playing pitches, continue to meet the needs of the current population. It must also plan positively for future growth, ensuring new development is supported by appropriate additional facilities.

Leisure and recreation also include cultural and social facilities such as cinemas, theatres, and other venues. These uses can play an important role in supporting town centres and local economies and may have implications for accessibility, transport patterns, and activity throughout the day and evening.

Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Strong communities depend on access to facilities and services that support health, wellbeing and everyday life. Community facilities and infrastructure play a key role in supporting sustainable growth and in reducing inequalities.

The new Local Plan will need to work with providers of key services and infrastructure, including education, healthcare, water supply and energy, to support future growth. This includes ensuring new development is supported by appropriate infrastructure, either through existing capacity or timely upgrades.

The Plan will also consider infrastructure essential to modern living and economic activity, such as high-quality digital connectivity and wastewater infrastructure.

In addition, the Local Plan will need to remain flexible to respond to future technological and societal change. This includes emerging approaches to service delivery and the infrastructure associated with digital technology, data storage, and the transition to low-carbon energy systems.

Urban Design and Conservation

The district's towns and villages contain historic cores that play a key role in defining local character and sense of place, and across the district there are over 3,000 Listed Buildings. These environments contribute significantly to the attractiveness of the district and its cultural heritage.

The new Local Plan will need to provide a framework for accommodating change in ways that conserve and enhance historic assets. This could include sensitively integrating energy-efficiency measures to ensure historic buildings remain viable and valued.

There is increasing emphasis within planning policy on the importance of good design. High-quality design can reinforce local character, support sustainability objectives, and create adaptable, long-lasting places.

The new Local Plan will need to set clear expectations for design quality, ensuring development respects local character while responding to contemporary and future needs.

Climate Change

Climate change presents a significant challenge for East Hertfordshire, influencing where development should take place, how it is designed, and how communities and infrastructure can remain resilient over time. National planning policy requires local plans to address both the mitigation of climate change, through reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and adaptation to its impacts.

The new Local Plan will need to support the transition to a low-carbon future. This includes promoting energy-efficient buildings, renewable and low-carbon energy generation, and patterns of development that reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car.

Equally important is ensuring that development is resilient to climate impacts. The Plan will need to address increased risks of flooding, overheating, and water stress by directing development away from areas at the highest risk of flooding, by encouraging design approaches that respond to higher temperatures and more extreme weather events, and by supporting sustainable drainage systems and promoting water efficiency.

Particular consideration will be given to the district's water environment, including chalk streams and water resources, which are highly sensitive to climate change and development pressures.

Addressing climate change will require an integrated approach across the Local Plan, linking with policies on housing, movement, design, infrastructure, and the natural environment. The new Local Plan will provide the framework to embed climate considerations into decision-making and support the creation of healthy, resilient and sustainable communities.

Environment and Landscape

East Hertfordshire is predominantly rural, defined by open countryside, scattered villages, and river valleys. This landscape makes a strong contribution to local identity and provides an important setting for settlements.

The district is characterised by a network of rivers draining towards the River Lea, including the Rivers Rib, Ash, Beane and Quin, with the River Stort forming part of the district's boundary. Many of these watercourses are chalk streams, flowing through chalk geology and supporting distinctive habitats. Chalk streams are internationally rare and highly sensitive to pressures such as abstraction, climate change, and development, making river corridors a key environmental consideration.

The wider landscape is gently undulating, with long views that contribute to the district's character. Settlements are often closely related to their surrounding landscape, reinforcing local distinctiveness and sense of place.

The new Local Plan will need to protect and enhance the landscape and natural environment while planning positively for future needs. This includes addressing biodiversity, flood risk, and climate change, and safeguarding the quality and openness of the countryside while enabling well-designed development.

Movement

Movement and transport are key considerations due to the district's size, rural character and settlement pattern. Major routes such as the M11, A1(M), A414 and rail links support travel, but access to transport options varies.

In the southern parts of the district, residents have greater access to walking, cycling, public transport, and rail. Elsewhere, options are more limited, and reliance on the private car is higher.

The new Local Plan will need to consider how development can reduce the impacts of car use, including congestion and environmental effects, while recognising the needs of people in less well-connected areas. This includes reducing the need to travel where possible and supporting realistic alternatives to the car.

Hertfordshire County Council will be a key partner, with responsibility for highways, active travel, and elements of public transport. Rail services will also continue to shape travel patterns.

Sustainability

Sustainability has long been a central principle of planning policy. It underpins national policy and provides the framework for balancing growth with environmental protection and social wellbeing.

Sustainable development encompasses environmental, social and economic considerations. Within plan-making, this involves meeting development needs in a

way that supports strong and healthy communities, enables a resilient local economy and ensures the efficient and responsible use of land and natural resources.

Many of the topic areas identified within this Scoping Consultation contribute directly to sustainable development. For example, efficient land use, sustainable growth patterns, and development in accessible locations can help to reduce the need to travel, to lower carbon emissions, and to support healthier lifestyles.

Together, these considerations will help to ensure that future development in East Hertfordshire is planned and delivered in a balanced and sustainable manner.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

- 2. Are there any other issues, in addition to those identified above, that you think the new Local Plan should address?**
- 3. What do you consider to be the three most important issues that should be addressed by the new Local Plan to help shape the future of East Hertfordshire? *Please select up to three topics and provide reasons for your choices.***
- 4. Is there anything else you would like to tell us that should be considered as part of the new Local Plan?**

4. PLAN VISION

In line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the new Local Plan is required to establish a clear vision for the district's future development. In response, the council has prepared a draft Vision to articulate how the district could develop over the plan period, reflecting local priorities, challenges, and opportunities.

The draft Vision is intended to provide a clear and consistent framework to guide the preparation of the Local Plan's objectives, strategy and policies.

The draft Vision document is available to view here: [Vision | East Herts Council](#).

Vision Statement

At the heart of the draft Vision document is a Vision Statement which sets out the council's long-term aspirations for East Hertfordshire and describes how the district should evolve over the plan period. It provides a shared statement of intent, reflecting local priorities, opportunities and challenges, and establishes the overall direction for growth.

VISION STATEMENT

“Renowned for our unique and charming historic market towns and villages set within beautiful countryside, rare chalk streams and rich heritage, East Herts will be an exemplar of sustainability, where innovative design solutions respect local character and are harnessed to mitigate and adapt to climate change and enhance biodiversity.

Our communities will continue to thrive, supported by affordable and accessible housing, reliable public transport, and improved public open spaces—promoting active lifestyles and creating inclusive places for all.

By nurturing local businesses, we will create a resilient, prosperous and secure future for all residents and visitors.

Collectively, we will recognise the responsibility we have to create a district fit for future generations”.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

5. Does the Vision Statement reflect your aspirations for East Hertfordshire over the next 20 years? *Please explain your views.*
6. Do you have any suggestions for how the wording of the Vision Statement could be improved?

Vision Themes and Aspirations

The Vision has six key themes, which together capture the district’s strengths, challenges and aspirations and will guide future policies and decision-making. The six themes are:

People – supporting healthy, inclusive and resilient communities, with access to high-quality homes, services, and opportunities for all.

Place – protecting and enhancing the distinctive character of towns, villages and the countryside, ensuring that new development responds positively to its surroundings.

Economy – promoting a diverse, adaptable, and productive local economy, supporting existing businesses, attracting new investment, and enabling innovation.

Environment – safeguarding and enhancing the natural environment, addressing climate change, and protecting biodiversity, landscapes and heritage assets.

Infrastructure – ensuring that growth is supported by timely and appropriate infrastructure, including utilities, health, education, and community facilities.

Movement – improving connectivity and accessibility, encouraging sustainable travel choices, and reducing reliance on the private car.

Across these themes, the draft Vision document highlights the need to balance growth with environmental protection, respond to climate change, and ensure a high quality of life for existing and future residents.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

7. **Do you agree that the six themes (people, place, economy, environment, infrastructure and movement) reflect the key priorities for East Hertfordshire? [Yes / No]**
8. **Are there any themes you think should be changed, added to, or given more emphasis? *Please explain your reasons.***

5. ENGAGEMENT

Meaningful engagement with stakeholders and the local community is a fundamental part of preparing a new Local Plan. Early and ongoing consultation helps to ensure that the Local Plan reflects local priorities, benefits from local knowledge, and is informed by those who live and work in the district. It also supports transparency and builds confidence in the plan-making process.

This section seeks views on how the council should engage with residents, businesses, landowners, infrastructure providers, community groups, and other stakeholders as the new Local Plan is prepared. The council is keen to understand which engagement methods are most effective, how information should be shared, and how people can best be supported to take part throughout the different stages of plan-making.

Feedback will help shape a proportionate and inclusive engagement strategy that encourages broad participation and ensures that communities and stakeholders have meaningful opportunities to influence the new Local Plan as it develops.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

9. How would you prefer to be engaged during the Local Plan process?

Please rank your preferences.

- a) Online consultations
- b) Public events
- c) Workshops
- d) Focus groups
- e) Written updates
- f) Social media
- g) Other methods, *please specify.*

10. Are there any specific engagement methods you think would be particularly effective in helping people understand and contribute to the Local Plan?

11. How can the council ensure that engagement is inclusive and accessible, and that opportunities to participate are available to a wide range of communities and stakeholders?

12. Is there anything else the council should consider when developing its approach to community and stakeholder engagement for the new Local Plan?

6. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA) / STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

Alongside the preparation of a Local Plan, the Council is required to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The purpose of the SA/SEA is to identify, describe and assess the likely economic, social and environmental effects of the Local Plan, as well as to consider reasonable alternatives to the proposed approach. The SA/SEA is undertaken in a number of stages and runs alongside the preparation of the Local Plan.

As part of the first stage of the process an SA/SEA Scoping document has been prepared. The document is available to view here: [\[link to webpage\]](#).

This report identifies relevant plans, policies and programmes that may have an impact on the Local Plan, the existing situation in East Hertfordshire across a range of topics, key sustainability issues and future trends. This information is used to develop an SA/SEA framework that will be used to assess the policies and proposals in the emerging Local Plan, ensuring that proposals are assessed against key environmental criteria as the plan is developed.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

13. Do you have any comments on the SA/SEA Scoping document?

14. Is there anything else that should be included within the SA/SEA Scoping document? *If so, please specify*

Agenda Item 4c

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date of meeting: Wednesday, 10 June 2026

Report by: Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward – Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Report title: Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Summary – East Herts has a duty to produce the East Herts Local Plan. In preparing a local plan the local authority is required by the Town and Country Planning Regulations (Local Planning) (England) 2026 and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended) to prepare a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SEA will identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the local plan and any potential reasonable alternatives to the proposed plan.

Additionally, as required by Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 local planning authorities need to carry out an appraisal of the sustainability of the proposals in the Local Plan. This process is known as a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and assesses the way in which the plan can contribute to achieving economic, social and environmental sustainability.

As part of the SA/SEA process the Council has a duty to consult on the scope and level of detail that must be included in the report with the relevant consultation bodies. An SA/SEA Scoping document has been prepared and this report is seeking approval on the content of this document and approval to consult with the relevant consultation bodies.

This report was considered at the District Planning Executive Panel on [19 May 2026](#) and Executive on [2 June 2026](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:

- a) That subject to the publication of the ‘Notice to Commence Local Plan Preparation and the Local Plan Timetable’, the content of the SA/SEA Scoping document (Appendix A) is approved;
- b) That the SA/SEA Scoping document be formally consulted upon with the Environment Agency (EA), Historic England (HE) and Natural England (NE) in accordance with statutory requirements;
- c) That subject to the approval of the ‘Local Plan Scoping Consultation’, the SA/SEA Scoping document will be made available alongside the Local Plan Scoping Consultation, and will include a period of activity between 11 June 2026 and 10 July 2026 through a range of different forums, including online on the Council’s website; and
- d) Any minor amendments required to the content of the SA/SEA Scoping document prior to the consultation period be delegated to the Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the content of the SA/SEA Scoping document and approval to consult with relevant consultation bodies and the wider public.
- 1.2 Consultation on the SA/SEA Scoping document is sought alongside the Local Plan Scoping consultation, and therefore this report directly links to the approval of the ‘Local Plan Timetable and Notice of Intention to Commence Plan-Making’, as well as the ‘Local Plan Scoping Consultation’.
- 1.3 This report will ensure that Members have a clear understanding of the statutory requirements for the SA/SEA process and the relationship to the Local Plan.

1.4 This report will be considered by the District Planning Executive Panel (DPEP) for scrutiny and comment prior to being referred to the Executive for consideration and recommendation. The Executive will then determine whether to recommend the reports to full Council for approval, in accordance with the Council's constitution and decision-making framework.

2.0 Background

2.1 An SA/SEA is part of an iterative process that is undertaken alongside the preparation of a local plan. It is broken up into key stages as follows:

- Stage A (Scoping) – Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline, and deciding on the scope
- Stage B – Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects
- Stage C – Prepare the SA/SEA report
- Stage D – Seek representations on the SA/SEA report from consultation bodies and the public
- Stage E – Post adoption reporting and monitoring

2.2 The SA/SEA Scoping document represents Stage A of this process and identifies relevant plans, policies and programmes that may have an impact on the Local Plan, the existing situation in East Herts in relation to various topics, key sustainability issues and future trends. This leads to the formation of an SA/SEA framework that will be used to test proposals and options in the local plan process as they emerge. It also ensures proposals are assessed against key environmental criteria.

2.3 Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations lists a number of issues that are likely to have significant effects on the environment. This includes biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape. The SA/SEA Scoping document assesses all of these issues individually, as well as the interrelationship and key drivers between them.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 An SEA is a requirement of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended) (commonly known as the SEA Regulations), this ensures that the likely significant effects of the Local Plan are considered from the outset. The SEA process also tests alternatives to the proposals within a local plan to ensure that the best outcome is achieved.
- 3.2 The requirement for an SA is set out in Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires local planning authorities to carry out an appraisal of the sustainability of the proposals in the Local Plan. The process is a way to test and assess the way in which the plan can contribute to achieving economic, social and environmental sustainability, as well as identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects that the plan may have¹.
- 3.3 SA's assess environmental sustainability which is a requirement of an SEA. Therefore, this Scoping document encompasses the requirements for both an SA and SEA.
- 3.4 As prescribed in the SEA Regulations the Council has a duty to consult with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency on the scope of the SEA for a minimum of five weeks.
- 3.5 Additionally, under the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2026 the Council must submit a self-assessment of readiness for local plan preparation (Gateway 1 assessment); this self-assessment necessitates any obligation required under the SEA Regulations. Completion of the Scoping document and consultation of that document with the consultation bodies would satisfy this requirement at this stage.
- 3.6 Subject to the approval of the 'Notice to Commence Local Plan Preparation and the Local Plan Timetable' and the 'Local Plan Scoping Consultation', it is recommended that the SA/SEA Scoping document is also consulted upon alongside the Local Plan Scoping Consultation.

¹ [Planning Practice Guidance - Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal - 11-001-20190722](#)

4.0 Options

- 4.1 Undertaking the SA/SEA Scoping consultation is subject to publishing the 'Notice of Intention to Commence and the Local Plan Timetable' as this sets the programme for the Local Plan and work ahead, of which the SA/SEA process is part of.
- 4.2 The SA/SEA Scoping consultation is a separate process from the Local Plan Scoping Consultation, therefore it is not essential that they are undertaken at the same time. However, there are benefits of undertaking both exercises at the same time, such as saving officer time by consulting on both documents at once rather than through separate consultations. It may also be more beneficial to stakeholders to view and respond to both the Local Plan scoping and SA/SEA scoping at the same time, providing a more detailed response. It is likely that more responses will also be made on the SA/SEA if both consultations are conducted together.
- 4.3 An additional SA/SEA section has been added to the Local Plan Scoping Consultation document which summarises the purpose and requirement for an SA/SEA and the scoping process. It also proposes relevant questions on what is contained within the SA/SEA Scoping document and if further information should be included. This could, however, be treated separately to the Local Plan Scoping Consultation if the Council was minded to separate the SA/SEA Scoping from the Local Plan Scoping Consultation.
- 4.4 The SEA Regulations require consultation bodies to be given a minimum of five weeks to respond to consultation on the scope of the SEA, although this period may be extended. The proposed consultation would close before the start of the summer holidays, when consultation responses are typically lower. Proceeding with the minimum statutory consultation period would both meet regulatory requirements and support the continuation of plan-making work during the summer holiday period.
- 4.5 Whilst it is recognised that the Council only has a legal requirement to consult with the listed consultation bodies (highlighted in paragraph 3.4), there is benefit of widening the consultation and allowing the general public and stakeholders to

provide feedback on the SA/SEA Scoping document as well. Local groups and individuals will have a broad understanding of the issues faced within the district; it is therefore beneficial to allow responses from the wider public to strengthen the scope of the SA/SEA and ensure issues are addressed accurately. However, there is an option to narrow the consultation to those legally specified in the SEA Regulations, which would likely lead to less consultation responses.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 Completion of an SEA Scoping consultation is required as part of the Gateway 1 self-assessment of readiness for local plan preparation. Any delay to the commencement of the SA/SEA Scoping consultation will have a knock-on impact to the overall local plan timetable and ensuring that key milestones are met.
- 5.2 Due to the breadth of the issues raised within the SA/SEA Scoping document there is a risk that responses will be received that react to concerns that are not covered by the SA/SEA Scoping consultation, which may generate additional work and administrative effort. Responses may be generated through means such as AI, which could increase the number of responses that are received. As well as adding further administrative time, this also risks responses that are poorly focused.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 The SA/SEA Scoping consultation forms a key part of the required 'getting ready' phase prior to Gateway 1, during which authorities must begin early engagement and initial assessment work.

Community Safety

Preparation of an SA/SEA framework will help to test policies and proposals within the emerging Local Plan which can influence community safety through design quality, public realm, lighting, and layout of developments to discourage crime and anti-social behaviour.

Data Protection

The SA/SEA Scoping consultation will involve the management and processing of personal data. This will be carried out within a bespoke, closed platform designed to manage this type of planning engagement and will contact people and organisations that are either defined as general or specific consultation bodies within the context of the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2026, or have specifically opted into notifications of such engagement via the bespoke platform. Advice will be taken from the Information Governance and Data Protection Manager and Data Protection Officer where required.

Equalities

The SA/SEA process helps to identify issues with inequality in the preparation of local plan policies, which will have a benefit to equality and be in keeping with the Public Sector Equality Duty. An Equalities Impact Assessment will accompany the Local Plan's development.

Environmental Sustainability

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to sustainable development. An SA/SEA is legally required and will evaluate the positive and negative impacts of policy options throughout the plan-making process on a range of topics that have implications to the environment. This will have a positive impact to the final Local Plan in relation to seeking environmental sustainability.

Financial

The decision to undertake consultation on an SA/SEA Scoping document entails resource implications, including staff time in commencing the consultation, reviewing consultation responses and updating relevant documents. These costs are planned for within the Council's budget for Planning Policy work.

Health and Safety

There are no direct health and safety implications arising from this report.

Human Resources

There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

Human Rights

The decision to undertake consultation on an SA/SEA Scoping document does not infringe on the rights set out in the Human Rights Act 1998. The plan-making process includes statutory opportunities for public participation, supporting rights relating to consultation and fair process.

Legal

Issuing the SA/SEA Scoping consultation document formalises the Council's compliance with the SEA Regulations, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as well as meeting requirements within the new plan-making system.

Specific Wards

All

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 Appendix A: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Consultation

Contact Member Cllr Vicky Glover-Ward
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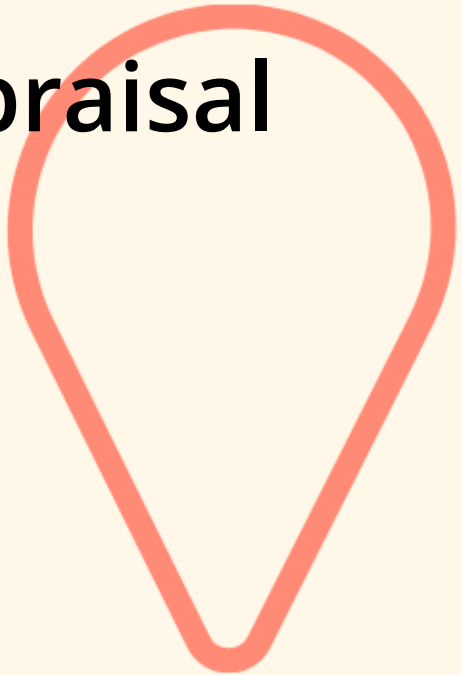
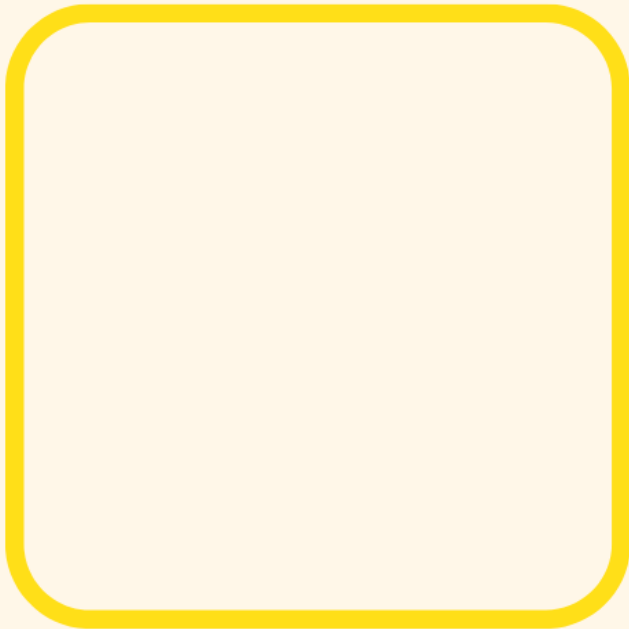
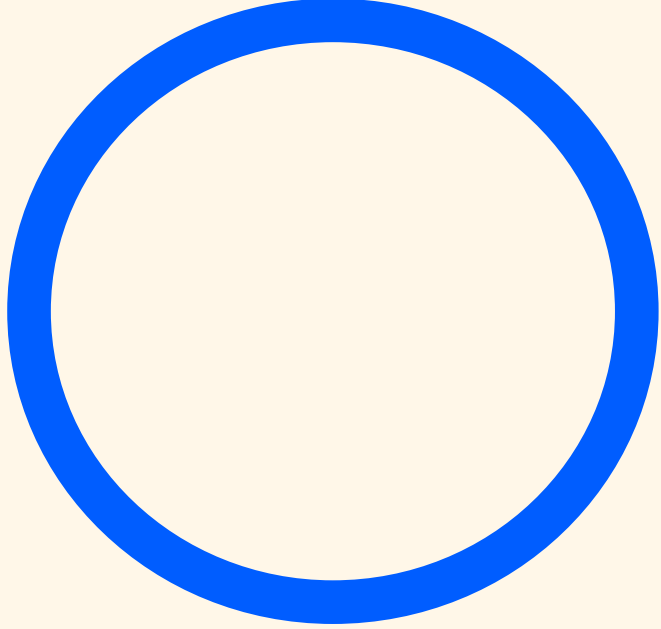

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**Sustainability Appraisal
(SA) and Strategic
Environmental
Assessment (SEA)**

Draft Scoping Report

May 2026

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1.0 Introduction and Process

1.1 Background

The purpose of this report is to provide context and determine the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) that will be used to assess the emerging new Local Plan in East Herts.

This document will include an initial assessment of relevant plans and programmes, current sustainability issues, baseline evidence and future trends in particular topics. This will lead to a framework that will be used within the SA/SEA process that will assess proposals in the new East Herts Local Plan.

1.2 East Herts Local Plan

The Council has commenced work on a new Local Plan. Once adopted this will update the existing District Plan 2018 and set the long-term vision for the district up to 2044. This will include specific policies for the natural, historic and built environment and set out the overall spatial strategy across the district. The new Local Plan will need to be consistent with national policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which at its core seeks to achieve sustainable development.

1.3 Sustainability Appraisals (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA)

Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to carry out an appraisal of the sustainability of the proposals in the Local Plan. The process is a way to test and assess the way in which the plan can contribute to achieving economic, social and environmental sustainability, as well as identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects that the plan may have¹. SA's assess environmental sustainability which is a requirement of an SEA which is described below. Therefore, this scoping document encompasses the requirements for both an SA and SEA.

¹ [Planning Practice Guidance - Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal - 11-001-20190722](#)

The new Local Plan is being prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, which includes meeting any obligation under Part 2 and Part 3 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended). Schedule 2 of these Regulations requires assessment of the *'likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects, on issues'*. These issues are listed in table 1.1, together with signposting to where they are addressed within this scoping document.

Table 1.1: SEA requirements and relevant chapters within this document

Schedule 2 of SEA Regulations 2004	SA/SEA Scoping Chapters
Biodiversity	Natural environment and landscape; Water resources and quality
Population	Population, health and wellbeing; Housing; Economy and employment
Human health	Population, health and wellbeing; Housing
Fauna	Natural environment and landscape; Water resources and quality
Flora	Natural environment and landscape; Water resources and quality
Soil	Land, soils, waste and resources; Transport, air quality and noise; Water resources and quality
Water	Water resources and quality; Climate change and flooding
Air	Transport, air quality and noise
Climatic factors	Climate change and flooding; Water resources and quality; Transport, air quality and noise
Material assets	Land, soils, waste and resources; Water resources and quality; Natural environment and landscape
Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	Historic environment

Schedule 2 of SEA Regulations 2004	SA/SEA Scoping Chapters
Landscape	Natural environment and landscape

The SEA Regulations require councils to monitor the significant environmental effects of a plan. Recommended monitoring indicators will be included at subsequent stages of plan preparation when policies are drafted, and the likely significant effects of the plan are more certain. The monitoring results will be reported in the Council's Authority Monitoring Report, published yearly, after such plan is adopted.

1.4 SA/SEA Process

Preparation of an SA/SEA is an iterative process alongside the preparation of a local plan, as it will be used to test alternatives options and the proposals within it. Table 1.2 below provides details of the different stages of the SA/SEA process. This scoping document forms stage A of this process and will be consulted upon with relevant consultation bodies.

Table 1.2: SA/SEA process

SA/SEA Stage	Key deliverables
Stage A (Scoping) – Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives • Collect baseline information • Identify sustainability issues and problems • Develop the SA/SEA framework • Consult the consultation bodies on the scope of the SA/SEA report
Stage B – Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test the Local Plan objectives against the SA/SEA framework • Develop the Local Plan option including reasonable alternatives • Evaluate the likely effects of the Local Plan and alternatives • Consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects • Propose measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan
Stage C – Prepare the SA/SEA report	

SA/SEA Stage	Key deliverables
Stage D – Seek representations on the SA/SEA report from consultation bodies and the public	
Stage E – Post adoption reporting and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and publish post-adoption statement • Monitor significant effects of implementing the Local Plan • Respond to adverse effects

1.5 Structure of the Report

Through the SA/SEA process it is required that relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives that have an impact on the local plan being prepared are highlighted. A list of these relevant documents can be found in Appendix 1 of this report. This sets out such policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives from the international, national, sub-national and local level.

The document has been split up into the following key topics:

- Population, health and wellbeing
- Housing
- Economy and employment
- Natural environment and landscape
- Climate change and flooding
- Historic environment
- Land, soils, waste and resources
- Water resources and quality
- Transport, air quality and noise

Within each topic area baseline information has been collected to highlight the latest most up to date picture for East Herts. As the Local Plan progresses there may be new evidence documents that emerge which are relevant to the SA/SEA process, these will be used to update the SA/SEA at relevant stages.

Alongside the baseline information and through evaluation of relevant plans and programmes future trends have been identified for each topic. A narrative has been provided on the impact that these trends will have on the East Herts area

in the absence of a new local plan and what sustainability issues and problems will need to be addressed through the formation of future policies.

Lastly, SA/SEA objectives have been identified for each topic area, which have informed a framework that will be used to assess policies, options and proposals through the local plan process. These will be used to assess the likely significant effects that such proposals may have on the plan and/or area and will support the decision making process.

2.0 Population, Health and Wellbeing

2.1 Baseline and local context

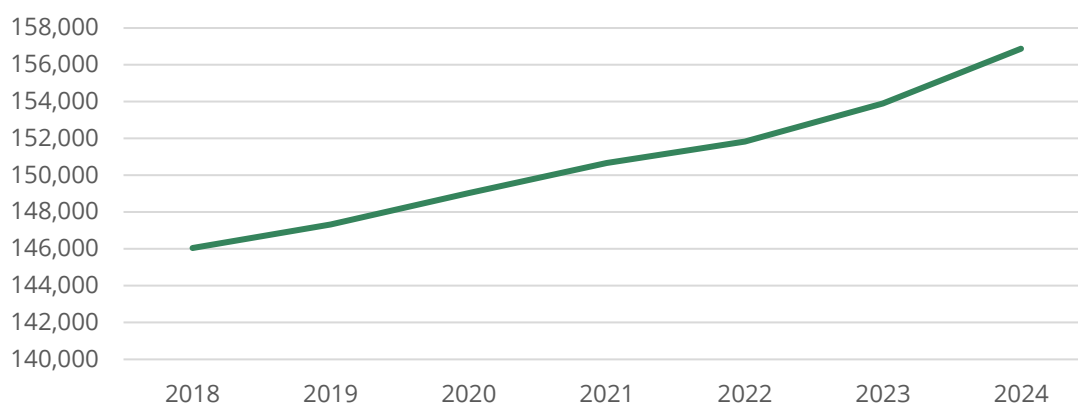
East Herts is a great place to live, and the vibrant communities are a testament to that. People here are healthy and happy, and the district is renowned for its outstanding educational and leisure facilities, making it a desirable place for individuals and families seeking a high quality of life.

The below sections present the current situation in East Herts, looking at overall population and future trends for the district, and specific characteristics of the district's population, such as age, sex, ethnicity, identity and health.

2.1.1 Population Size and Future Trends

East Herts has a growing population, estimated at 156,875 people (2024). The population grew by 5.94% between 2018 and 2024, and is projected to increase by 4.65% by 2033. The population growth seen in East Herts is higher than the percentage increase in Hertfordshire and in England between the years of 2018 and 2024.

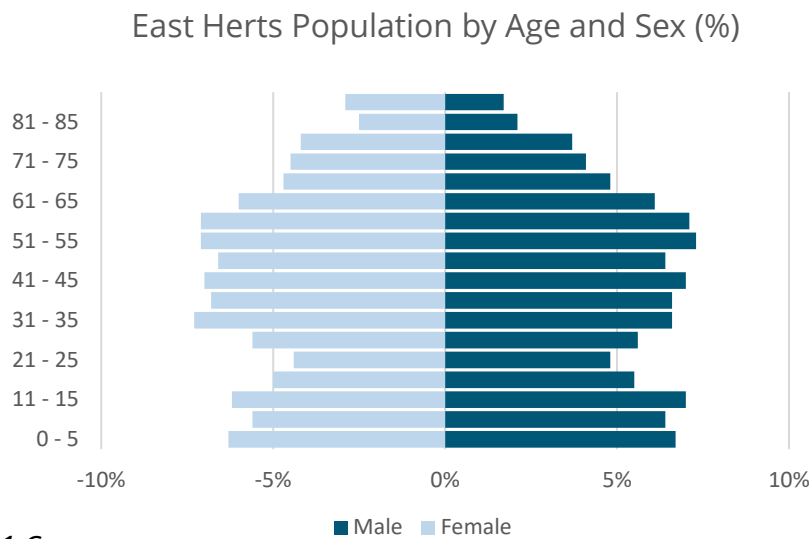
Figure 2.1: Population estimate by year in East Herts



Source: ONS, 2026

Just over half of the population in East Herts are female (51.3%), with males making up 48.7%. Age and sex are presented in the population pyramid in Figure 2.2. The median age in East Herts is 42. The percentage of East Herts' population that is aged 0 to 15 is 19.2%. Working age population in East Herts (16 to 64) is 61.9% - this is similar to the national average.

Figure 2.2: Population pyramid showing the age and sex of East Herts population



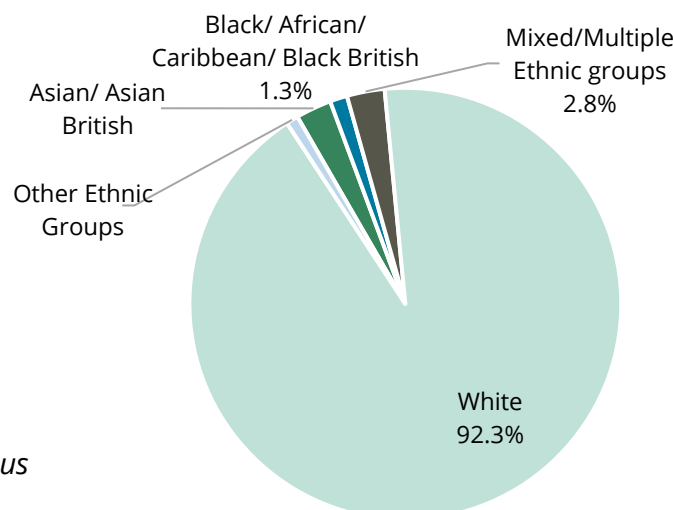
Source: 2021 Census

There is a growing ageing population in the district, in line with the national trend. Between 2011 and 2024, the percentage of population aged 65+ has increased from 15.4% to 18.9%. It is projected that a quarter of the district’s population will be 65+ by 2043.

2.1.2 Ethnicity

Data from the 2021 census shows that 92.3% of people in East Herts identify their ethnic group as ‘White’. This is the predominant group in the district, followed by 2.8% of people identifying their ethnic group as ‘Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups’. In comparison, 81% of people in England and 81.8% of people in Hertfordshire identify their ethnic group as ‘White’.

Figure 2.3: Pie chart showing the population in East Herts by ethnic group (%)



Source: 2021 Census

2.1.3 Religion and Belief

Of those with a religious faith in East Herts, the largest group is Christian (49.1%), followed by Muslim (1.2%), and Hindu (0.6%), reflecting national trends. 41.8% of people in East Herts follow no religion.

2.1.4 Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

According to the 2021 census, 91.4% of people in East Herts identify as 'Straight or Heterosexual' and 2.3% identify as LGB+ ('Lesbian or Gay', 'Bisexual' or 'Other sexual orientation'). The percentage of those who identify as LGB+ in the district is lower than across England and Wales, but similar to the statistics for Hertfordshire. 6.3% of people in East Herts chose not to answer this census question.

It is estimated that in the district, 0.25% of the population identify as trans (including 'Trans woman', 'Trans man', 'Non-binary', and 'All other gender identities'). Just under 5% of people chose not to answer this census question.

2.1.5 Pregnancy and Fertility

The total fertility rate (TFR) in England and Wales in 2024 was 1.41 children per woman. This is the lowest value on record for the third year in a row. The TFR in East Herts was 1.53 children per woman - higher than the national rate and the Hertfordshire rate. Over time, the rate in East Herts is decreasing which reflects the national trend of falling fertility rates.

2.1.6 Disability

In the 2021 census, 78.9% of people in East Herts reported that they were 'not disabled under the Equality Act' and had 'no long-term physical or mental health conditions'. 13% (20,462) of East Herts residents were disabled (under the Equality Act). This percentage is similar to the number of disabled residents in the county (13.92%).

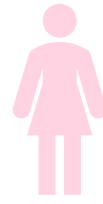
2.1.7 Health

The following subsection looks at indicators of physical and mental health in the East Herts population, compared with regional and national averages. Health is influenced by social determinants and environmental conditions, alongside genetic factors. For example, access to green spaces, air quality and pollution,

commuting distance, social isolation, levels of deprivation, and poverty all have impacts on a person's health and life expectancy. Therefore, many of the areas discussed below link to and are influenced by the indicators discussed throughout this scoping document.

In East Herts, life expectancy at birth for men is 82 years and for women is 85.6 years, both above the national average for England and the county average for Hertfordshire.

82.0 years males



85.6 years females

Life expectancy differs depending on the area of the district a person lives. Looking at wards in East Herts, Ware Christchurch has the lowest life expectancy at birth for males (76.9) and Ware Chadwell has the lowest for females (77.8).

Healthy life expectancy, which is the number of years people can expect to live in 'good' general health, has been decreasing. In East Herts, the healthy life expectancy for females is 69.8 years and for males is 68.6 years. This is longer than the Hertfordshire averages and national averages.

In 2024, the mortality rate for under 75s from all causes of death was 226 per 100,000 people in East Herts. This is lower than the rate for England (329.4 per 100,000) and puts East Herts above the 75th percentile for the country. Over recent years, there has been no significant change in mortality rates for the district. The mortality rate for those under 75 from causes considered preventable was 94.6 per 100,000 people, which is lower than rates in the region and nationally.

Smoking prevalence in East Herts (in adults aged 18 and over) was 7.6% in 2024. This is lower than prevalence in Hertfordshire (8.0%) and England (10.4%).

Disease

In the district in 2024, 20.1% of adults were obese - this is lower than the average in England. Between 2015/16 and 2023/24, adult obesity prevalence has increased by 1.3% in East Herts.

Of children at Year 6 age (10 to 11 years old) living in East Herts, obesity prevalence was 14.8%, and healthy weight prevalence was 71.4%. The proportion of children at a healthy weight is higher in East Herts than the national average of 63.2%.

Mortality rates related to cardiovascular disease in East Herts have been decreasing in recent years – a positive trend. Many other disease related mortality rates in the district have not shown a significant change over time.

Asthma prevalence (in those aged 6 and over) in the district is 6.9% and has been increasing over the past five years, reflecting national trends. It is slightly more common in East Herts than Hertfordshire (6.1%) and England as a whole (6.6%).

The percentage of East Herts' residents reporting long term musculoskeletal problem is 14.3% which is lower than the percentages for Hertfordshire (16.5%) and England (17.9%).

Physical activity

In East Herts, 71% of adults (aged 19+) are physically active – this is higher than the percentage of physically active adults in the county (70.1%) and across England (67.4%). Whilst most adults in East Herts are active, 14.6% are physically inactive, which means they do less than 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week.

86.4% of adults in East Herts walk or cycle at least once a month – the second highest in the Hertfordshire and higher than the county average. 78.9% of adults in East Herts walk or cycle at least once a week.

Of children and young people (aged 5 to 16 years old) in East Herts, 55.6% are physically active, which is again higher than the percentage for the county (52.1%) and the country (49.1%).

Wellbeing and Mental Health

In the Annual Population Survey, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) asks people to rate their well-being through four measures: life satisfaction, feeling things in life are worthwhile, happiness, and anxiety. The most recent results of this survey (2022/23) are shown in Table 2.1. Overall, the data for East Herts is similar to the regional and national averages.

Table 2.1: Self-reported wellbeing²

Indicator	East Herts	East of England	England
Anxiety 0 – ‘not anxious at all’ 10 – ‘completely anxious’	3.6	3.2	3.2
Feeling life is worthwhile 0 – ‘not at all worthwhile’ 10 – ‘completely worthwhile’	7.8	7.8	7.7
Happiness 0 – ‘not at all happy’ 10 – ‘completely happy’	7.2	7.4	7.4
Life Satisfaction 0 – ‘not at all satisfied’ 10 – ‘completely satisfied’	7.5	7.5	7.4

Of those who took part in the self-reported wellbeing survey in East Herts, 32.4% had high levels of anxiety. This is a larger percentage than in Hertfordshire (24.0%) and nationally (23.3%) and puts East Herts in the lower percentile.

3.2% of East Herts residents who took part had a low happiness score. This is lower than the percentage for England (8.9%), showing less people in East Herts scored themselves as ‘not at all happy’ compared to national averages.

Health Facilities

Health care in the district is provided by the NHS Central East Integrated Care Board (ICB) (formerly known as the Herts and West Essex ICB³). There are 12 GP practises that operate in East Herts⁴ and a range of pharmacies across the district. There is one NHS hospital: Hertford County Hospital which is located in Hertford and provides a range of outpatient services. There is a minor injuries unit in Bishop’s Stortford as part of Herts and Essex Community Hospital. The Council runs the East Herts Healthy Hub to provide residents with information and advice around general health and wellbeing.

² Data from Annual Population Survey, ONS

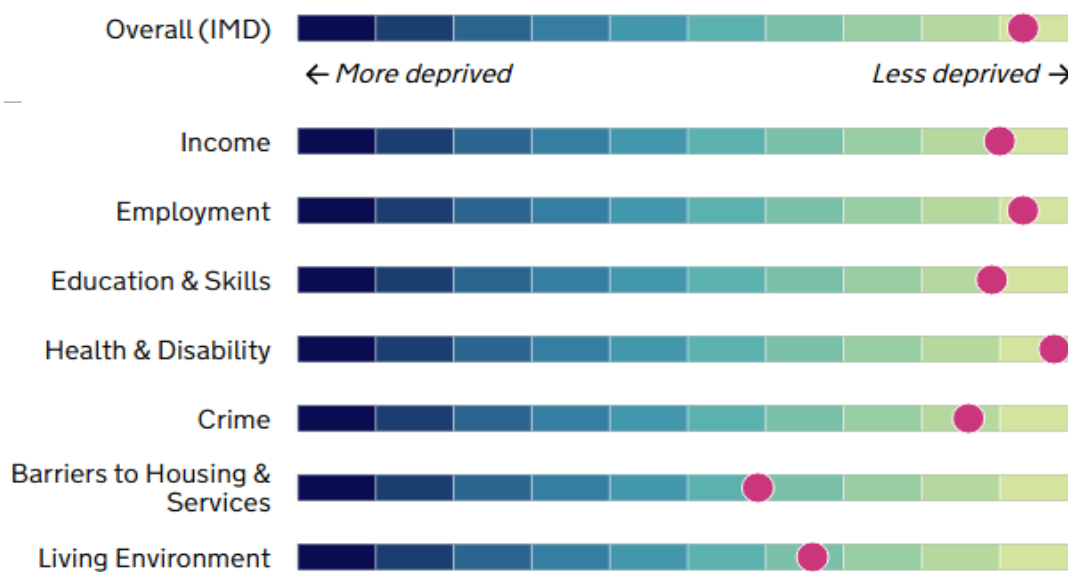
³ [Herts and West Essex Integrated Care System](#) – new boundary as of 1st April 2026

⁴ [Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care System](#) – GP Practices

2.1.9 Indices of Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranks lower layer super output areas (LSOAs⁵) by seven categories: income, employment, education and skills, health and disability, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment. The overall IMD for East Herts puts the district as less deprived than 93% of local authority districts in England. The ranking of each index can be seen in Figure 2.4 below.

Figure 2.41: Index of multiple deprivation for East Herts, split by the 7 categories



Source: MHCLG, 2025

Looking at the LSOAs within East Herts, there are some areas that experience more deprivation than others. The map below shows the range across the district.

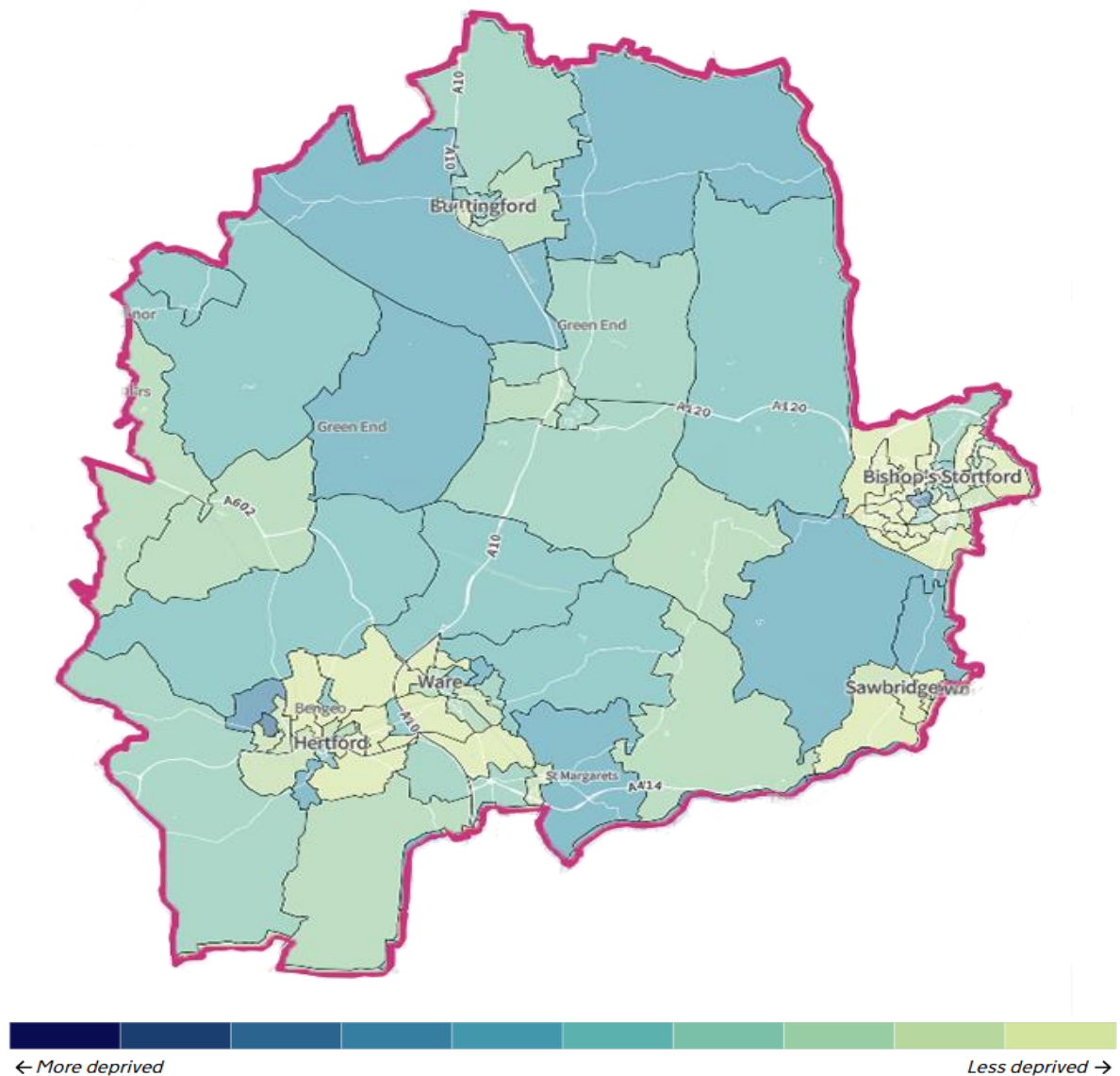
East Herts is split into 89 LSOAs. The area west of Hertford (referred to as East Hertfordshire 015A) is the most deprived in the district, according to the IMD. This is due to scoring high levels of deprivation in terms of employment, education and skills, and income.

Area East Hertfordshire 003A, in the west of Bishop's Stortford, is the least deprived LSOA in the district – it is less deprived than 99% of areas in England.

⁵ Small statistical areas with an average population of approximately 1,600 residents.

The whole district ranks at the 21st least deprived out of 296 local authority districts. In 2019, East Herts was the 10th least deprived out of 317 districts. As population and boundaries have changed, it is challenging to compare the previous index with the 2025 release.

Figure 4.52: Map of East Herts showing level of deprivation by LSOA



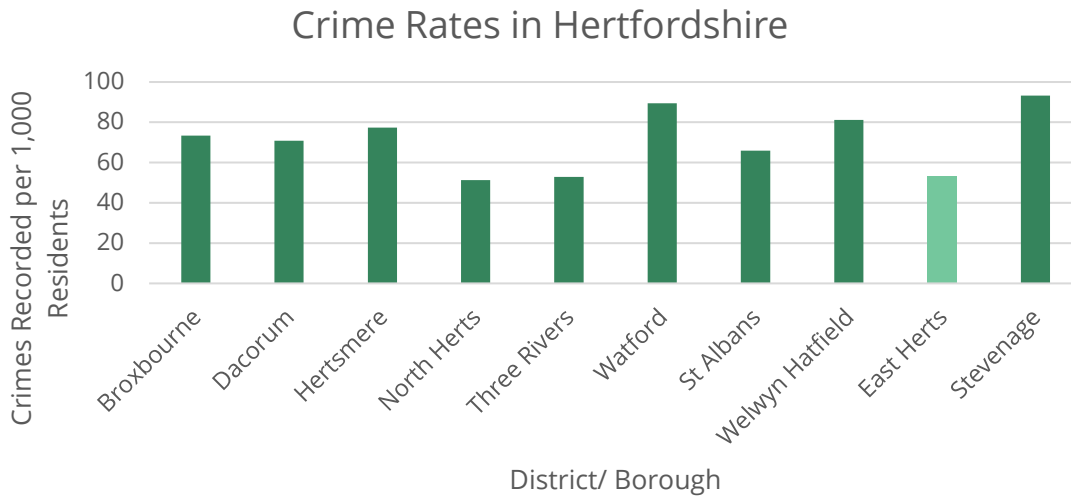
Source: MHCLG, 2025

2.1.10 Crime

As of September 2025, the crime rate in East Herts was lower than the average rate across similar areas, and the average rate across Hertfordshire. The crime

rate is calculated by looking at the number of crimes recorded in 12 months per 1,000 residents. For East Herts, this figure is 53.1 per 1,000 people (2025/26).

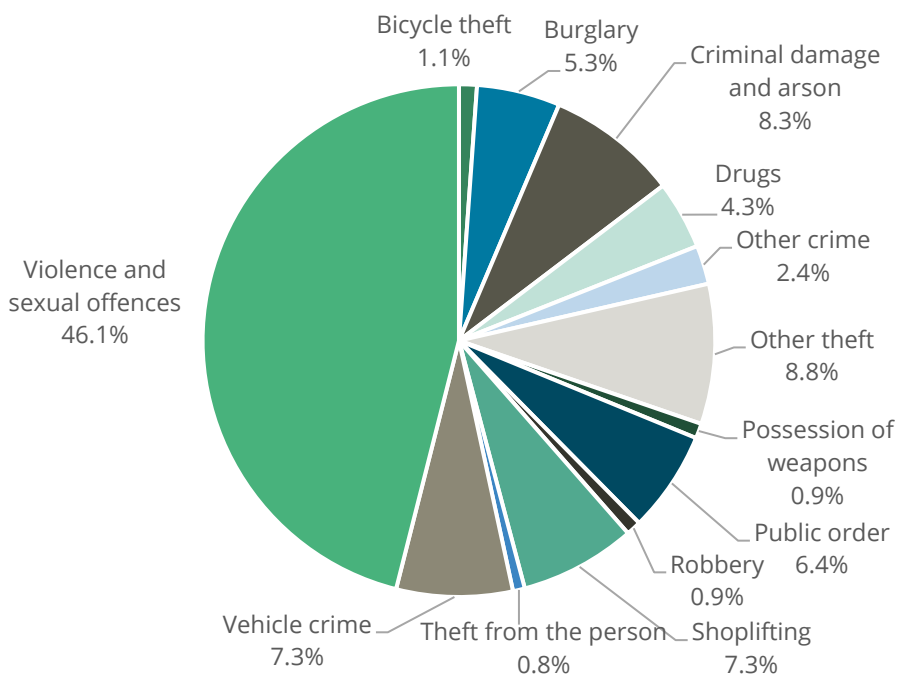
Figure 2.63: Bar chart showing recorded crime in Hertfordshire in 2025/26



Source: ONS, 2026

The most common type of crime in East Herts is violence and sexual offences (46.1%), followed by theft (8.8%). The pie chart below shows the percentages of recorded crime in the district in 2025/26 (this does not include anti-social behaviour which is recorded separately).

Figure 2.74: Pie chart showing the types of crime recorded in East Herts between Feb 2025 and Jan 2026



Source: Home Office, 2026

2.1.11 Education

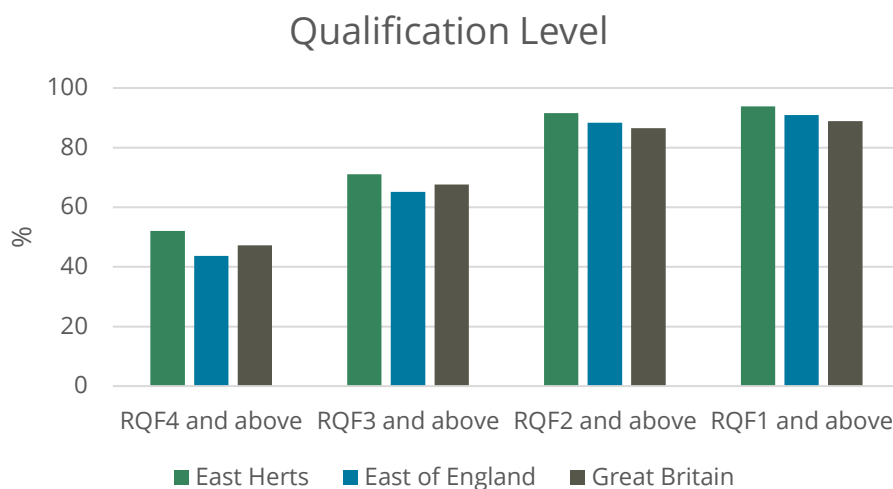
In East Herts, there are over 80 schools providing high quality education. Hertford Regional College offers further education opportunities from their Ware campus. Schools in Hertfordshire exceed the national average for Ofsted rating – 91.1% of the county’s schools are rated as ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ compared to 90.4% of schools across England.

There is a gender attainment gap in the district where girls in East Herts performed better than boys in their Early Years assessment by 14.0% in 2025.

Pupils not taking Free School Meals in East Herts performed better in their Early Years assessment than those taking Free School Meals by 36.0% in 2025.

As presented in the chart below, people in East Herts have attained higher level qualifications compared to the averages in the region and nationally.

Figure 2.85: Qualification levels (Regulated Qualifications Framework) in East Herts, compared with East of England, and Great Britain



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, 2024

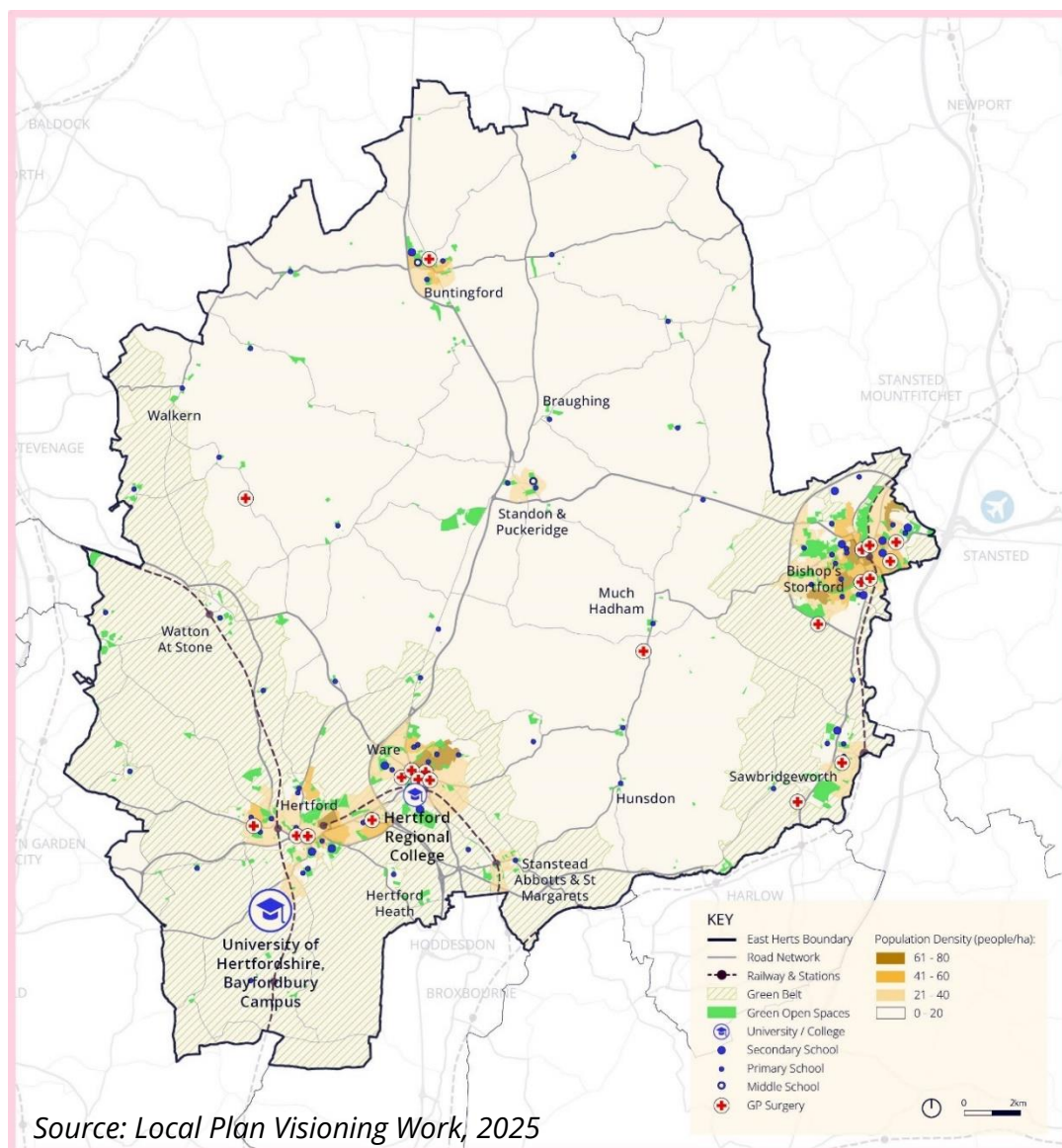
2.1.8 Access to open spaces and community facilities

East Herts has a diverse and valuable range of open spaces, offering ecological and recreational benefits. The main settlements and villages benefit from playing fields, pitches, outdoor sports facilities, accessible green and blue infrastructure, play areas and provisions for children, parks, gardens, and amenity greenspace. Chapter 5 of this document lists the environmental assets in the district in more detail.

There are around 1,694 hectares of public open space in the district. This figure includes formal open spaces, such as allotments, amenity greenspaces, parks and gardens, provision for children, and natural and semi-natural greenspace. This equates to around 10.7 hectares per 1,000 residents, which is above the recommended minimum of 3.2 hectares per 1,000 residents⁶. Figure 2.9 shows the existing greenspaces in the district.

East Herts has a selection of village and community halls that serve as vital hubs for social, cultural, and recreational activities. These facilities provide important spaces for many communities across the rural district. There are five libraries in East Herts – one in each of the main settlements.

Figure 2.9: Greenspaces and local services in East Herts



⁶ [Fields in Trust Standards](#)

2.2 Future trends without implementation of a new local plan

Population in East Herts is expected to continue to grow - estimated to be 177,039 people by 2047 (2022 projections). A growing population brings increasing pressures to communities, through the needs for housing, services and infrastructure. It is important to plan appropriately for not only population increase, but the changes of the needs arising from the population, a local plan will help to ensure sustainable growth is delivered.

There is a growing ageing population in the district which will need to be supported through specialist, accessible and adaptable housing, alongside innovative design to encourage accessible public realm and transport routes. Without a plan-led approach, the appropriate amount of accessible housing related to need and future projections may not be provided. This will limit independence and increase isolation for older people, and put more pressure on health and care services in the area.

Whilst deprivation in the district is low compared to national levels, there are still some inequalities between different areas across East Herts. These different levels can impact health, life expectancy and quality of life for residents. Without a plan-led approach, inequalities are likely to increase. Strategic policies can support areas such as sufficient employment and education opportunities and improvements to accessibility and affordable housing in the district.

The category of deprivation that is under most stress across East Herts is 'access to housing and services'. A Local Plan will be able to plan for a range of new housing and services in appropriate locations to increase supply. This will improve residents' access to sufficient housing.

Healthy life expectancy has been decreasing over time meaning people may experience bad health in later years of their lives. This puts pressure on health and care services. By integrating health into strategic policies based on evidence, environmental determinants of poor health, such as air pollution and lack of access to open spaces, can be tackled. A plan-led approach will ensure valuable existing open spaces can be protected, and suitable routes to access open spaces are provided to support the mental and physical wellbeing of East Herts residents. As well as the potential to create and improve greenspaces.

Physical activity rates in the district are higher than national averages. However, there are 14.6% of adults in East Herts who are inactive, and obesity rates have

increased in recent years. It is important to encourage accessible and inclusive active travel and exercise to continue good rates of physical activity across different demographics in the district. Strategic policies can ensure active travel routes are planned when development is brought forward to connect the district through healthy modes of transport, such as walking, wheeling and cycling.

The majority of crimes recorded in East Herts were categorised as 'violence and sexual offenses'. Although, crime in East Herts is lower than in surrounding areas, it is important to ensure public spaces and travel routes feel safe to the general public. Design and policy can be used to create safer spaces and prevent potential future increase in crime. Reduced crime and reduced fear of crime will positively impact wellbeing and encourage more active travel across the district, linking together many of these issues.

2.3 Local sustainability issues and problems

The key sustainability issues and problems that are faced locally in relation to population, health and wellbeing include:

- The pressure of a growing population on demand for housing, services, and infrastructure to be provided in the district.
- The pressure on specialist housing supply and health and care services due to the ageing population. Lack of accessible and adaptable housing will limit independence for older people and cost health and care services in the district more.
- Inequalities across the district and pockets of deprivation, impacting life expectancy, health, opportunities and prosperity.
- Rising obesity levels increasing health issues and adding pressure to health services.

2.4 Identifying the SA/SEA framework

Table 2.2 highlights the proposed SA/SEA objectives for the population, health and wellbeing needs within the district. The decision-making questions can be used when appraising emerging policies within the new local plan.

Table 1.2: Proposed SA/SEA objectives for 'Population, Health and Wellbeing'

SA/SEA Objectives	Decision making questions
<p>To support the needs of the whole population, through creating inclusive and active environments, whilst reducing health inequalities and improving overall health outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are housing, services and infrastructure being provided create/ support sustainable communities? • Is demand for specialist accommodation being met? • Are proposals providing adaptable and accessible housing, services and/ or infrastructure? • Does the proposal aim to improve the measures/ indices of deprivation? • Are those with protected characteristics being supported by this proposal? • Is the accessibility of health and social infrastructure be improved? • Is active travel encouraged through accessible routes and green infrastructure? • Is access to open spaces and leisure facilities provided? • Is access to open spaces and leisure facilities improved?

3.0 Housing

3.1 Baseline and Local Context

3.1.1 Housing Stock and Mix

The Government's latest estimate for dwelling stock in East Herts is 67,719 dwellings (Live Table 125⁷, 2024). Of these, only 28 dwellings are owned by the Local Authority. 86.6% of the housing stock in East Herts are privately owned dwellings compared to 83.3% for England as a whole (Live Table 100, 2024).

The 2018 District Plan allocated a minimum of 18,458 new houses over the plan period of 2011 to 2033. Since 2011, 10,299 net houses have been completed. The table below shows the annual net housing completions over the past five years in the district.

Table 2.1: Net housing completions in East Herts by year (April - March)

Year	Net Completions
2020/21	805
2021/22	872
2022/23	887
2023/24	1388
2024/25	778

Of the dwellings completed between April 2024 and March 2025, 77.5% were houses, 19.5% were flats, apartments, or maisonettes, bungalows made up 1.2%, and mobile, temporary and dwelling equivalents made up 1.7%.

23% of dwellings completed in 2024/25 were built on previously developed land (PDL). There has been a decrease in the percentage of residential completions built on PDL in the district since 2017/18.

The Government's standard method for calculating housing need was revised in December 2024⁸. Under the new method East Herts' housing need is 1223 dwellings per year (using the affordability ratio published in 2026).

⁷ [All MHCLG Live Tables on Dwelling Stock](#)

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

3.1.2 Housing Market

In January 2026, the average house price in East Herts was £460,671⁹. This is similar to the average house price in Hertfordshire (£466,972) and higher than the average for the region East of England (£336,455) and the country (£290,437).

Over the past 10 years (January 2016 to January 2026), the average house price in East Herts has increased by 28.8%. This is a higher percentage increase than in Hertfordshire (23.6%) but lower than the increase for the region (31%) and the country (38.2%).

The affordability ratio for East Herts is 10.66¹⁰, in line with the ratio for Hertfordshire (10.64). This means median house prices in the district are 10 times the average gross annual earnings of East Herts residents. The affordability ratio for the whole country is lower at 7.63.

3.1.3 Affordable Housing

There are an estimated 9,055 affordable dwellings in East Herts (2024). The 2018 District Plan required 35% of housing delivered on sites proposing 11 to 14 dwellings to be affordable, and 40% on sites proposing 15 or more dwellings (Policy HOU3). Of the dwellings completed between April 2024 and March 2025, 32.7% were affordable tenures (this is a total percentage on all sized sites, including windfall and smaller sites which Policy HOU3 may not have applied to).

At the end of December 2025, there were 2,613 live applications on East Herts housing register¹¹. 61% of those on the register live in East Herts. 27% are currently in a social housing tenancy in the district and are seeking a transfer. The greatest demand is for smaller properties – over half (52%) of households on the register require a 1-bed property.

3.1.4 Occupancy Rates

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are defined in Section 254 of the Housing Act 2004, as a house or flat let to three or more tenants, who form two or more

⁹ <https://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi/?lang=en>

¹⁰ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

¹¹ East Herts Quarterly Housing Monitor report (October – December 2025), available at: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/housing/housing-policies-and-strategies>

households, and who share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet. In East Herts, landlords currently need an HMO licence in most cases if a property has five or more occupants forming more than one household.

According to a 2017 study, 843 houses were in multiple occupations (HMO) in the district, of which 168 were licensable under the 2018 definition¹². As of March 2026, there are 80 licensed HMOs on the East Herts Public Register¹³.

The percentage of houses that were recorded as overcrowded in East Herts in the 2021 census was 2.5%. This is a lower percentage than for England (4.4%). East Herts, however, has a higher proportion of under-occupied houses (more bedrooms than required) than the percentage for the country: 72.9% of housing stock in the district and 68.8% of England’s housing stock are under-occupied.

3.1.5 Vacancy Rates

As of October 2025, it is estimated that there are 1,493 vacant homes in East Herts (MHCLG, Live Table 615). Data on vacant homes in the district over the past 15 years can be seen in the graph below.

Figure 3.1: Graph showing the estimated number of vacant dwellings in East Herts annually between 2010 and 2025



Source: MHCLG, Live Table 615, 2026

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/private-renting/houses-in-multiple-occupation;>
<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/hmo>

¹³ <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/hmo-licencing#:~:text=Landlords%20need%20an%20HMO%20licence,or%20change%20your%20licenc,e%20online:>

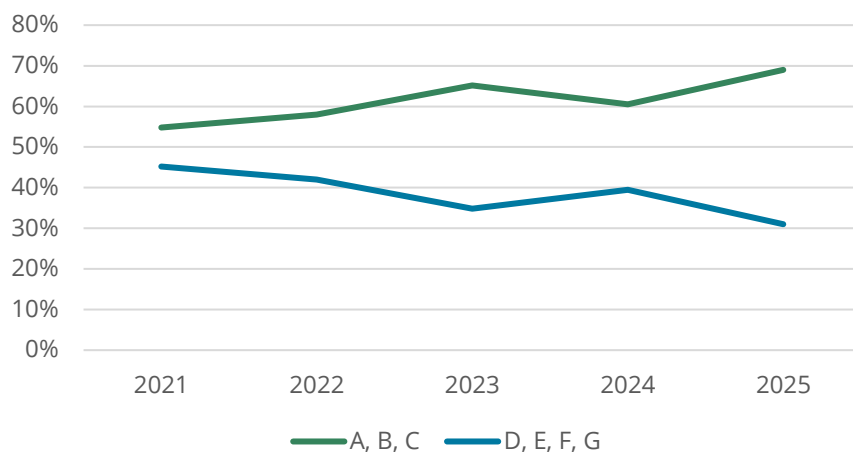
3.1.6 Housing Quality and Efficiency

Quality of housing has a significant impact on human health and wellbeing, as well as on the environment. Unsuitable living conditions, such as homes that are cold, damp, overcrowded or unsafe, can impact residents' quality of life and mental and physical health¹⁴.

According to research undertaken by the Building Research Establishment in 2017, 15% of privately owned homes and 14% of privately rented homes in East Herts contained a hazard deemed to be category one (the most serious) under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)¹⁵.

Additionally, the energy and water efficiency of housing have implications for the environment and the climate crisis. Energy performance certificates (EPCs) rate how energy efficient a building is on a scale of A (most efficient) to G (least efficient). A property with a higher efficiency rating will emit less CO₂ and be less expensive to heat and light. The below graph shows an increase in the percentage of energy efficient homes (rated A, B and C) in the district over the past five years.

Figure 3.26: EPC ratings in East Herts, 2021 to 2025



Source: MHCLG Live Table on Energy Performance of Building Certificates, 2026

¹⁴ The Hertfordshire Healthy and Safe Places Framework discusses housing insecurity and poor-quality housing as determinants of health. This framework is available at:

<https://hertshealthyplacemaking-hertscc.hub.arcgis.com/>

¹⁵ <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/housing/poor-conditions-private-rented-housing/housing-health-safety-rating-system>

Furthermore, the efficiency and quality of housing have economic costs and can push people into fuel poverty. Fuel poverty is driven by a combination of low income, high fuel costs, and poor energy efficiency. A household is considered fuel poor if they live in a property with an EPC rating of D or below, and they spend more than 10% (or a reasonable amount) of their income on heating their home to a comfortable level. In East Herts, 7.8% of households are considered to be fuel poor¹⁶. This is lower than the percentage for Hertfordshire (8.1%) and England (11.4%). The area with the highest proportion of fuel poor households in the district is LSOA 019D which is in the ward The Mundens (14.9%).

3.1.7 Self and Custom Build Housing

The Council keeps a Self and Custom Build Register to understand the level of demand for self or custom build housing in the district. As of March 2026, there were 61 individuals on part 1 and 27 individuals on part 2 of East Herts Self and Custom Build Register. In 2025, East Herts granted permission for 32 self or custom build dwellings.

3.1.8 Specialist and Older Persons Accommodation

Specialist housing can provide accommodation for older people and people with specific needs or vulnerabilities. There is a wide range of different types of specialist housing, including care and nursing homes, sheltered housing, supported living, lodging for care leavers, and student accommodation.

Older persons housing is monitored in the district by measuring completions that fall under the C2 Use Class in the Use Class Order, which includes residential care homes and nursing homes. East Herts has already achieved the 530-bed spaces target (set in the 2018 District Plan under policy HOU6), with a total of 1,153 bedrooms for older people delivered between April 2011 and March 2025.

There is growing demand for different types of accommodation for older people, which range in levels of support. Another result of the ageing population is that dementia is becoming more common. Dementia friendly design and housing can support the health and wellbeing of people living with the syndrome.

¹⁶ Sub-regional fuel poverty data 2025 (2023 data): https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/f3009590-2bc9-40d9-8dc3-571e6fddae45/fuel_poverty_sub-regional_statistics

The district does not have any universities or further educational facilities that require student accommodation, therefore there is none of this type of accommodation in the district.

3.1.9 Accessible Housing

There are existing discrepancies between supply and need of accessible, adaptable and wheelchair user housing, especially between local authorities across the country. The ageing population in the district will increase the number of people with mobility problems, meaning the need for accessible, adaptable, and wheelchair user dwellings is likely to increase, adding further pressure to supply.

The two standards for accessible housing design, M4(2)¹⁷ and M4(3)¹⁸, can be integrated into Local Plan policies to influence the accessibility of new housing.

3.1.10 Homelessness

Between 1st January and 31st December 2025, 1,827 households approached East Herts' homelessness service for advice and assistance. 553 households over the year were assessed as owed a duty – 270 were threatened with homelessness and owed the prevention duty and 283 were homeless and owed the relief duty¹⁹.

The homelessness rate in East Herts in 2024/25 was 0.8 out of 1000 households were in temporary accommodation and 9.4 per 1000 households were owed a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act. Both these rates are lower than the value for England and put the district in the 75th percentile compared to other local authority areas.

Looking at data since 2018, homelessness rates in the district have increased, with a decrease in 2020/21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in line with national trends, which have been influenced by global and national economic pressures.

¹⁷ Accessible and adaptable homes.

¹⁸ Wheelchair user dwellings.

¹⁹ The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) introduced two legal duties for councils. The prevention duty means councils must take reasonable steps to stop someone from losing their home within 56 days. The relief duty means councils must help someone who is already homeless to secure suitable accommodation. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/overview-of-the-homelessness-legislation>

3.1.11 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

In relation to Gypsies and Travellers, the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Need Assessment (GTANA), published in 2022, identified a need for 52 pitches to be delivered between 2022 and 2037²⁰. Since 2022, East Herts Council has granted permission for 14 new pitches (net). In addition to these permissions, factors such as out-migration, have meant the remaining outstanding need is 33 pitches, with 18 pitches required to come forward in the first five years (2022 – 2027). Permissions for 15 pitches have also been granted as part of the major strategic development of the Gilston area²¹.

In relation to Travelling Showpeople, there is one travelling showperson site within the district, Rye House, which suffers from overcrowding. The GTANA identified that 27 plots are required in the district to 2037. Additional plots have been granted as part of villages 1-6 as part of the major strategic development of the Gilston area (3/19/1045/OUT).

3.2 Future trends without implementation of a new local plan

Speculative development is likely to come forward in the district. Without a plan-led approach to development, it is likely the Council will have less impact over the sustainability and appropriateness of these developments. The Council will have less influence over the services and infrastructure that is delivered alongside speculative housing developments or the financial contributions made by developers to support appropriate local facilities. Without a Local Plan the Council would also have a weaker position on requiring proportions of specific housing types to meet local need, such as affordable housing or specialist housing for older people.

A plan-led approach can ensure sufficient housing to meet growing demands and the government's targets are allocated. It will also ensure required housing is located in suitable locations and development is delivered sustainably to support new and existing communities. This approach can also ensure housing for the ageing population is provided. Housing for older people can range in

²⁰ [https://cdn-eastherts.onwebcurl.com/s3fs-public/2022-08/East%20Herts%20GTANA%20Final%20Accessible%20Report%20\(2\).pdf](https://cdn-eastherts.onwebcurl.com/s3fs-public/2022-08/East%20Herts%20GTANA%20Final%20Accessible%20Report%20(2).pdf)

²¹ 7 pitches granted at Villages 1-6 (3/19/1045/OUT); 8 pitches granted at Village 7 (3/19/2124/OUT).

levels of support, including adaptable and accessible housing to improve independence for older people, reducing pressure on health and care services.

Residential development on previously developed land (PDL) has decreased over recent years, meaning there has been more development on greenfield land. Without a plan-led approach, it is likely this will continue, whereas strategic policies and site allocations can support the identification of appropriate development on PDL.

The Self and Custom Build Register held by the Council shows an increasing demand for this type of housing. Strategic policies can be used to ensure self and custom build plots are allocated and provided to meet this demand, including on appropriate larger development sites.

House prices in East Herts are high compared to national averages and increasing reflecting the national trends. Alongside other influences, housing stock supply and demand impact house prices. By increasing housing supply, as required by the government, affordability of housing can be supported/improved. Strategic policies can be adopted to require a percentage of affordable housing to be delivered on major development sites. A plan-led approach can also ensure affordable housing is located in appropriate locations to meet local demand and is supported by the correct infrastructure and services.

Homelessness rates are increasing nationally, including in the district. Increasing and allocating affordable housing in appropriate sustainable locations via a plan-led approach, can help to alleviate this issue by making more affordable options available.

Housing quality and efficiency have significant economic, environmental and social impacts. A plan-led approach to housing can help to ensure dwellings are built to higher energy and water efficiency standards, as well as promoting renewable energy systems, such as solar panels and heat pumps. This will reduce emissions and support residents where energy prices are rising.

A plan-led approach can also ensure masterplanning and high design standards are required when developing residential sites. This will have many benefits on the sustainability of new and existing communities, for example design can create dementia friendly housing and public spaces to support the ageing population.

3.3 Local Sustainability Issues and Problems

The key sustainability issues and problems that are faced locally in relation to housing in East Herts include:

- Meeting the Government’s requirements for housing numbers in a sustainable way
- Delivering appropriate housing for specific groups within the community, such as an ageing population and the Gypsy and Traveller community
- Providing for a sufficient amount of affordable homes, including the different options of available products
- Improving the quality and efficiency of existing and future dwellings to have positive environmental impacts
- Meeting local demand for self and custom build houses

3.4 Identifying the SA/SEA Framework

Table 3.2 highlights the proposed SA/SEA objectives for the housing within the district. The decision-making questions can be used when appraising emerging policies within the new local plan.

Table 3.2: Proposed SA/SEA objectives for Housing

SA/SEA Objectives	Decision making questions
To provide high quality and efficient housing to meet the needs within the district, including affordable housing and the needs of specific groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal provide housing that has a high EPC rating? • Does the proposal include renewable energy systems to power or heat the home? • Does the proposal include enhanced utility standards? • Does the proposal provide a mix of housing and tenures to meet local need? • Does the proposal support local need for specialist housing? • Are dwellings being built to accessible and/or adaptable standards? • Are any self or custom build plots being provided on site? • Is there a suitable proportion of affordable housing provided?

SA/SEA Objectives	Decision making questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="549 275 1321 409">• Does the proposal support the timely delivery of housing to meet government requirements and sufficiently increase supply?

4.0 Economy and Employment

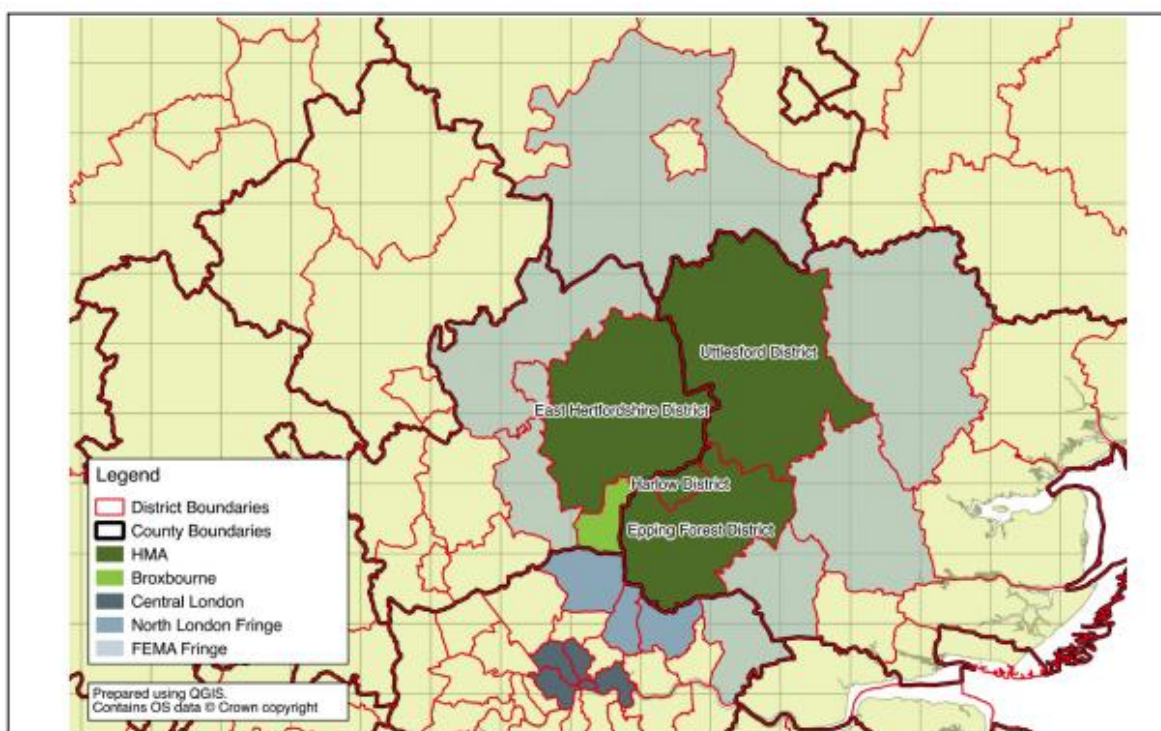
4.1 Baseline and local context

4.1.1 Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA)

East Herts is surrounded by the larger centres of Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City, Stevenage, Letchworth and Baldock, located along the A1(M) corridor. To the south and east there are the urban areas of Hoddesdon, Cheshunt and Harlow. Due to the relationship of these areas they all have economic draws from East Herts.

The latest Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) study from 2015 found that East Herts fell within the West Essex FEMA, this includes Uttlesford, Harlow and Epping Forest in Essex as well as Broxbourne in Hertfordshire. The FEMA is illustrated in figure 4.1 below, this also shows the FEMA fringe which includes neighbouring authorities which have a relationship with the FEMA.

Figure 4.1: Functional Economic Market Area



Source: [Hardisty Jones Associates - Economic Evidence to Support the Development of the OAHN for West Essex and East Herts 2015](#)

4.1.2 Employment and wages

There are 33 different employment areas in the district, the majority of these areas can be found around the urban areas of Buntingford, Bishop's Stortford, Hertford and Ware.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS)²² found in 2024 that of those who are economically active within the district 84% are within employment, this is higher than the East (78.6%) and Great Britain (75.6%). Gross weekly pay by place of residence (pay of those living within the district) was well above the national and regional average at £960.60 compared to £804.90 (eastern region) and £766.60 (Great Britain). Comparatively gross weekly earnings by place of work (those working in the district) was less at an average of £843,70. This shows that higher salaries can be found outside of the district than within.

In terms of occupation 67.6% of workers fell into group 1-3 of the standard occupational classification, this includes managers, directors, senior officials and professionals; 12.5% were in groups 4-5 which include administrative and secretarial occupations and skilled traders; 11.4% included caring, leisure and other service occupations, as well as sales and customer service operatives; and 8.5% were groups 8-9 which include process plant and machine operatives and elementary occupations.

There are a range of industries in East Herts, the ONS found in 2024 that the largest industries by number of employee jobs included wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles, as well as administrative and support service activities. Both of these industries accounted for 14.3% each of employee jobs in the district overall.

East Herts is a rural district and therefore has a range of rural businesses and industries within it. Some of these are small in scale and are not allocated within the District Plan, however, provide local jobs for communities in rural areas. These are therefore valuable for localised movement patterns.

As identified by the FEMA there is an economic draw from neighbouring authorities. Additionally, Stansted Airport, is a major centre of employment that lies just outside the district boundary to the north east of Bishop's Stortford and falls within the Uttlesford district. From approved and submitted plans there is

²² [Office for National Statistics – Labour and Market Profile East Hertfordshire 2024](#)

an ambition from the airport to increase passenger numbers up to 51 million passengers per year by 2040, if approved this will likely increase employment opportunities in the district.

4.1.3 Retail and town centres

Retail and leisure facilities, along with education and healthcare services also provide valuable sources of employment. Businesses located in or with good connections to a town centre for example can help to support these uses and can benefit from shared resources and good public transport connectivity.

Within East Herts there are five town centres within the district that support a range of retail as well as a mix of uses such as leisure and office spaces. There are also a number of local centres and parades throughout the district supporting more localised shopping patterns. A list of the existing retail hierarchy from the District Plan can be found in table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Retail Hierarchy in adopted District Plan 2018

Retail Hierarchy	Location
Principal Town Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishop's Stortford
Secondary Town Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hertford
Minor Town Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buntingford • Sawbridgeworth • Ware
District Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Thorley Centre, Bishop's Stortford
Neighbourhood Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishop's Park, Bishop's Stortford • Bishop's Stortford North • Birchall Garden Suburb, East of Welwyn Garden City • Gresley Park, East of Stevenage • North and East of Ware • The Gilston Area Whittington Way at Bishop's Stortford South
Local Parade: Bishop's Stortford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hockerill • Havers Parade • Snowley Parade
Local Parade: Hertford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fleming Crescent, Sele Farm • The Avenue
Local Parade: Ware	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Green, Kingshill • Cromwell Road • King George Road

Retail Hierarchy	Location
Local Parade: Villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puckeridge • Standon • Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Watton-at-Stone

4.2 Future trends without implementation of a new local plan

Due to the need for housing there is a pressure on existing employment land to be redeveloped for housing. Such land is previously developed and therefore sought after for housing. These areas of land are however valuable to support local employment opportunities which have added benefits of being accessible to the local communities and reduce the need to travel further distance for work, which has added personal and environmental benefits. A new local plan can steer development away from these employment areas and provide further protection for them.

There is a strong link to key employers outside of the district such as Stansted Airport, which has a particular draw for residents within Bishop's Stortford. The plans to increase passenger numbers will likely increase job prospects for residents within East Herts, it is therefore important to ensure the airport is accessible through appropriate means such as sustainable travel.

Town centres are valuable to the area as they can help to support local businesses and provide hubs for connectivity and employment, in sustainability terms this helps to reduce the need to travel further distances for employment which have added benefits. It is important to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres by providing a mix of uses, ensuring they remain accessible to all and keep visitor numbers up. A local plan can help to achieve this through seeking regeneration opportunities and cross location of uses such as residential on upper floors and retail or community uses on the ground floors.

4.3 Local sustainability issues and problems

The key sustainability issues and problems that are faced locally in relation to the economy and employment include:

- Supporting residents within the district to access a range of local employment opportunities sustainably, as well as access to other employment opportunities such as Stansted Airport.

- Protecting existing employment sites and where appropriate creation of new employment sites to support existing and emerging employment industries within the area.
- Protecting and enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres as mixed use hubs, as well as local centres and parades.

4.4 Identifying the SA/SEA framework

Table 4.2 highlights the proposed SA/SEA objectives for economy and employment within the district. The decision making questions can be used when appraising emerging policies within the new local plan.

Table 4.2: Proposed SA/SEA objectives for 'Economy and employment'

SA/SEA Objectives	Decision making questions
To support a strong and diverse economy that provides accessible employment opportunities for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the proposal support the local economy through diversification and new opportunities? • Will the proposal support new local employment opportunities? • Does the proposal support resilience to the economy, such as improved employment spaces and improved access to existing employment opportunities? • Does the proposal support the viability and vitality of town centres, local centres and local parades?

5.0 Natural Environment and Landscape

5.1 Baseline and local context

A number of areas in East Herts are specifically designated either nationally or locally for their contribution to habitats, biodiversity and geological features. These are important features to ensure wildlife and biodiversity thrive, whilst protecting key natural features within the district. Designated ecological assets include:

- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Ramsar Sites
- Sites of Special Scientific Areas (SSSIs)
- Priority Habitats
- Irreplaceable Habitats
- National Nature Reserves
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Local Nature Reserves

5.1.1 Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) are areas designated to protect particular habitats, plants and species, these areas are designated under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Within East Herts the Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC is designated for its representation of Sub-Atlantic and medio-European oak or oak-hornbeam forests.

5.1.2 Special Protection Area (SPA)

Special Protection Areas (SPA's) are internationally designated areas, that have been identified as areas of international importance for breeding, feeding, wintering and the migration of rare and vulnerable migratory bird species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Four areas within the district are classified under the Lee Valley SPA, this includes Rye Meads and Amwell Quarry. The Lee Valley SPA spans from London and Hertfordshire and includes a mosaic of important wetland habitat for bird conservation across the region.

5.1.3 Ramsar Sites

Ramsar Sites are wetlands of international importance that have been designated to protect the biological and physical features of wetlands, these have been designated under the Ramsar Convention (1971) – Wetlands of International Importance. Within the district Rye Meads and Amwell Quarry which form components of the Lee Valley Ramsar Site, this site overlaps the Lee Valley SPA.

5.1.4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is land notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended), sites are designated by Natural England. Sites are designated for their characteristics that support rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features. All of the internationally designated sites within the district are also designated as SSSI's, in total there are 16 SSSI's within the district, this includes:

- Moor Hall Meadows SSSI
- Great Hornead Park SSSI
- Patmore Heath SSSI
- Benington High Wood SSSI
- Plashes Wood SSSI
- Thorley Flood Pound SSSI
- Hunsdon Mead SSSI
- Rye Meads SSSI
- Amwell Quarry SSSI
- Hertford Heath SSSI
- Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Woods North SSSI
- Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Wood South SSSI
- Tewinbury SSSI
- Hillcollins Pit SSSI
- Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI
- Downfield Pit, Westmill SSSI

Table 5.1 below highlights the latest recorded condition of the SSSI's within the district.

Table 5.1 SSSI condition in East Herts

SSSI Type	Area (ha)	% of SSSI Total in East Herts
Favourable	340.75	50.6%
Unfavourable - Recovering	209.19	31.0%
Unfavourable - Declining	102.99	15.3%
Unfavourable - No change	20.84	3.1%

Source: Natural England, 2024

5.1.5 National Nature Reserves (NNR'S)

National Nature Reserves (NNR's) are areas managed for either (or both) the preservation of flora, fauna, geological and physiological features of special interest or to provide opportunities to study flora, fauna and their physical conditions. An NNR is land declared under the National parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 or Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, sites are selected by Natural England that meet certain criteria. Broxbourne Wood NNR lies to the south of the district and forms part of the only NNR in Hertfordshire, it contains several woodlands of SSSI status, which are home to many rare and scarce woodland wildlife.

Hatfield Forest, located to the East of Bishops' Stortford, is a large forest run by the National Trust and is designated as a NNR and SSSI. Natural England wrote to the Council in 2025 explaining that the habitats and species which make the Forest special were being harmed by visitor usage and that this would be made worse by future developments nearby. They have developed a programme of mitigation work to prevent the situation getting worse. New developments built in the area need to pay towards implementing them. Larger developments (approximately 50+ residential units) will also need to provide or pay for sustainable alternative natural green space (SANG).

The Council therefore expects all relevant developments to pay this tariff for mitigation works (£540.07 per net additional dwelling) within the zone of influence area which is affecting Hatfield Forest.

5.1.6 Local Nature Reserves (LNR'S)

Local Nature Reserves (LNR's) are places of special local wildlife, geological or educational interest or significance identified by local authorities. LNRs within East Herts include Pishiobury Park and Waterford Heath.

5.1.7 Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS)

Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) are locally designated sites for their local and regional importance considered to be of significance for their wildlife features. LoWS in the district are identified by the Hertfordshire Local Wildlife Sites Partnership, which is a partnership approach to the identification, selection, assessment and protection of LoWS in the County, this is led by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. There are currently 544 LoWS in East Herts totalling 3,309.14 ha.

5.1.8 Priority Habitats

Some semi-natural habitats in England are especially rare or under threat. These are known as Priority Habitats, identified under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 as being in most need of conservation. The Government has published a list of Priority Habitats of principal importance in England and includes 56 habitats. A number of these habitats can be found within the district, additionally the features of such habitats also provide protection to areas such as Ancient Woodlands. Priority Habitats within the district include, but are not limited to:

- Deciduous woodland – there are many deciduous woodlands within the district, some of which are internationally or national designated in addition to being a Priority Habitat. This classification also provides protection to the many Ancient Woodlands within the district. Deciduous woodland areas in East Herts include Broxbourne Woods, Box Wood, Easeney Park Wood, Post Wood and Bloodhounds Wood in addition to many others. This habitat provides the basis for a broad range of wildlife as well as recreational opportunities in some circumstances.
- Traditional orchard – these habitats are home to heritage fruits and other species, these are run through long standing processes. Traditional orchards can be found within Sawbridgeworth, Thundridge and scattered between smaller villages throughout the district.
- Lowland meadows – these flower rich meadows and pastures are species rich due to traditional systems of hay-cutting and grazing over centuries. In non-agricultural settings such as churchyards and roadside verges lowland meadows can also be found, however are rarer. There are few examples of lowland meadows within the district, however they can be found to the east of Ardeley and north of Watton at Stone.

- Chalk Rivers – these are rare and ecologically significant assets. East Herts is home to seven of the chalk rivers of just around 210 chalk streams globally.

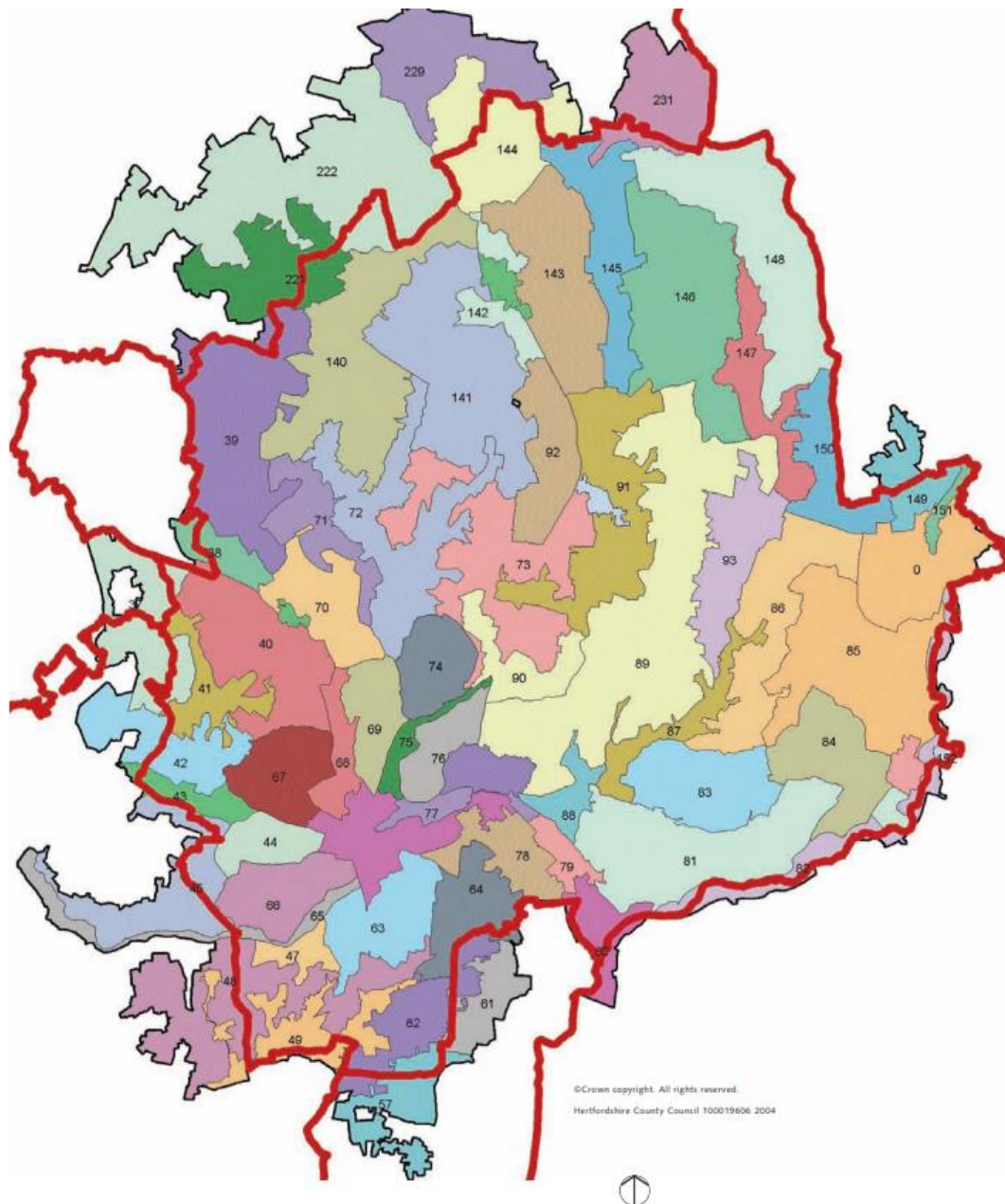
5.1.9 Landscape

East Herts has a vast rural landscape which is made up of woodlands, open fields and parklands shaped by river valleys and arable plateaux. Hedgerows are also an important feature throughout the district, reflecting the historic enclosure of agricultural fields and defining land ownership boundaries. Many hedgerows throughout the district are considered as being ‘important’ (as defined under the Hedgerow Regulations, 1997) and are key elements of green corridors, contributing towards wider ecological networks.

There are no specific nationally or locally protected landscapes within the district, however Lee Valley Regional Park is nationally recognised and protected asset within London, Hertfordshire and Essex. This park provides space for leisure, recreation and nature, as well as providing a rich landscape character within the district.

There are diverse landscape character areas and settlement patterns in the district which are assessed in the Council’s Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (September 2007). The document provides a structured evaluation of these landscapes, a landscape strategy and guidelines for strengthening, reinforcing, improving, reconstructing, conserving and restoring the character of each area. The landscape character areas are illustrated in figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1: Landscape Character Areas in East Herts



Source: [Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2007](#)

5.2 Future trends without implementation of a new local plan

The latest State of Nature Report 2023²³ provided a comprehensive overview of species trends across the UK. It found that since 1970 UK species have declined by about 19% on average and nearly 1 in 6 species (16.1%) are now threatened with extinction. There are many factors that contribute towards this, one of which is the effects of climate change which have created more extreme weather conditions such as excessive rainfall and longer periods of drought.

²³ [State of Nature Report 2023](#)

Such changes to weather patterns can cause uncertainty for more sensitive ecosystems and as such can lead to degradation and loss of habitat.

In July 2025 the Council declared an ecological and biodiversity crisis²⁴ this led to a number of actions to help to overcome such issues, including embedding nature recovery into the Council's strategic plans, policy areas and decision making processes and prioritising investment in nature-based solutions to climate change. Additionally, the Council published its biodiversity duty report²⁵ in 2026 which is a requirement of the Environment Act 2021. This set out a number of actions the Council will seek to achieve in the next five years to fulfil its biodiversity duty and have positive impacts to biodiversity locally. A local plan can be a tool to help implement the actions of this ecological and biodiversity crisis, without a plan reaching such targets may be more difficult to achieve.

There is an increasing pressure for housing across the country, with the NPPF requiring local authorities to meet specific housing requirements. The demand for housing puts an increased pressure on land which poses risks to habitats and species if designated sites deteriorate either through loss of designation, loss of ecological networks, potential increased recreational pressures from local inhabitants and associated pollution as a consequence of development. Without a plan-led approach, sites may be developed without relevant policy criteria which could have cumulative negative impacts on habitats and designations.

In addition to the pressure to habitats, species and designated sites that is posed from housing need is the pressure on character rich areas and locally valued landscapes. Without a strategy for housing delivery within the local plan there is a risk that locally valued landscapes will be at risk from speculative development.

The Environment Act 2021 brought into force the requirement for mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on development sites to protect the country from further loss of habitat. This is a positive step towards reducing the impact that development can cause to the natural environment and help support nature recovery through bigger, better and more connected ecological networks. A local plan may be vehicle to further increase this mandatory requirement, if viable, to further help restore and enhance ecology in the district.

²⁴ [East Herts – Ecological and Biodiversity Crisis](#)

²⁵ [East Herts – Biodiversity Duty 2026](#)

In addition to BNG the Environment Act 2021 introduced Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS's). LNRS's are strategies that support directing biodiversity and habitat interventions into areas that can have the greatest positive impact towards nature recovery through bigger, better and more connected ecological networks to support biodiversity. The Hertfordshire LNRS ²⁶ was finalised in 2025 by the Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership and forms one of the 48 LNRS's nationally, which once completed will work towards the Government's plan to create a Nature Recovery Network (NRN). This has a number of actions to protect, restore and enhance biodiversity, whilst creating more resilient habitats and ecosystems at the national level. A local plan can help to strategically implement the actions of the LNRS through policies and location of development.

5.3 Local sustainability issues and problems

The key sustainability issues and problems that are faced locally in relation to the natural environment include:

- The pressure on land for development purposes which poses a risk to the landscapes and the natural environment through potential habitat loss, as well as the potential loss of land that could be used to improve ecological networks in the future.
- Threats to species, habitats and designated sites through increased risk of pollution associated with development, such as noise, light and water run-off.
- Increased recreational pressure on designated sites as a consequence of development and new local inhabitants.
- Potential adverse impacts to habitats and species as a consequence of climate change.

5.4 Identifying the SA/SEA framework

Table 5.2 highlights the proposed SA/SEA objectives for the natural environment and landscape within the district. The decision making questions can be used when appraising emerging policies within the new local plan.

²⁶ [Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership](#)

Table 5.2: Proposed SA/SEA objectives for 'Natural Environment and Landscape'

SA/SEA Objectives	Decision making questions
<p>To protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the district.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal support conservation and enhancement of protected sites? • Will the proposal support and enhance ecological networks and green infrastructure networks? • Does the proposal help to reverse the decline of species at risk? • Does the proposal help to reverse the decline of habitat? • Does the proposal support the conservation of habitats and species? • Does the proposal help to increase resilience of biodiversity and geodiversity to climate change impacts?
<p>To maintain, conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the landscape character within the district.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the proposal protect and enhance the local landscape and its setting? • Will landscape character areas be protected?

6.0 Climate Change and Flooding

6.1 Baseline and local context

6.1.1 Renewable energy

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DfESNZ) publishes local authority renewable energy statistics yearly²⁷. The latest 2024 data can be seen in table 6.1. This shows that anaerobic digestion accounts for the largest renewable energy generation within the district, followed by landfill gas and photovoltaics.

Table 6.1: Energy source, capacity and generation in East Herts in 2024

Energy source	Number of installations	Capacity (MW)	Generation (MWh)
Photovoltaics	3,468	19.0	15,789
Onshore wind	4	0.0	56
Anaerobic digestion	4	4.2	24,654
Sewage gas	1	2.3	Not disclosed
Landfill gas	3	5.3	22,538
Total	3,480	30.9	63,037

Source: [DfESNZ - Regional Renewable Statistics](#)

In the 2024/25 monitoring period a further 14 photovoltaics were completed within the district providing a minimum of 1.2 MW capacity. Additionally, within the same monitoring year the Council has granted planning permission for 39 renewable energy applications. This includes applications for 29 air source heat pumps, 2 for ground source heat, and 8 for solar panels²⁸.

6.1.2 Greenhouse gas emissions

The ONS publish data on greenhouse gas emissions per capita, this is calculated by the average amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced by each person in a specific area over a year. The metric is calculated by dividing the total greenhouse gas emissions of an area by its population, with the result being expressed in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (tCO₂e) per person. In 2023 the greenhouse gas emissions in East Herts was 4.1 tCO₂e per capita. This has steadily decreased on a downward trend in the district since 2005 and remains

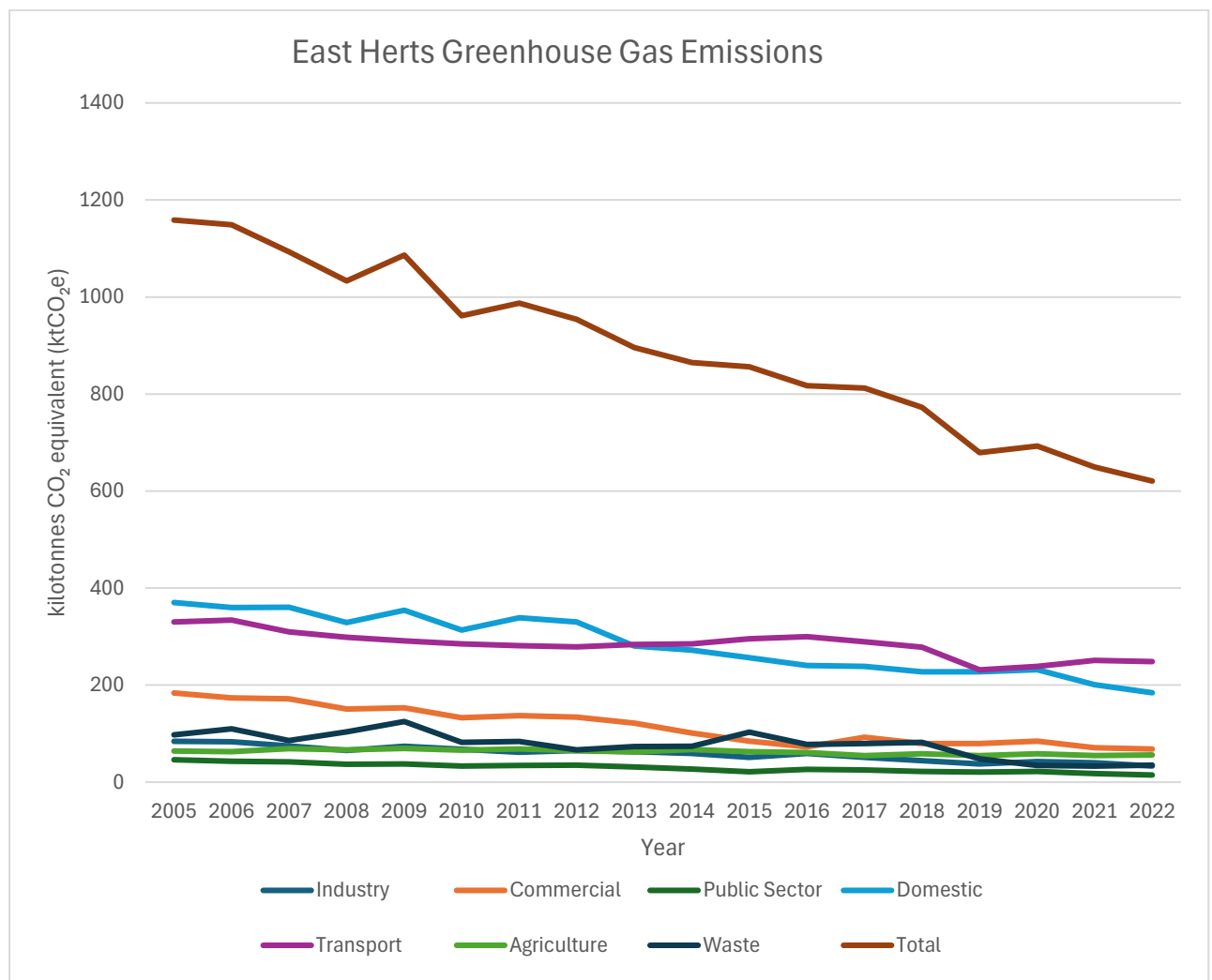
²⁷ [DfESNZ - Regional Renewable Statistics](#)

²⁸ [East Herts Authority Monitoring Report 2024-2025](#)

below national average for England which is at 4.8 tCO₂e per capita in the and the East of England at 5.4 tCO₂e per capita in 2023²⁹.

In 2023 the estimated greenhouse gas emissions in the district totalled 620.7 kilotonnes CO₂ equivalent (ktCO₂e)³⁰, this has steadily decreased since 2005. The main sources of greenhouse gas emissions, as highlighted in figure 6.1, are from domestic uses such as electricity and gas usage, as well as transport.

Figure 6.1: East Herts greenhouse gas emissions total and main sources



Source: [UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics, 2005 to 2023](#)

6.1.3 Flooding

Hertfordshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority produced the Hertfordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2 (LFRMS) 2019-2029, the

²⁹ [ONS Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2025](#)

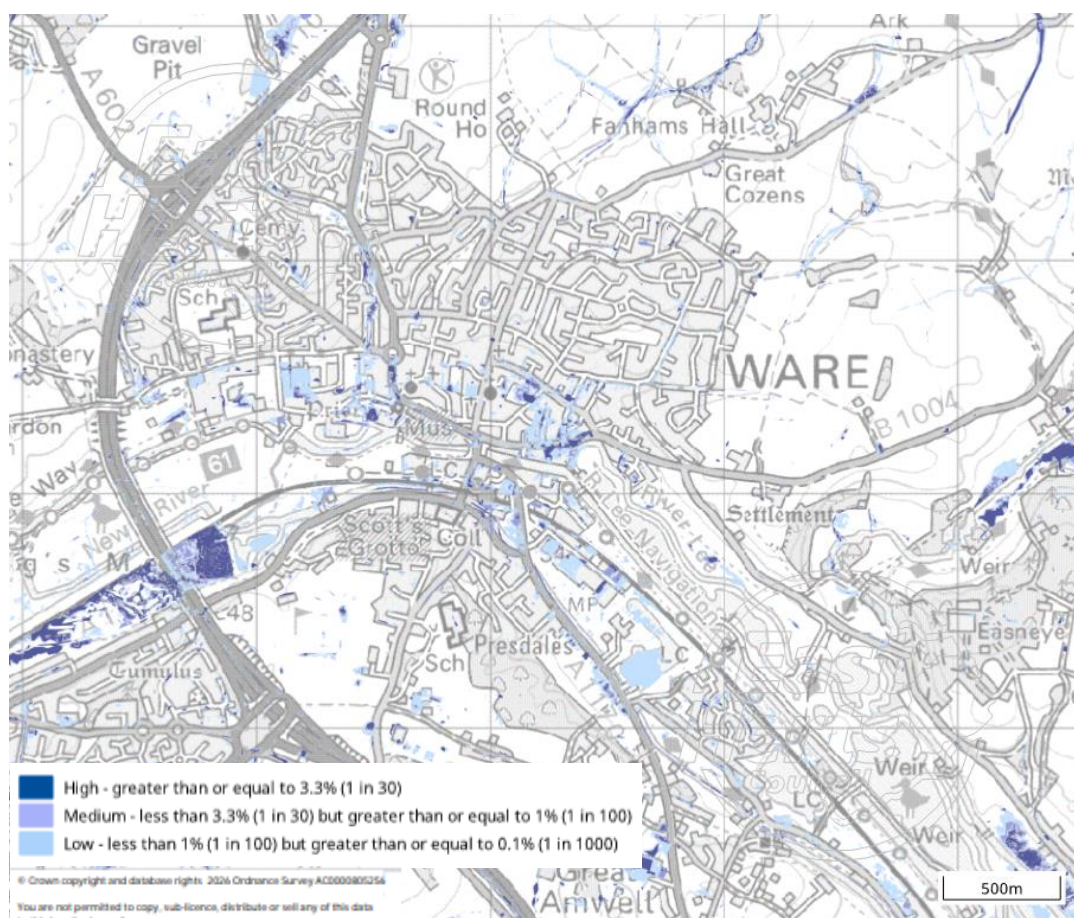
³⁰ [UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics, 2005 to 2023](#)

aim of this strategy is to give an understanding of local flood risk in Hertfordshire and the actions that will be taken to manage it most appropriately within available resources³¹. This strategy found that the main sources of flood risk within Hertfordshire are surface water, rivers and other watercourses (fluvial) and less frequently through groundwater.

The LFRMS recorded flood incidents dating from 2011 to 2018, within the district there were flooding incidents recorded within each of the five towns, as well as some within villages such as Puckeridge, Walkern and Cottered.

Surface water flood risk is caused when local drainage capacity and infiltration is unable to cope with the volume of water experienced during periods of sustained or heavy rainfall. Within East Herts the study found that 4,272 properties had a high risk (1 in 30 year) of surface water flood risk and 8,615 properties had a medium risk (1 in 100 year) of surface water flood risk.

Figure 6.2: Ware surface water flood risk



³¹ [Hertfordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2 2019-2029](#)

Figure 6.3: Bishop's Stortford surface water flood risk

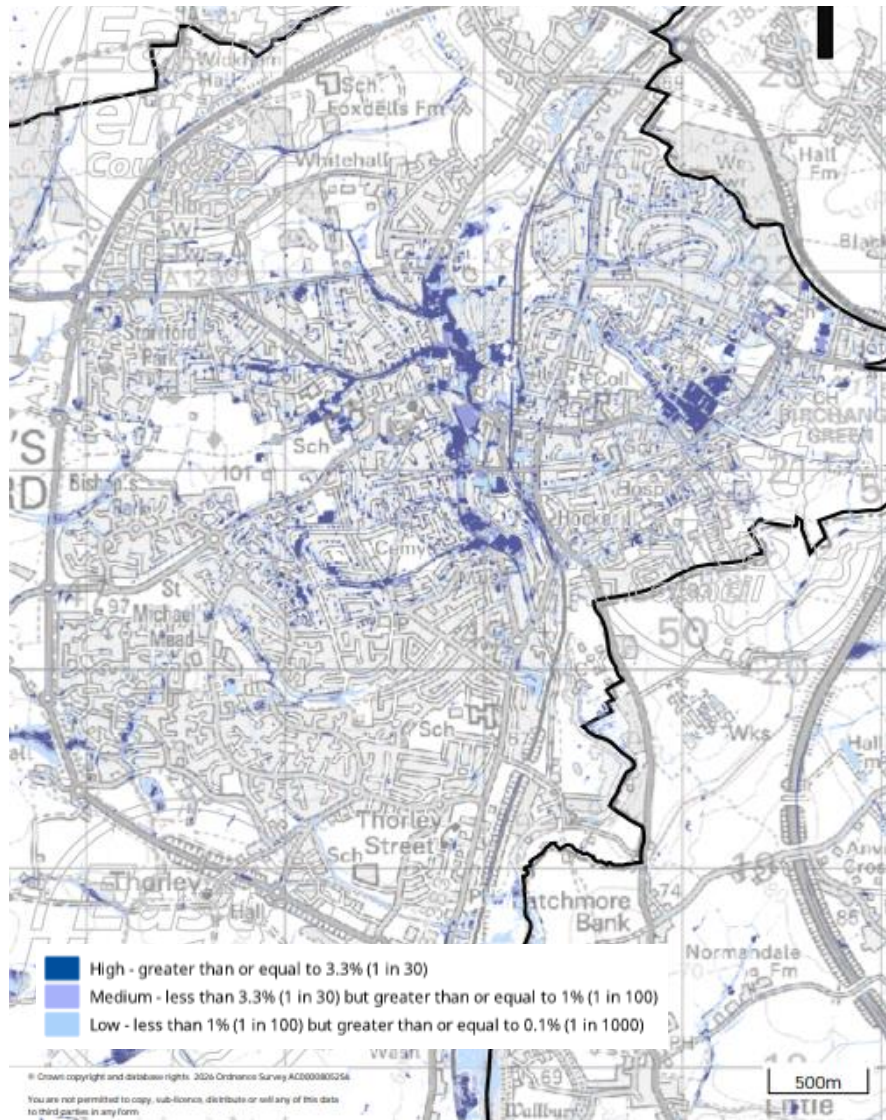


Figure 6.4: Buntingford surface water flood risk

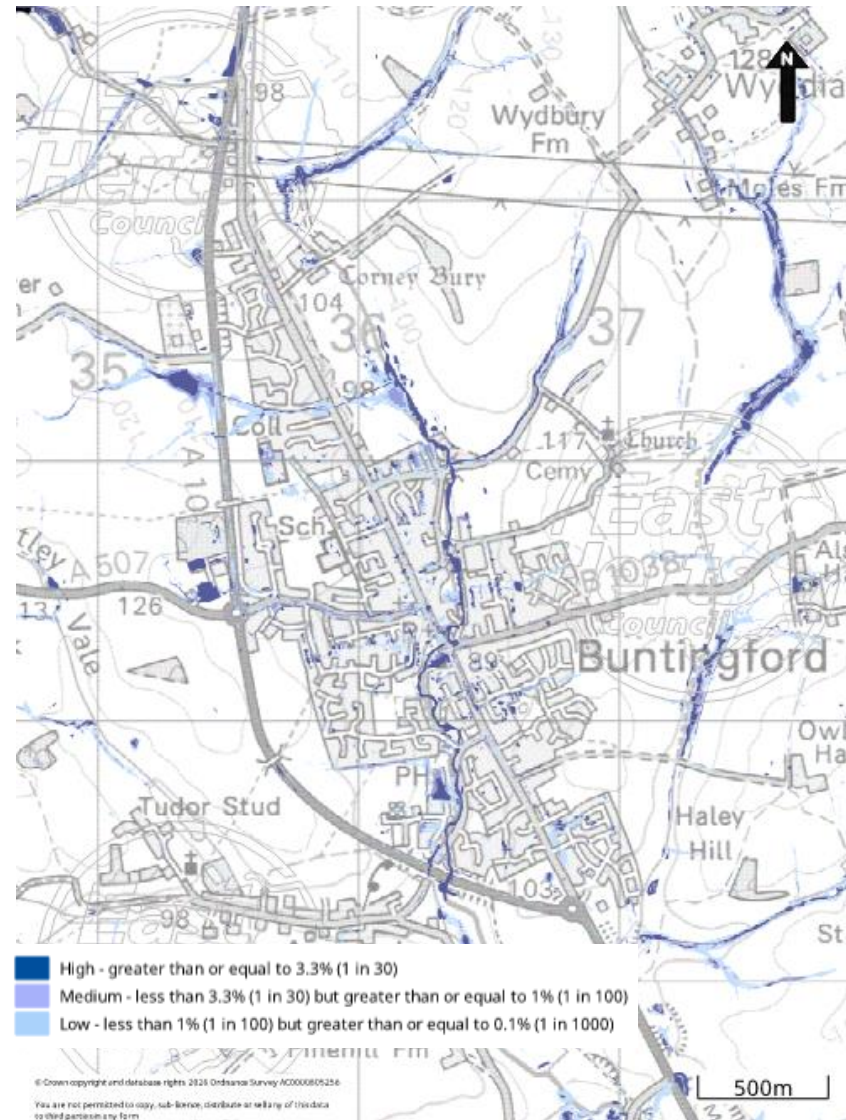
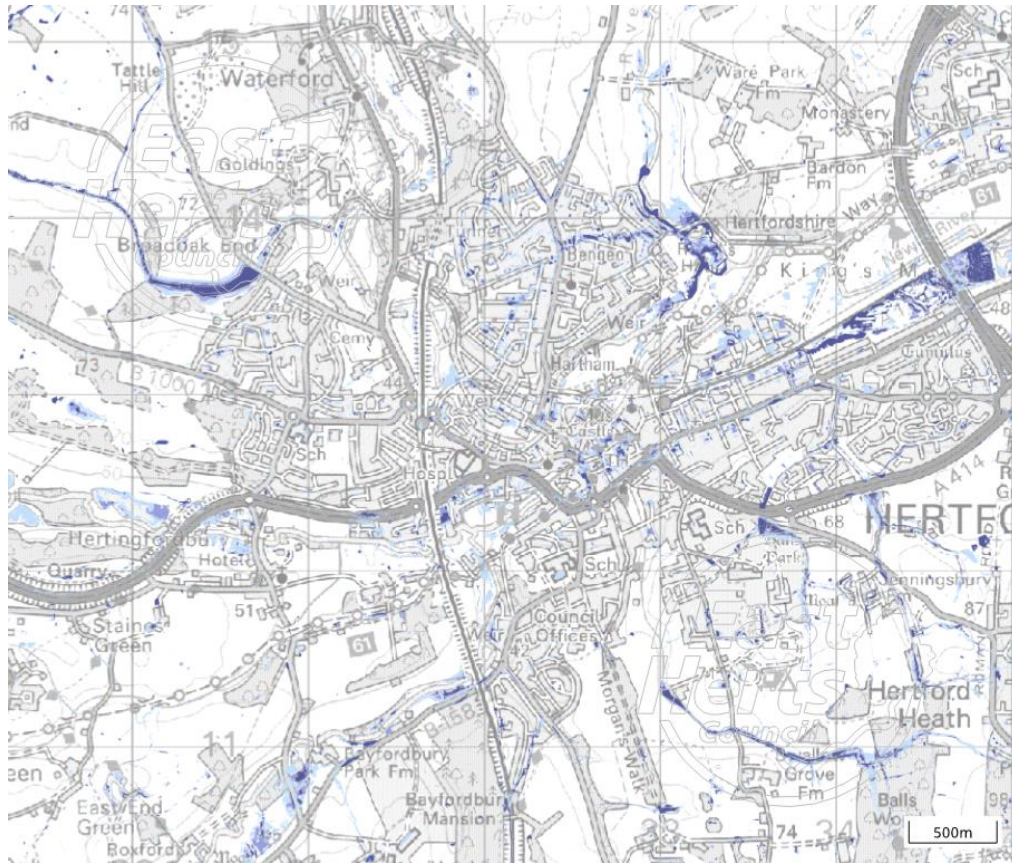
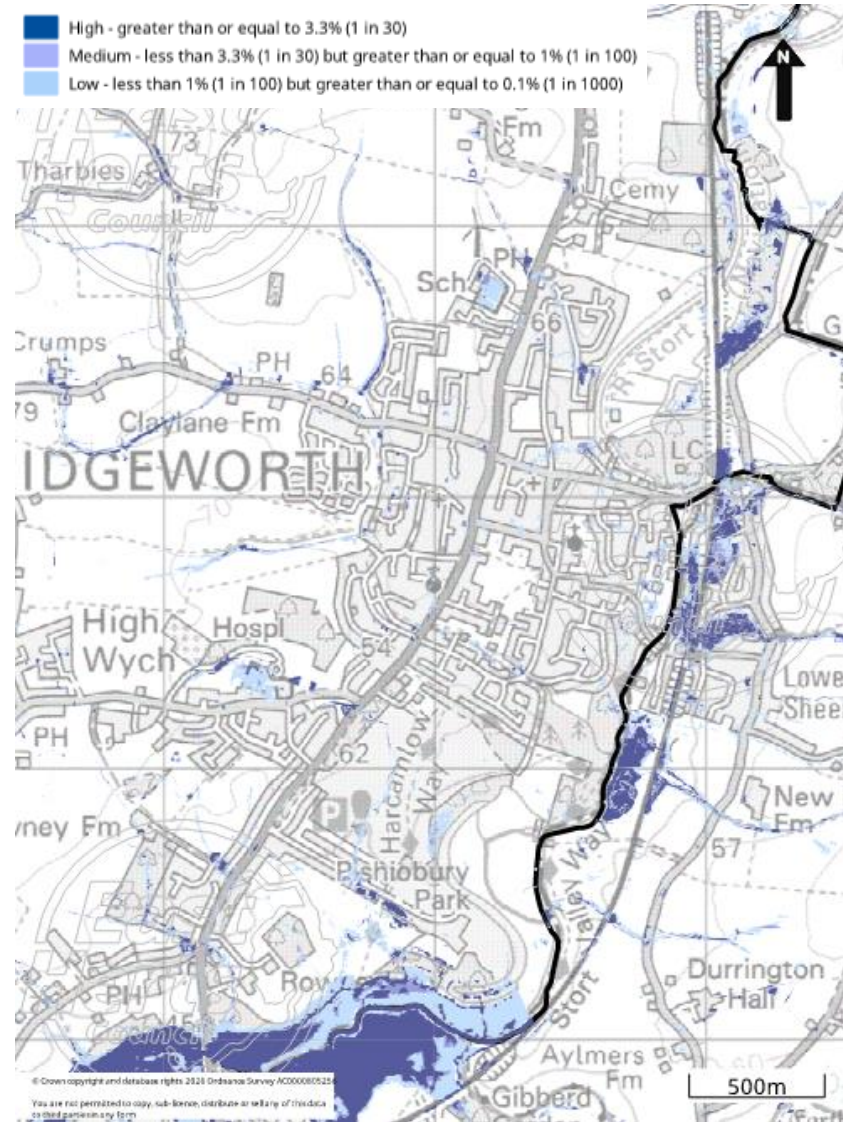


Figure 6.5: Hertford surface water flood risk



- High - greater than or equal to 3.3% (1 in 30)
- Medium - less than 3.3% (1 in 30) but greater than or equal to 1% (1 in 100)
- Low - less than 1% (1 in 100) but greater than or equal to 0.1% (1 in 1000)

Figure 6.6: Sawbridgeworth surface water flood risk



- High - greater than or equal to 3.3% (1 in 30)
- Medium - less than 3.3% (1 in 30) but greater than or equal to 1% (1 in 100)
- Low - less than 1% (1 in 100) but greater than or equal to 0.1% (1 in 1000)

Fluvial flood risk is when the capacity of a watercourse is reached causing water to spill out of the channel into adjoining areas. Larger watercourses are known as main rivers and the Environment Agency is responsible for them, the remaining watercourses are known as ordinary watercourses and are managed by the relevant authority. Figure 6.7 shows the extent of fluvial flood risk and flood zones within the district.

Figure 6.7: Flood Zones



In relation to groundwater, this type of flooding occurs when the water held underground rises to a level where it breaks the surface away from usual channels and drainage pathways, this may occur after periods of heavy rainfall or due to obstructions. The LFRMS study found that groundwater flood risk is only a small element of the overall flood risk in the county. The areas more susceptible to groundwater flooding within the district are within isolated areas of Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Ware and around areas around the A10 near Puckeridge.

The Council is currently preparing a new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, this will update the latest position and provide the latest forecasts for climate change calculations within the district. This will provide the most up to date impact climate change will have to flood risk within the district and how it can be managed.

6.1.4 Heat

The Climate Change Committee highlight that periods of high temperature are becoming more common and intense across the UK. These events not only can lead to droughts which has an impact to farming and water resources, it can also have negative impacts to health and wellbeing and economic output.

Increased temperatures are leading to health impacts from overheating and have been linked to increased death rate, in particular to more vulnerable groups such as the elderly. The negative implications to health can impact and put pressure on key services such as healthcare, with the impact to health also impacting productivity across the workforce³².

6.2 Future trends without implementation of a new local plan

In 2023 the Council declared a climate emergency³³, recognising the seriousness of climate change and the need for urgent action. This declaration committed the Council to take action to address the causes and impacts of climate change across the district and laid out a route map for the Council itself to achieve a net-zero carbon position by 2027 while at the same time working with residents, community groups and other public and private sector partners to encourage the whole district to achieve the same position by that date. This shows a desire

³² [Climate Change Committee - Risks to health, wellbeing and productivity from overheating in buildings 2022](#)

³³ [East Herts - Climate Emergency 2023](#)

to become net zero by 2027 and a local plan can implement policies that help to achieve and sustain that ambition.

Renewable energy generation within the district has been increasing in recent years, in order to keep this momentum up a new local plan can help support this upward trend with specific policies for renewable energy, this could be larger scale projects, as well as smaller householder initiatives.

The Climate Change Act 2008 commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050. Therefore, local planning authorities have a duty to shape policy which reduces greenhouse gas emissions in order to meet this national target.

Greenhouse gas emissions have been decreasing steadily since 2005 overall in the district. Transport continues to be the biggest contributor to this, although electric vehicles have increased in popularity in recent years which will help with the downward trend. A local plan can help to support this further through planning development in sustainable locations reducing the need to travel, providing more suitable alternative options for travel other than the private vehicle and implementing potential new infrastructure to improve traffic flow to help reduce emissions. Without a plan there is a risk developments could come forward that encourage the use of the private vehicle rather than more sustainable options, as well as the reduced ability for the Council to secure suitable transport interventions to make a positive strategic impact to greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate change can affect flood risk in multiple ways. Wetter winters and more intense rainfall may increase river flooding in both rural and urban catchments. More intense rainfall causes greater surface runoff, increasing localised flooding and erosion. In turn, this may increase pressure on drains, sewers and have an impact on water quality. The number of intense summer storms leading to occurrences of flash flooding could increase even in summers which may have less overall rainfall. A planned approach can help to strategically steer development away from higher risk flooding areas to ensure resilience to climate change over coming decades, as well as providing effective flood alleviation and mitigation schemes.

The UK's average temperature is expected to rise due to climate change. Extreme high temperatures are felt by people primarily through their internal

building temperature and much of the existing building stock is not built to cope with the high temperatures that the UK is already experiencing. A local plan can introduce higher standards for building requirements, which can lead to improved building stock that provides suitable heating and cooling systems to manage the effects of climate change in the coming years.

6.3 Local sustainability issues and problems

The key sustainability issues and problems that are faced locally in relation to climate change and flooding include:

- Greenhouse gas emissions from transport and domestic buildings remain high, there is a need to reduce these through building retrofitting and transport improvements and initiatives.
- There is a need to transition to a low carbon energy system. Further work is needed to increase the amount of renewable energy generation and capacity to provide energy security locally.
- More frequent extreme weather events are likely which increases the chances of flooding events, as well as periods of hot dry weather and the impact that can have to health and wellbeing.

6.4 Identifying the SA/SEA framework

Table 6.2 highlights the proposed SA/SEA objectives for climate change and flooding within the district. The decision making questions can be used when appraising emerging policies within the new local plan.

Table 6.2: Proposed SA/SEA objectives for ‘Climate change and flooding’

SA/SEA Objectives	Decision making questions
To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support a transition to net zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the proposal help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions? • Does the proposal generate or store energy from renewable energy sources?
To adapt and improve resilience to the impacts of climate change and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal consider flood risk from all sources and steer development away from the higher risk areas?

SA/SEA Objectives	Decision making questions
extreme weather events, including flooding and increased periods of heat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal reduce flood risk within the site and surrounding areas? • Does the proposal consider appropriate heating and cooling of buildings?

7.0 Historic Environment

7.1 Baseline and local context

The district has a rich and varied historic environment which includes landscapes, sites, monuments, building and townscapes, and buried remains of significant archaeological and historic interest. East Herts is characterised by five market towns, each with different qualities and characteristics. Numerous medieval villages and hamlets of varying size are also dotted across the district, the most notable being Braughing, Hertford Heath, Hunsdon, Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets, Walkern, Watton-At-Stone, Standon & Puckeridge and Much Hadham.

Heritage assets in East Herts includes:

- 46 Scheduled Monuments
- Nearly 3,100 Listed Buildings (which comprise over 4,000 individual listed features)
- 42 Conservation Areas
- 550 Areas of Archaeological Significance
- 16 Registered Parks and Gardens
- Approximately 70 Locally Listed Historic Parks and Gardens

Conservation Areas are designated for their special architectural or historic interest, these usually have a number of listed buildings as well as features such as open and local green spaces, trees, historic street patterns and archaeological sites. Each Conservation Area has a Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan, these are required to understand the unique character of each Conservation Area and set out management proposals setting out how each area can be protected and enhanced.

Historic England produces an annual Heritage at Risk Register which includes Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Grade I and II* Listed Buildings and Grade II Listed churches. In addition to Historic England's list the Council also publishes an East Herts Heritage at Risk Register which covers Grade II Listed Buildings (excluding churches) and selected curtilage Listed Buildings and structures which it considers are at risk. In the latest 2025 iterations of these documents a total 71 heritage assets are at risk, these are summarised below:

- 4 Scheduled Monuments at risk
- 2 Registered Parks and Gardens at risk
- 1 Grade I Listed Building at risk
- 1 Grade II* Listed Building at risk
- 58 Grade II Listed Buildings at risk
- 5 curtilage Listed Buildings at risk

An important consideration of heritage assets is the context and setting that it falls within. The setting can encompass the immediate area surrounding the asset, as well as the broader landscape, views, wider historical context and relationships with other heritage assets. Understanding these relationships and patterns can reveal valuable insights into the historic development of a place.

7.2 Future trends without implementation of a new local plan

The Government has set a target to become Net Zero by 2050, due to the number of historic buildings nationally there has been discussions about how heritage assets could be retrofitted to improve energy efficiency. There are sensitivities around this topic as there is a huge benefit of making such assets energy efficient through to the environment, as well as reduced management costs which can support owners to maintain upkeep of heritage assets. Some energy efficiency interventions however can have negative implications to appearance of heritage assets and damage the significance of the asset, such as location and appearance of air source heat pumps, changes in window treatment and solar panels impacting roofscape. Therefore, such measures need careful planning to understand what may be appropriate and the local plan can explore that in more detail and provide certainty on this topic to protect heritage assets, whilst striving for improved energy efficiency.

Due to the pressure on land for housing needs within the district, there is an increased risk to heritage assets where development may occur impacting the setting of such assets. Where heritage assets are at risk from the adverse impacts of development then the Historic England and the East Herts Heritage at Risk Registers are likely to increase in size. A local plan approach can help to limit the impact that speculative development may have to heritage assets and ensure that the historic environment of the district is considered at the strategic level.

The Council is currently preparing a local list of historic buildings, the intention is that this list can be adopted alongside the local plan and provide local designation and protection to these assets.

7.3 Local sustainability issues and problems

The key sustainability issues and problems that are faced locally in relation to the historic environment include:

- Ensuring all nationally and locally designated heritage assets are conserved and enhanced.
- Ensuring archaeological sites are conserved and enhanced.
- Protecting historical buildings, whilst striving for improved energy efficiency in these buildings.
- Restoring and repairing heritage assets that are at risk within the district.
- Protecting heritage assets and their setting from the risk posed by development.

7.4 Identifying the SA/SEA framework

Table 7.1 highlights the proposed SA/SEA objectives for the historic environment within the district. The decision making questions can be used when appraising emerging policies within the new local plan.

Table 7.1: Proposed SA/SEA objectives for ‘Historic Environment’

SA/SEA Objectives	Decision making questions
To protect, conserve and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will historic character be protected from development? • Will the proposal protect, conserve or enhance areas of archaeological significance? • Will the proposal protect, conserve or enhance designated or non-designated heritage assets? • Will the proposals have a positive impact to the setting of a heritage asset? • Can any adverse impacts to the historic environment be adequately mitigated? • Will the proposal enhance accessibility and education to cultural heritage assets?

8.0 Land, Soils, Waste and Resources

8.1 Baseline and local context

8.1.1 Brownfield land

The NPPF (2024) defines brownfield land (or previously developed land) as

'Land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed). It also includes land comprising large areas of fixed surface infrastructure such as large areas of hardstanding which have been lawfully developed. Previously developed land excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.'

The use of brownfield land for redevelopment helps to protect the undeveloped areas within the district and supports regeneration. As of 2025 there were 6 sites on the Council's Brownfield Land Register with the ability to accommodate around 992 dwellings alongside other uses. Some of these sites are however allocated within the adopted District Plan 2018. The sites on the Brownfield Land Register include:

- Bishop's Stortford High School Site, London Road, Bishop's Stortford
- The Goods Yard, Station Road, Bishop's Stortford
- Mead Lane Area, Mead Lane, Hertford
- The Well House and Dixon's Yard, Acorn Street, Hunsdon
- Watton-at-Stone Depot, Station Road, Watton-at-Stone
- Land and Buildings to the East of Netherfield Lane, Stanstead Abbots

8.1.2 Soil

East Herts is a rural district with food production being a big part in the rural economy. The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) categorises farmland and is used as a tool to help identify the best and poorest quality land, helping to protect land of the highest quality for agricultural purposes such as food

production. Natural England use several criteria to assess land for its ALC, this includes climate (temperature, rainfall, aspect, exposure, frost risk), site (gradient, micro-relief, flood risk) and soil (depth, structure, texture, chemicals, stoniness)³⁴

DEFRA defines the classifications as³⁵:

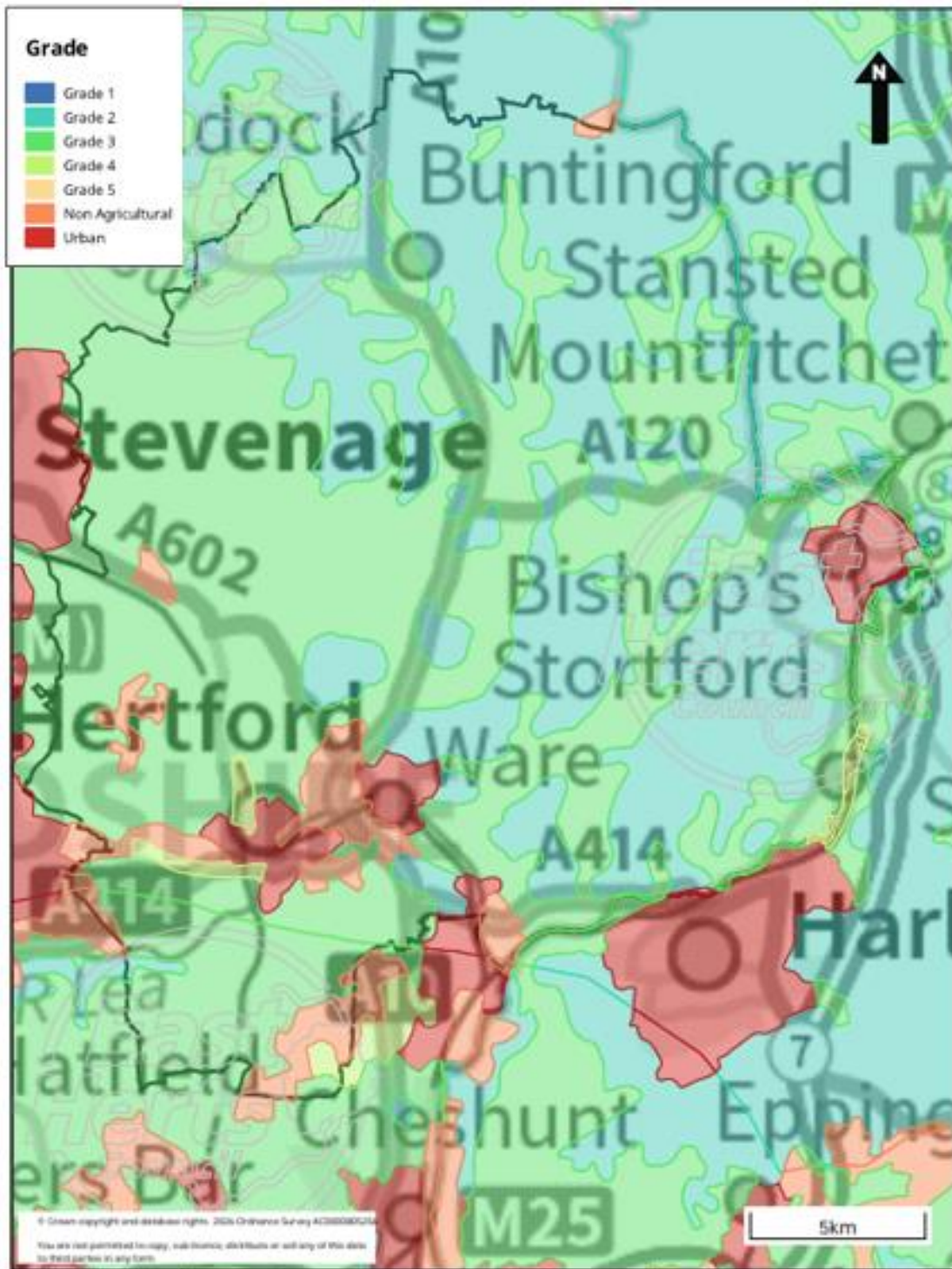
- Grade 1 – Excellent quality agricultural land with no or very minor limitations
- Grade 2 – Very good quality agricultural land with minor limitations that affect crop yield, cultivations or harvesting
- Grade 3 – Good to moderate quality agricultural land with moderate limitations that affect the choice of crops, timing and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield.
- Subgrade 3a – Good quality agricultural land capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops.
- Subgrade 3b – Moderate quality agricultural land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops.
- Grade 4 – Poor quality agricultural land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops or level of yields.
- Grade 5 – Very poor quality agricultural land with severe limitations that restrict use to permanent pasture or rough grazing, except for occasional pioneer forage crops.

Within the district the majority of ALC is classified as grades 2 and 3 with the higher quality land tending to lie to the east of the district. Figure 8.1 highlights the ALC for the whole district.

³⁴ [Natural England Provisional Agricultural Land Classification](#)

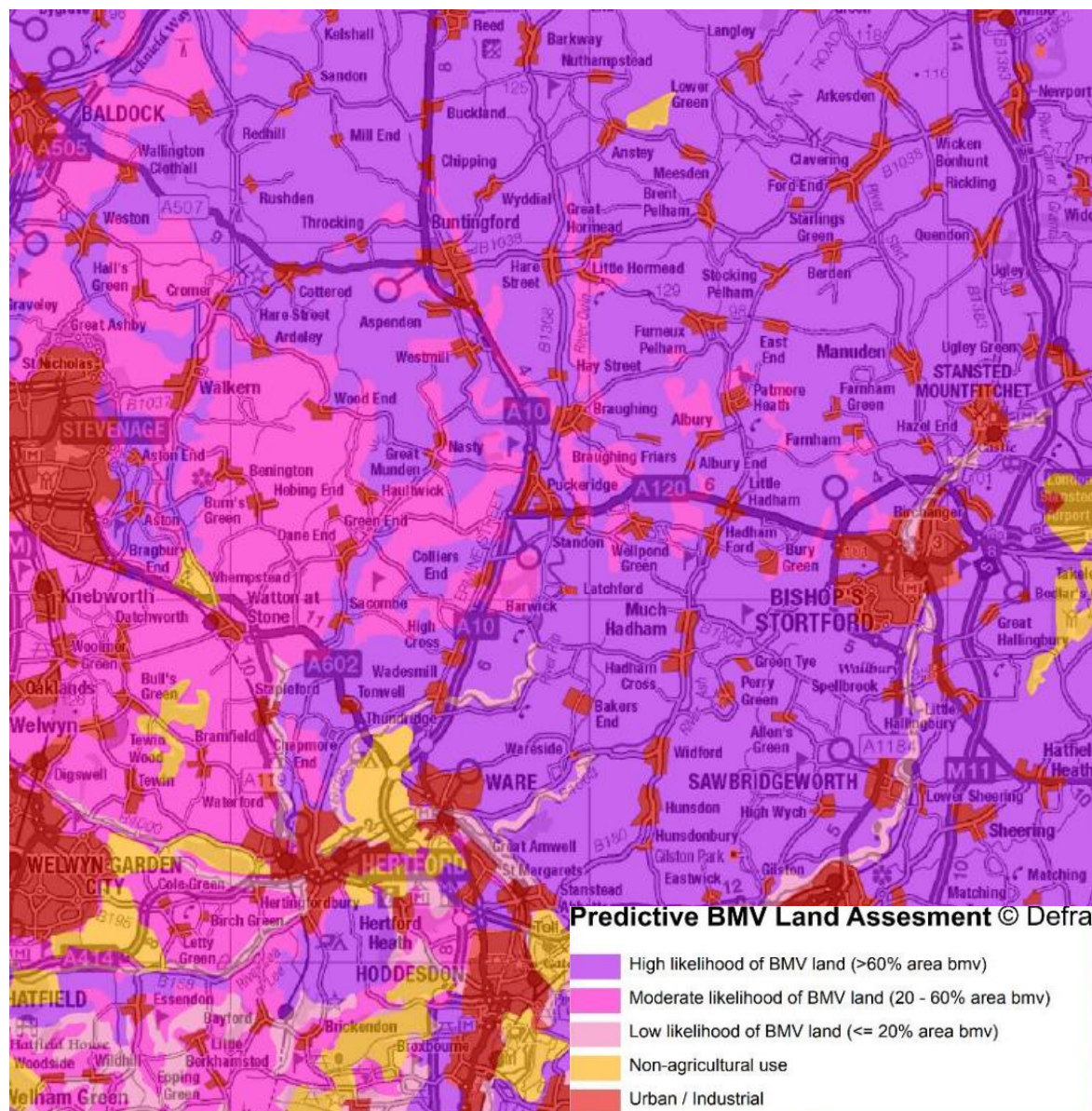
³⁵ [DEFRA Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land](#)

Figure 8.1: Agricultural Land Classification



As shown in figure 8.2 the 'Predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land Assessment' for the Eastern Region provided by Natural England shows the District as having significant areas of high (>60%) likelihood of BVM, in particular in the rural area between Bishop's Stortford and Ware and the north of the district and moderate (20-60%) likelihood of BVM land to the east of Stevenage outside urban areas in the main settlements.

Figure 8.2: Predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land Assessment' for the Eastern Region



Source: [Natural England](#)

8.1.4 Mineral resources

Mineral resources are defined as natural concentrations of minerals or bodies of rock that have the potential to be of economic interest. As minerals are a non-renewable resource, minerals safeguarding is used to ensure that non-minerals development does not needlessly prevent (or sterilise) the future extraction of mineral resources. A minerals safeguarding area (MSA) is an area designated by a Mineral Planning Authority which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development. A minerals consultation area, is an area, based on an MSA, where the Council should consult the Mineral Planning Authority for any proposals for non-minerals development. Hertfordshire County Council is the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, the current Minerals Plan was adopted in 2007 and reviewed in 2016. The Minerals Plan can be viewed on the interactive [Minerals and Waste Local Plan Adopted Policies map](#).

8.1.5 Waste

The Hertfordshire Waste Development Framework Waste Site Allocations (WSA) was adopted 2014, this identifies sites for waste management facilities across the County. This includes the 10.57 ha allocated site at land off Birchall Lane, Cole Green and the safeguarded strategic and allocated site Westmill Quarry (18.31 ha) and Landfill (56,73 ha). The Waste Plan can be viewed on the interactive [Minerals and Waste Local Plan Adopted Policies map](#).

In terms of household waste, East Herts and North Herts have a shared waste contract which implemented a new recycling regime in 2025. Five months after it was introduced there was a significant reduction of 5,883 tonnes in non-recyclable waste compared with the same period in the previous year.

8.2 Future trends without implementation of a new local plan

The district contains large swathes of grade 2 and 3 very good quality to moderate quality agricultural land. This land is under pressure from new development. A local plan can help to protect the highest quality agricultural land and help prevent speculative development in less desirable areas such higher quality land.

In relation to brownfield land there are usually a higher costs associated to development of such sites for several reasons, including demolition costs and remediation of contaminated land, this can have a knock-on impact to the viability of sites and what it can deliver in terms of affordable housing and

infrastructure. However, there are benefits to prioritising brownfield land, not only does it align with the requirements of the NPPF, it helps to protect undeveloped greenfield sites which may have other functions such as agricultural uses, environmental value, landscape character and fulfilling Green Belt purposes, it can also lead to regeneration within urban areas leading to wider benefits. A local plan approach can help unlock brownfield sites through site identification and specific policies to support such sites coming forward and help to protect more valued greenfield land.

The pressure for the use of brownfield land also has consequences for density on such sites, in trying to achieve the most on the land. This can lead to increased density in unsuitable locations, as well as an increase of certain housing types such as flatted development where it may not be the most appropriate development type.

There is a risk to the quality of soil from changing climatic conditions through longer periods of droughts, heavier rainfall and more varied temperatures through the year. This can impact agricultural productivity and have ecological impacts through increased run-off contaminating other land. A local plan can help protect the more valued areas of land, whilst steering development away from locations that may lead to negative implications to soil through pollution. Additionally, a local plan can help to unlock previously developed sites that are more likely to be contaminated, regeneration of this land and remediation of the contaminated land could have positive impacts to soil through the removal of potential harmful pollutants.

In terms of future waste management, the total amount of household waste may increase because of population and household growth, even if the average amount of waste generated per household decreases. Implementation of a local plan can help the local authority and waste authority to plan effectively into the future and forecast future needs. Additionally, a local plan can ensure waste facilities are effectively designed into new developments to ensuring effective waste collection reducing fly tipping.

There are mineral-related facilities safeguarded in the district, as well as mineral consultation areas. The impacts of new development on natural resources will be taken into account at a strategic level through a local plan, rather than a site led development approach.

8.3 Local sustainability issues and problems

The key sustainability issues and problems that are faced locally in relation to the land, soils, waste and resources include:

- Balancing competing pressures on land and ensuring the most suitable uses are accommodated in the most suitable locations.
- Preventing further contaminated land and remediating existing contaminated land.
- Protecting the integrity of mineral resources.
- Promoting waste minimisation and encouraging the re-use of materials.

8.4 Identifying the SA/SEA framework

Table 8.1 highlights the proposed SA/SEA objectives for land, soils, waste and resources within the district. The decision making questions can be used when appraising emerging policies within the new local plan.

Table 8.1: Proposed SA/SEA objectives for 'land, soils, waste and resources'

SA/SEA Objectives	Decision making questions
Ensure the most efficient use of land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the proposal on brownfield land? • Does the development propose the most efficient use of land in terms of density, uses and based on local needs?
Protect soil, versatile agricultural land and mineral resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal protect or enhance soil quality, such as the remediation of contaminated land? • Does the proposal protect the integrity of mineral resources?
Promote sustainable management of waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal support the minimisation, reuse and recycling of waste?

9.0 Water Resources and Quality

9.1 Baseline and local context

9.1.1 Water resources

Affinity Water is responsible for the supply of water in East Herts. Under the Water Industry (Prescribed Conditions) Regulations 1999, serious water stress is defined as where *'the current household demand for water is a high proportion of the current effective rainfall which is available to meet that demand; or the future household demand for water is likely to be a high proportion of the effective rainfall which is likely to be available to meet that demand'*³⁶. The Environment Agency classified East Herts as an area of serious water stress³⁷. The water supply is currently collected through surface water such as reservoirs and groundwater sources by collecting it through boreholes and wells. The Environment Agency found that an additional 2,034 megalitres per day is required to address water supply needs between 2030 and 2055 in the south east to accommodate a growing population, make supplies more resilient drought and climate change and address environmental improvements³⁸.

Groundwater supplies roughly a third of drinking water in England and makes up to 80% of water that comes out of taps in some regions³⁹. Affinity Water stated that approximately 65% of water abstracted is from groundwater sources with the remaining coming from surface water, principally the River Thames⁴⁰. Affinity Water monitors groundwater levels within the region. Figure 9.1 below shows the latest monitoring data for the central region which covers the East Herts district, Affinity Water stated that:

'Rainfall in our Central region was well below average in March at 53% of the Long Term Average (LTA). Over the last three months (January to March inclusive), our Central region has received above average rainfall (131% of the LTA) and above average effective precipitation (142% of the LTA). Soil Moisture Deficit (SMD) for March was below average, although soils have become gradually drier through

³⁶ [Environment Agency - Water Stressed Areas – final classification 2013](#)

³⁷ [Environment Agency - Water Stressed Areas – final classification 2021](#)

³⁸ [Environment Agency – National Framework for Water Resources 2025](#)

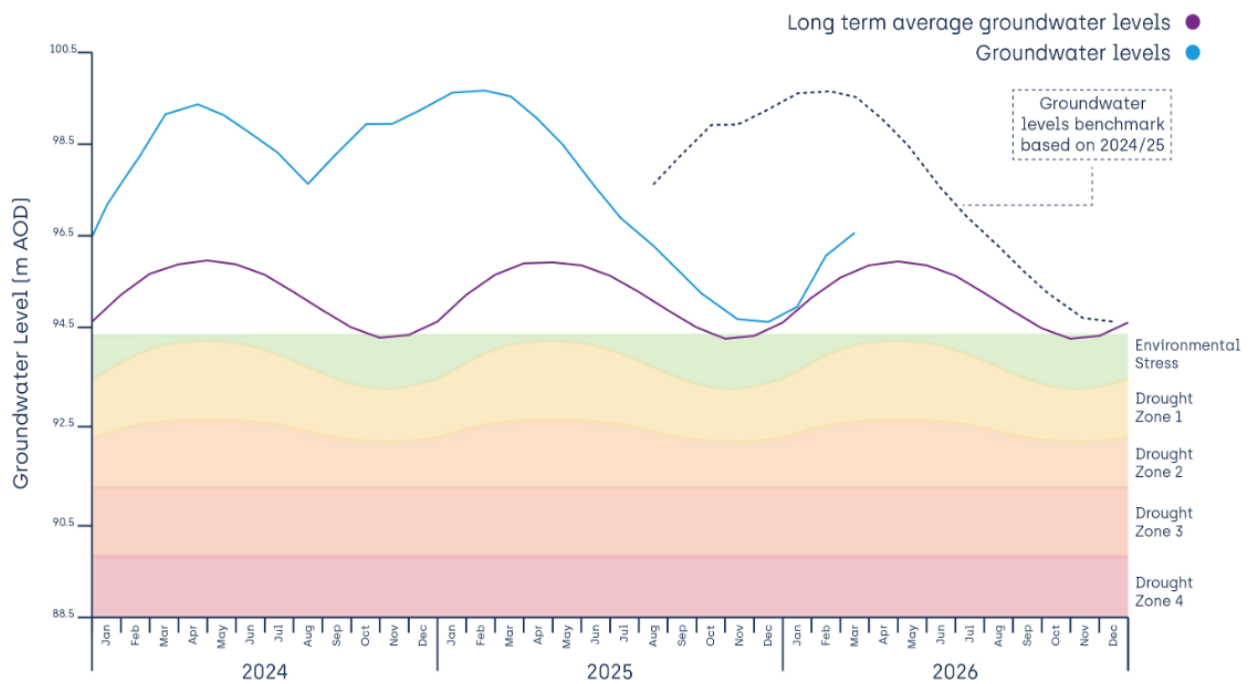
³⁹ [Environment Agency - Groundwater source protection zones \(SPZs\) 2024](#)

⁴⁰ [Affinity Water - Water Resources Management Plan 2024](#)

March and the first week of April. They are now at a level where forthcoming rainfall is unlikely to contribute significantly to groundwater recharge.

Groundwater levels have increased through March due to the well above average rainfall in January and February, although are starting to plateau. Groundwater levels are forecast to remain above average for the next seven months under all rainfall scenarios.⁴¹

Figure 9.1: Central Region Groundwater Levels 2024-2026



Source: [Affinity Water – Chalk Groundwater Levels](#)

9.1.2 Chalk streams

East Herts is home to seven of the chalk rivers of around 210 chalk streams globally. These provide a unique and valued habitat for flora and fauna, the porous nature of chalk which underlies a lot of Hertfordshire acts as a sponge and retains rainwater and supplies rivers.

Chalk streams are predominantly fed from groundwater aquifers, meaning that the water is of high clarity and good chemical quality. The higher quality of water in these ecosystems support a diverse and valued range of flora and fauna. However, groundwater abstractions have contributed to reduced flows along several chalk rivers in Hertfordshire such as the River Mimram and River Beane

⁴¹ [Affinity Water – Chalk Groundwater Levels](#)

which run through East Herts. Chalk streams are usually dry in summer and following rainfall in the winter months begin to flow. Groundwater abstractions therefore can create periods of dry bed conditions when water would usually flow. The change to typical conditions can have negative impacts to local wildlife and biodiversity which rely on this habitat, as well as leading to accumulation of fine sediment on the riverbed creating an imbalance.⁴²

9.1.3 Waste water

Thames Water are responsible for waste water in East Herts district, in the latest Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan⁴³ they have an ambition to enhance resilience at STWs and ensure 100% permit compliance by 2050.

Existing Sewage Treatment Works (STWs) in East Herts includes:

- Buntingford STW
- Braughing STW
- Dane End STW
- Rye Meads STW
- Bishop's Stortford STW
- Sandon STW

The Hertfordshire Water Study 2017⁴⁴ is the latest water study for the area. Since it was completed Thames Water provided a position statement for the Greater Harlow area, in particular in relation to the Rye Meads STW. The statement highlighted that the Rye Meads STW was being upgraded to extend the treatment capacity and improve discharge quality standards to enable it to treat an increased volume of incoming flow. This highlighted that the upgrade would provide the STW with a treatment capacity of 447,134 PE (Population Equivalent). At that time a high level assessment was undertaken that indicated that from a final effluent stream point of view Thames Water expected the site to have capacity up to 2036, albeit requiring relevant upgrades in sludge and storm streams where required. The site was expected to have sufficient capacity in all streams by 2026⁴⁵.

⁴² [Hertfordshire Water Study 2017](#)

⁴³ [Thames Water - Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan 2025-2030](#)

⁴⁴ [Hertfordshire Water Study 2017](#)

⁴⁵ [Thames Water – Greater Harlow Position Statement](#)

In addition, since 2017 the District Plan has been adopted and there has been further growth within the district. It is therefore important that data on all of the STWs is made available to the Council to ensure that the emerging Local Plan is based on the most up to date information as the local plan progresses. As this information emerges the SA/SEA will be updated with relevant information.

9.1.4 Water quality

The Rivers Trust record the amount of spills that occur from sewers within local areas across each year. The monitoring devices do not differentiate between treated and non-treated discharge, however they do provide an indication of where issues may occur in areas. Within 2025 a total of 116 spills were recorded within East Herts that lasted for a duration of 1,295 hours combined⁴⁶.

As groundwater is a valuable source of water it is essential that groundwater sources are not polluted. Ways in which they can become polluted is through contamination from activity that may seep into the ground such as petrol being stored underground, and soakaways from septic tanks underground.

The Environment Agency map areas that are at a higher risk of groundwater pollution through Ground Source Protection Zones (SPZs), these are based on uses and the distance of such uses and their potential impact to groundwater⁴⁷. Figure 9.2 shows the extent of SPZs within the district, zones 1 are the areas at higher risk from pollutants with 3 being the lowest risk.

⁴⁶ [The Rivers Trust - Sewage Map](#)

⁴⁷ [Environment Agency – Groundwater Source Protection Zones \(SPZs\)](#)

Figure 9.2: Groundwater Source Protection Zones

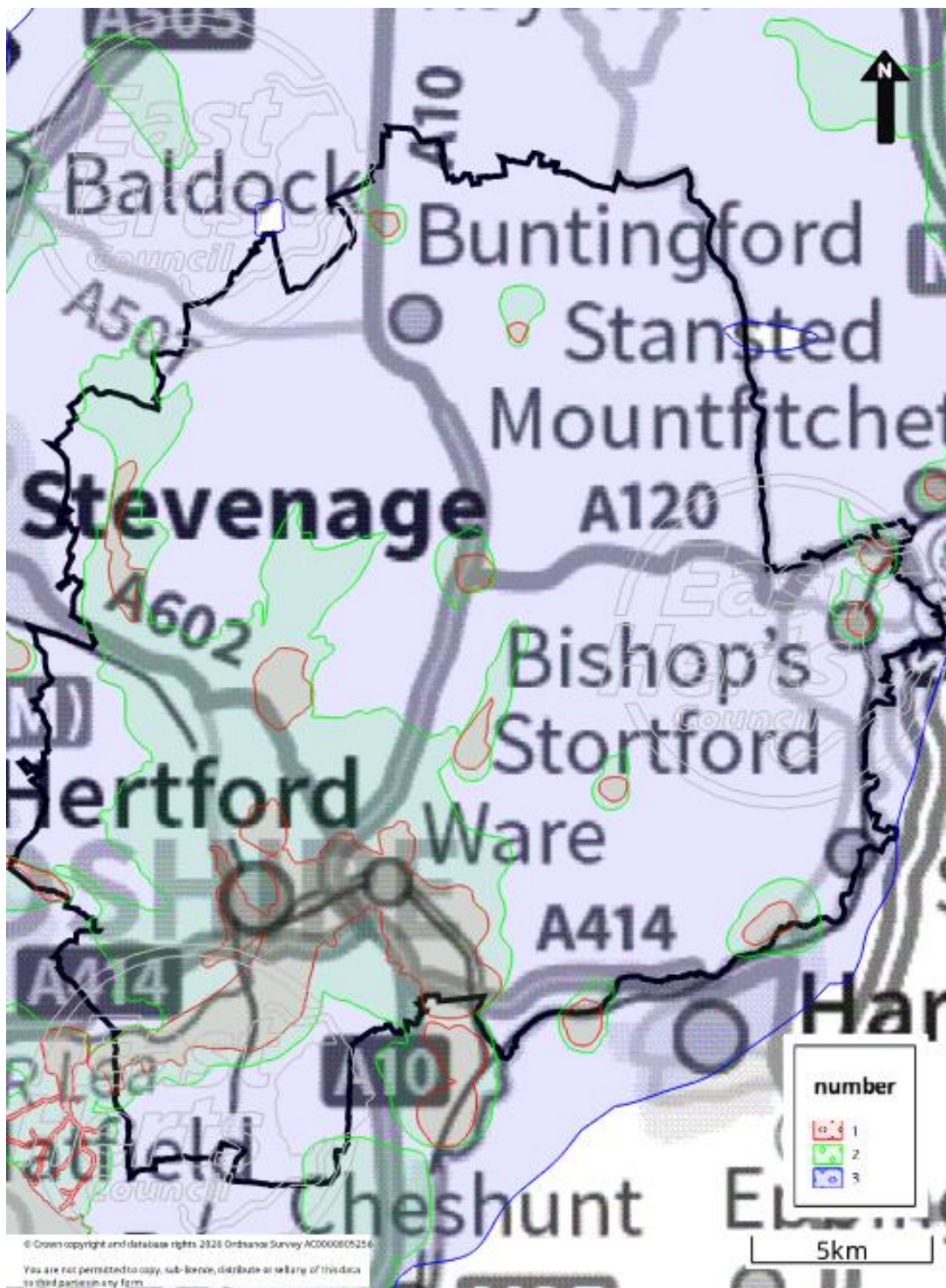


Table 9.1 provides a breakdown of all of the water bodies within East Herts and their ecological status. Due to an updated methodology all water bodies now fail under chemical status, however these can be viewed along with all of the pollutants and industry that is causing pollutants in the relevant links below.

Table 9.1: Water bodies in East Herts ecological status

Water body	Ecological status
Beane (Source to Stevenage Brook)	Poor
Rib (upper stretches, above confluence with the Quin)	Moderate
Quin	Poor
Ash (from Meesden to confluence with Bury Green Brook)	Moderate
Stort and Bourne Brook	Moderate
Stort and Navigation, B Stortford to Harlow	Moderate
Stort and Navigation, Harlow to Lee	Moderate
Fiddlers Brook	Moderate
Ash (from confluence with Bury Green Brook to Lee)	Moderate
Lee Navigation (Hertford to Fieldes Weir)	Moderate
Lea Navigation (Fieldes Weir to Enfield Lock)	Poor
Lee (from Luton Hoo Lakes to Hertford)	Moderate
Mimram (Codicote Bottom to Lee)	Poor
Rib (from confluence with Quin to Lee Navigation)	Poor
Beane (from confluence with Stevenage Brook to Lee)	Poor

Source: Environment Agency – Catchment Data Explorer

A common source of pollutant amongst the water bodies is from business, agriculture and rural land management, urban and transport, water industry and recreation.

9.2 Future trends without implementation of a new local plan

Reliance on groundwater extraction for water supply can lead to negative impacts to chalk streams. Therefore, it is important for groundwater extraction to be minimised and other sources of collection be sourced to maintain water supply needs within the district. It is predicted that based on continued substantial population and housing growth, the demand for water will increase by 10% in the Affinity Water area⁴⁸. Adoption of a new local plan can help water companies manage future growth as the level and location of growth will be known, allowing them to effectively plan for and implement necessary infrastructure.

East Herts is in a highly water stressed area. A new local plan can help to achieve higher water efficiency standards for new buildings through specific policies. Without a local plan requiring higher standards this could increase the strain in

⁴⁸ [Water Resources Management Plan – Affinity Water 2024](#)

an already water stressed area. Additionally, certain developments that have increased in recent years, such as data centres have a higher requirement for water than a lot of other types of development. Policies within a local plan can help to ensure that water efficiency standards are sought from the outset for such development and work with water companies to maintain a good water supply in the area. Additionally, there are added benefits to improving water efficiency, in particular within households as the Environment Agency found that the water industry contributes to 0.8% of annual UK greenhouse gas emissions. However the emissions that result from heating water in the home increases this figure to 5.5% of greenhouse gas emissions⁴⁹. Therefore, reductions in water usage in the home can lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions as less water as less heating of water is required.

There is a limited amount of raw water storage of surface water in reservoirs, this means that water supplies are vulnerable when there is high demand for water during summer months. Climate change also has an impact on water supplies through prolonged periods of drought. Ensuring water is harnessed where possible and working with the water management companies when developments come forward can help to ensure developments are planned appropriately to improve and maintain water supplies.

New development and the Government's housing targets will put pressure on existing waste water facilities. A local plan will help the sewage undertakers understand where development is focused and where improvements or new infrastructure will be required to meet future demands.

The Council has recognised the negative impact that sewage discharge can have on the environment and resolved a motion to protect rivers by taking account the cumulative impacts of sewage discharge in 2025⁵⁰. Amongst highlighting negative environmental impacts of this issue, the motion sought to recognise the deterioration of water quality due to the cumulative impact of multiple sewage discharge events, ensuring that the new Local Plan would compile an evidence base that assesses this issue and ensure it is factored into future decisions. Implementation of a Local Plan is therefore important to ensure that

⁴⁹ [Environment Agency – Green House Gas Emissions of Water Supply and Demand Management Options 2008](#)

⁵⁰ [East Herts – Motion to protect our rivers by taking into account the cumulative impact of sewage discharge](#)

sewage and wastewater is assessed at a strategic level and relevant policies are implemented to meet the ambitions of this motion.

As part of the Local Plan process a water cycle study will be prepared which will provide an updated position to water management and quality issues that may be occurring within East Herts and potential solutions that may be appropriate for the locality. Once completed the Local Plan will seek to implement the outputs of this work and translate them into deliverable policies.

9.3 Local sustainability issues and problems

The key sustainability issues and problems that are faced locally in relation to the water resources and quality include:

- East Herts is within a highly water stressed area, this may increase due to the impacts of climate change.
- Existing sources of water supply are not sustainable currently due to the lack of storage facilities or the impact of over extraction through groundwater to the environment.
- Water quality is low in certain rivers, heavy rainfall events as a result of climate change can lead to worsened quality as runoff leads pollutants into existing watercourses.
- Population growth will have impacts to the existing STWs and needs to be managed appropriately.

9.4 Identifying the SA/SEA framework

Table 9.2 highlights the proposed SA/SEA objectives for water resources and quality within the district. The decision making questions can be used when appraising emerging policies within the new local plan.

Table 9.2: Proposed SA/SEA objectives for 'water resources and quality'

SA/SEA Objectives	Decision making questions
Ensure the efficient use of water resources, whilst protecting and improving water quality of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the proposal have negative implications on water supply in the district and wider area? • Does the proposal provide opportunities for water harvesting and recycling? • Will the development provide appropriate drainage to minimise pollution into waterbodies?

SA/SEA Objectives	Decision making questions
district's waterbodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal maximise water efficiency standards? • Does the proposal adequately plan for waste water?

10.0 Transport, Air Quality and Noise

10.1 Baseline and local context

10.1.1 Walking and cycling network

There is a vast public walking and cycling network within the district, as highlighted in figure 10.1, however these are not always well integrated with each other making them more desirable for leisure use rather than day-to-day active travel uses such as education and employment.

The visioning work for the Local Plan found that 34% of residents in 2022 used walking as part, or all, of their main method of travel to reach a destination, and 1.6% included cycling. Improvements to walking and cycling routes, as well as creation of new ones could help to encourage active travel reducing the needs for car-based travel.

East Herts Council has developed a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) with Hertfordshire County Council, aimed at making walking, cycling and wheeling easier, safer and more enjoyable as everyday journeys.

A new cycle route is being planned between Rye House, Harlow, Sawbridgeworth, Bishop's Stortford and Stansted Airport, as well as other proposals within the LCWIP.

The National Cycle Network Route 61 also runs through the district connecting Hertford and Ware to London, and to Maidenhead through Welwyn Garden City.

10.1.2 Public transport

East Herts has five key market towns interspersed with multiple villages and vast rural areas. Public transport connectivity is challenging within parts of the district, in particular within the more rural areas where reliability and access can be limited. Indirect routes, slow journey times and less frequent public transport provision in certain locations can increase the reliance on private vehicles, impacting congestion on the local road network. This also has negative implications to particular groups who cannot drive such as younger and older people, as well as some with disabilities, leading to isolation.

Hertfordshire County Council introduced HertsLynx in 2021 as a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service. The objective was to serve those rural communities and encourage public transport use where typical bus facilities

were not available or well used. This service does not have a set timetable or have set routes, passengers can book where and when they would like to travel from a number of pick up and drop off locations. This service is in demand locally and as of February 2025 has accommodated over 125,000 passenger journeys⁵¹.

Hertfordshire County Council and partners are working on the Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transport (HERT) which will be a new sustainable passenger transport network, creating a stronger public transport system with east-west links connecting Watford to Harlow. The route of this project has not yet been finalised as it is still within the early stages, however, there may be hubs along this route within East Herts, such as Hertford and Ware town centres and Gilston.

10.1.3 Road network

East Herts is well connected to the national road network, bordered by the M11 and A1(M) on the east and west, and bisected by the A10 which connects central areas to London in the south and Cambridge in the north. The A414 runs through the south of the district running east-west connecting the district to Essex and the rest of Hertfordshire, whilst the A505 corridor runs from Luton to Cambridge a short distance to the north of the district. The three towns of Harlow, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City are located immediately across the boundary of the East Herts district. There are also substantial cross-boundary influences from Cambridgeshire to the north, Essex to the east and London to the south.

The 2021 Census found that 40.6% of East Herts households owned one car, 33.7% owned two cars and 13.3% owned three or more cars. The visioning work for the local plan also found that 57% of residents used a car or van as their main method of travel in 2022.

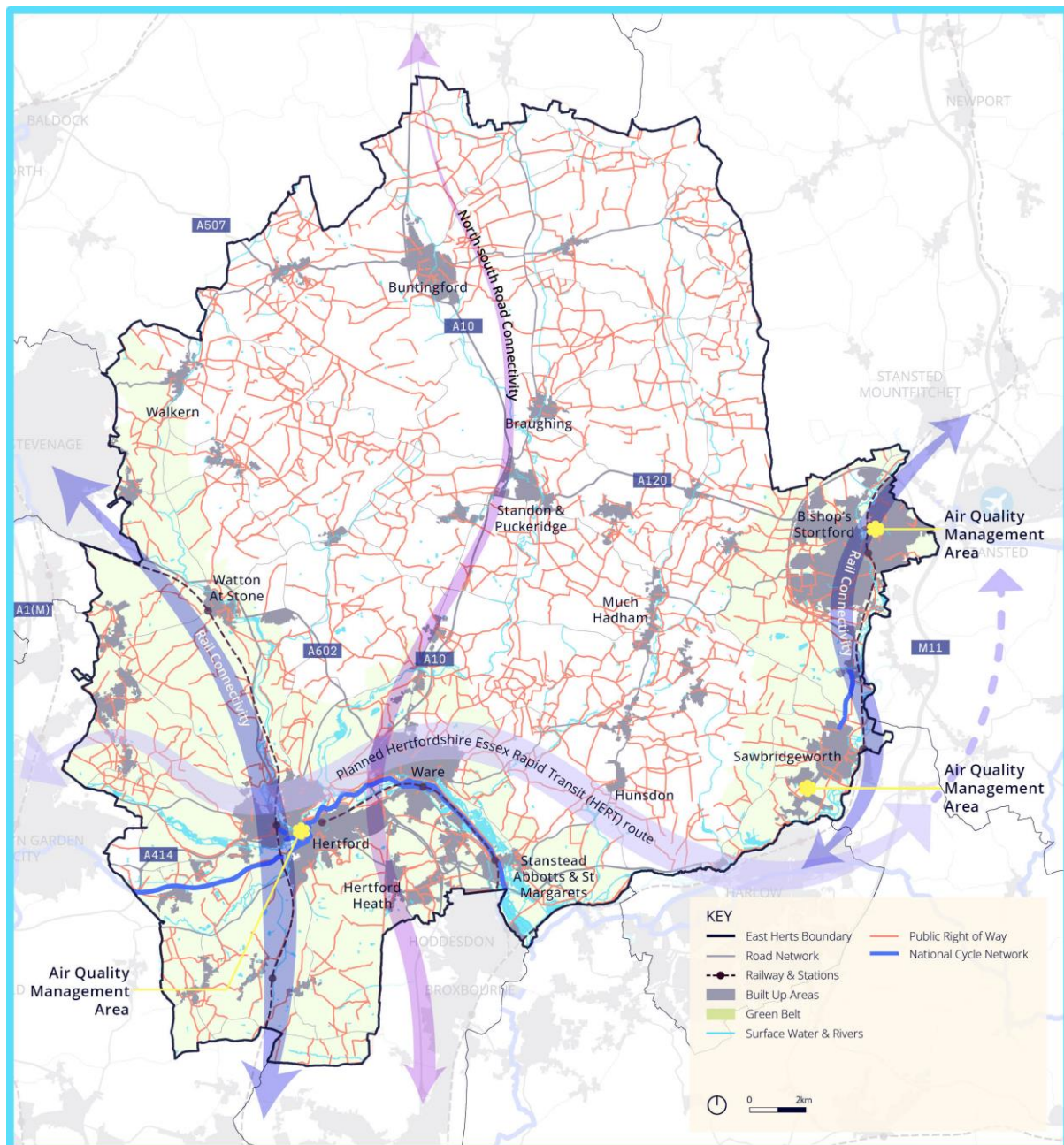
Areas within the district experience high levels of congestion in peak times which can have knock-on impacts to the quality of environment through idling of traffic contributing to emissions and poor air quality, increased journey times and unreliable journey times which can have negative implications to public transport as a reliable mode of travel.

⁵¹ [Hertfordshire County Council HertsLynx](#)

10.1.4 Rail services

Four of the five main towns have north-south rail connections to London, there are also railway stations in the villages of St Margarets, Bayford and Watton-at-Stone providing services into London and Stevenage. Additionally, there are a number of railway stations in close proximity across the authority boundary within Harlow, Stevenage, Welwyn Garden City and Broxbourne.

Figure 10.1: Movement networks and air quality management areas in the district



Source: Visioning work for the local plan

10.1.5 Airports

The district benefits from excellent national and international connectivity through its proximity to two international airports, Stansted and Luton. Stansted airport lies immediately to the east of Bishop's Stortford within the neighbouring authority of Uttlesford. East Herts therefore lies within the core area of the UK innovation Corridor.

London Stansted is the third busiest airport in London (fourth nationally). It currently has around 29 million passengers that travel through it every year. The airport has permission to increase in passenger numbers up to 43 million passengers per year and is looking to extend this further to up to 51 million passengers per annum⁵². If approved this will likely have implications to the road network within East Herts to support passenger journeys as well as those accessing jobs at the airport.

10.1.6 Air quality

Poor air quality is associated with certain health conditions and an increased risk of conditions such as asthma, coronary heart disease, lung cancer and strokes. It is estimated that long-term exposure to man-made air pollution in the UK has an annual effect equivalent to 28,000 to 36,000 deaths⁵³.

Air pollution is largely from three main pollutants Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) and Particulate Matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). SO₂ is predominately produced from the combustion of coal or crude oil, whereas NO₂ and SO₂ can be emitted from everyday activities such as transport, industrial process and farming. Defra has estimated that the biggest emitter of NO₂ is from transport, in particular from diesel light duty vehicles⁵⁴. In relation to Particulate Matter emissions are usually from sources such as smoke from fires, emissions from industry and dust from tyres and brakes.

Continuous monitoring in the district has shown a downward trajectory of NO₂ and PM_{2.5} levels from 2023-2024⁵⁵. Whilst there is good connectivity within East Herts to the wider area, key routes do run through town centres and there is

⁵² [Stansted Airport About Us](#)

⁵³ [Health Matters: Air Pollution – Public Health England 2018](#)

⁵⁴ [Health Matters: Air Pollution – Public Health England 2018](#)

⁵⁵ [2025 Air Quality Annual Status Report](#)

evidence of air quality issues on such routes. Three of the five town centres have a designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), these are areas where the annual average level of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) exceeds 40µg/m³ (40 micrograms of NO₂ per cubic metre of air). These areas include:

- Hockerill Junction in Bishop’s Stortford – declared in 2007
- Gascoyne Way in Hertford – declared in 2010
- London Road in Sawbridgeworth – declared in 2014

Figures 10.2-10.4 show the general trend of NO₂ levels for each of these areas from 2020- 2024. In general, across the district there has been a downward trend in air pollutants and improved air quality in all locations other than one in Hertford, with only one exceedance of the annual objective which was recorded within the Bishop’s Stortford AQMA⁵⁶.

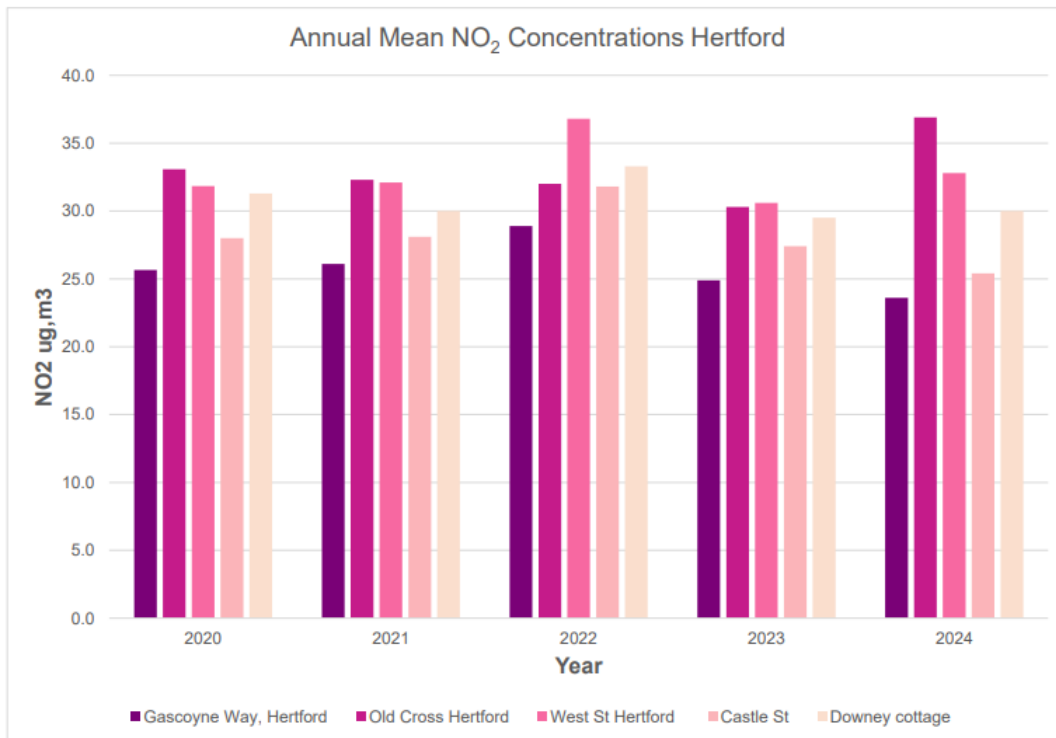
Figure 10.2: Trends in annual mean NO₂ concentrations for Bishop’s Stortford AQMA



Source: [2025 Air Quality Annual Status Report](#)

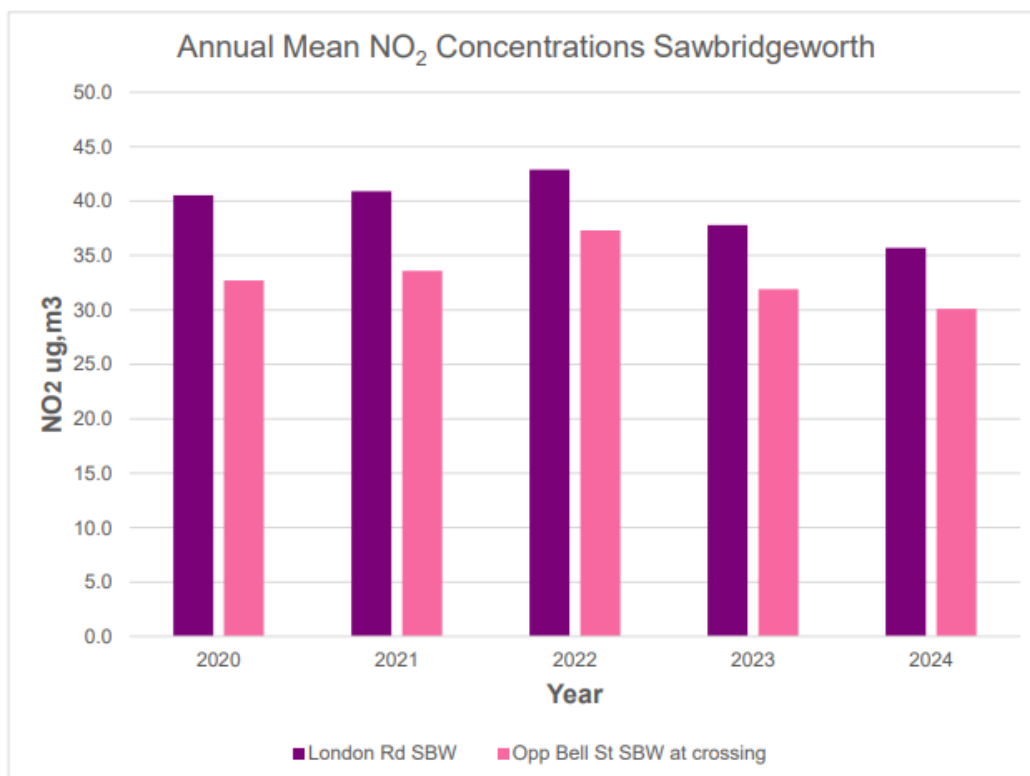
⁵⁶ [2025 Air Quality Annual Status Report](#)

Figure 10.3: Trends in annual mean NO₂ concentrations for Hertford AQMA



Source: [2025 Air Quality Annual Status Report](#)

Figure 10.4: Trends in annual mean NO₂ concentrations for Sawbridgeworth AQMA



Source: [2025 Air Quality Annual Status Report](#)

The East Herts Air Quality Action Plan 2024-2029 provides a plan for how the AQMA areas will be managed in the district. Measures in the past have included trialling an e-car club in Hertford and Bishop's Stortford, requirements for new developments to consider air quality through the Sustainability SPD 2021, emission standards for licenced taxis, installation of charging points to encourage the use of e-vehicles, new signage and replacing council vehicles.

10.1.7 Noise

Noise can have a significant impact on public health and quality of life as well as environmental impacts through disturbance to wildlife. Long term exposure to noise levels above 50 decibels (dB) has been shown to lead to negative health effects from sleep disturbance to heart disease, diabetes, and depression⁵⁷. The main sources of noise include transport and industry, as well as neighbourhood noise related to anti-social behaviour. Noise is a complex technical issue, and levels of noise exposure is often a combination of more than one factor such as occurrences in a given time period, the duration of noise and the time of day⁵⁸.

10.2 Future trends without implementation of a new local plan

The adopted District Plan is set to deliver a number of new homes and development across the district by 2033, in addition to this Stansted airport has planned expansion that will increase passenger numbers significantly from 35 million passengers per annum, with agreement to increase this to 43 million passengers per annum and a planned extension increasing this further to 51 million passengers per annum. Due to the location of Stansted airport immediately adjacent to the East Herts boundary, alongside the planned growth within the adopted District Plan this will likely increase the number of trips through the district potentially leading to negative implications to the transport network and likely increase the emission of air pollution.

The implementation of a new local plan will consider existing and neighbouring developments and consider transport and air quality at the strategic level to help achieve improved connectivity and transport choices.

Without a strategic approach to development there is a risk posed by the need for housing for development coming forward without understanding and implementing measures to mitigate the impacts to the road network and

⁵⁷ [UK Health Security Agency – Noise Pollution: Mapping the Health Impacts of Transportation Noise in England](#)

⁵⁸ [Planning Practice Guidance - Noise](#)

provide potential improvements to active travel and public transport modes. A planned approach can actively plan for transport solutions to support existing and new communities. A local plan can implement policies to actively seek sustainable travel modes through new interventions, improvements to existing infrastructure or potential use of development land to improve active and sustainable travel connections. Examples include improving access to railway stations by active travel and bus; creating and improving bus waiting facilities to create attractive and safe waiting environments; integrating public transport services better to reduce travel times and costs; improving the quality and availability of information about sustainable travel options, including reliable bus time data; creation of or improvement of public rights of way.

Local plans can also plan for development in the most sustainable locations to reduce the reliance on vehicular travel, which can lead to reduced congestion and emitted air pollutants from vehicles. Additionally, development and the relationship to noise sources such as main roads and railways can be factored into strategic site placement at an early stage, with relevant policies requiring noise mitigations where appropriate. Without a planned approach there is a risk that development may occur in the least sustainable locations and exacerbate the existing situation.

Transport through road, railways and air travel generate loud noises which can lead to a negative impact biodiversity through disturbance. It is important for noise generating development to be steered away from designated and protected sites which a local plan can help to achieve.

10.3 Local sustainability issues and problems

The key sustainability issues and problems that are faced locally in relation to transport, air quality and noise include:

- Reducing the need to travel by vehicles to reduce congestion in the district and the amount of pollutants emitted from vehicles.
- The need for improvements to the walking and cycling network to encourage active travel modes. In particular for day-to-day routes.
- Access to reliable and direct public transport services to key destinations, including transport hubs.
- The need to improve air quality within the district, in particular in the designated AQMAs in Bishop's Stortford, Hertford and Sawbridgeworth.

- Reducing noise impacts from development especially in relation to biodiversity.

10.4 Identifying the SA/SEA framework

Table 10.1 highlights the proposed SA/SEA objectives for transport, air quality and noise within the district. The decision making questions can be used when appraising emerging policies within the new local plan.

Table 10.1: Proposed SA/SEA objectives for 'Transport, air quality and noise'

SA/SEA Objectives	Decision making questions
Reduce the need to travel and maximise sustainable transport and active travel opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the proposal encourage active travel by creating or improving active travel opportunities? • Will the proposal encourage the use of public transport? • Is development located in a sustainable location? • Will the proposal lead to a reliance of the private vehicle for travel? • Will the proposal lead to increased congestion? If so, how will the proposal manage this?
To improve air quality and reduce noise pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the proposal have positive implications to air quality? • Will the proposal lead to increased disturbance to biodiversity? • Will the proposal lead to reduced noise exposure?

11.0 The SA/SEA Framework and Next Steps

11.1 SA/SEA assessment and framework

For each SA/SEA topic, SA/SEA objectives and decision-making questions have been proposed within each chapter as part of the SA/SEA framework. This is to help support the decision making of proposals to ensure that decisions assess proposals in relation to each topic thoroughly. This also ensures that they have considered and work towards meeting the identified SA/SEA objectives.

Additionally, two tables have been prepared as part of the framework, table 11.2 seeks to assess draft policies in the emerging local plan and table 11.3 will assess proposed development sites. This brings together all of the SA/SEA objectives and topics and proposes a scoring matrix to assess policies and proposals through the SA/SEA process. At this stage the indicators are examples of where information could be sourced from and how the SA/SEA objectives could be reasonably assessed, it may be the case that further indicators emerge through the consultation process and as evidence emerges.

Each policy or site option that is presented in the emerging East Herts Local Plan will be scored based on the scoring matrix below. These will test the likely effects of the policy, site option or proposal against the SA/SEA criteria. The SA/SEA assessment at later stages will also consider whether identified effects are likely to take place over the short, medium, or long term, be temporary or permanent and whether the effects will have a lesser or greater impact when combined. The reasons for each score will be explained in the SA/SEA, based on evidence and professional judgement.

Table 11.3: Methodology for assessing policies, options and proposals against the SA/SEA objectives

Score	Effect/ impact
++	Significant positive
+	Positive
0	None or negligible
-	Negative
--	Significant negative
?	Unknown/ uncertain

Table 11.2: Draft SA/SEA Policy Framework

Topic	SA/SEA Objectives	Typical indicators
Population, health and wellbeing	To support the needs of the whole population, through creating inclusive and active environments, whilst reducing health inequalities and improving overall health outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of new sustainable housing, services and infrastructure • Provision of specialist accommodation • Provision of adaptable and accessible housing, services and infrastructure • Inclusion/ engagement with those with protected characteristics • Accessibility of health and social infrastructure • Provision of active travel routes • Access to open spaces and leisure facilities
Housing	To provide high quality and efficient housing to meet the needs within the district, including affordable housing and the needs of specific groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPC rating for new housing • Renewable energy systems incorporated into buildings and developments, including Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson accommodation • Implementation of the Council's Climate Emergency route map actions and aspiration for net zero within buildings and developments • Provision of mix of housing types and tenures • Provision of accessible, adaptable and wheelchair user dwellings • Provision of self and custom build housing plots • Provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots • Provision of affordable housing • Timely delivery of new housing
Economy and employment	To support a strong and diverse economy that provides accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of new employment space • Loss of employment space • Improvements to existing employment stock

Topic	SA/SEA Objectives	Typical indicators
	employment opportunities for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to new or existing employment opportunities
Natural environment and landscape	To protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity or impact to SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites • Proximity or impact to SSSI's • Proximity or impact to Ancient Woodlands • Proximity or impact to Priority Habitats • Proximity or impact to Wildlife Sites • Implementation of the LNRS actions • Impact to wildlife corridors • Biodiversity increase on development sites
Natural environment and landscape	To maintain, conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the landscape character within the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of the proposed site • Impacts to TPOs • Impacts to hedgerows • Site type (town centre, urban, edge of urban area, rural) • Proximity to Lee Valley Regional Park
Climate change and flooding	To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support a transition to net zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy consumption per households • Renewable energy generation • Air quality monitoring data • Building standards and design in relation to heating and ventilation • Tree planting
Climate change and flooding	To adapt and improve resilience to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events, including	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of surface water flood risk • Flood zone • Building standards and design in relation to heating and ventilation • Tree planting and implementation of sustainable urban drainage systems

Topic	SA/SEA Objectives	Typical indicators
	flooding and increased periods of heat	
Historic environment	To protect, conserve and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity or impact to Schedule monuments • Proximity or impact to Listed Buildings • Proximity or impact to Conservation Areas • Presence or impact of areas of archaeological significance • Impact to heritage at risk
Land, soils, waste and resources	Ensure the most efficient use of land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of brownfield land compared to greenfield land • Regeneration of urban land • Site densities
Land, soils, waste and resources	Protect soil, versatile agricultural land and mineral resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportional loss of Grade 3 agricultural land. • Change in recorded soil quality • Contaminated land remediation • Relationship to mineral safeguarding areas and allocated sites
Land, soils, waste and resources	Promote sustainable management of waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship to waste safeguarding areas and allocated sites • Improved waste management, including recycling and reuse of building materials and construction waste • Improved household waste management
Water resources and quality	Ensure the efficient use of water resources, whilst protecting and improving water quality of the district's waterbodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity of waterbodies • Ground Source Protection Zone • Water efficiency standards • River catchment areas and existing water quality • Improvements to STWs

Topic	SA/SEA Objectives	Typical indicators
Transport, air quality and noise	Reduce the need to travel and maximise sustainable transport and active travel opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance and frequency of public transport services • Distance to key locations such as town and village centres, schools, healthcare • Improvements to sustainable and active travel modes
Transport, air quality and noise	To improve air quality and reduce noise pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity or impact to a designated AQMA • Air quality monitoring data • Noise level in decibels

Table 11.3: Draft SA/SEA Site Assessment Framework

Topic	SA/SEA Objectives	Potential assessment
Population, health and wellbeing	To support the needs of the whole population, through creating inclusive and active environments, whilst reducing health inequalities and improving overall health outcomes	Opportunities to create inclusive and active environments and reduce health inequalities will likely be known at more detailed stages. Therefore, there is not enough information to compare all sites against this objective.
Housing	To provide high quality and efficient housing to meet the needs within the district, including affordable	++ Development of the site is likely to provide a wide range of housing typologies for different groups and affordable housing and meet a large, identified housing need in the area (10+ units)

Topic	SA/SEA Objectives	Potential assessment
	housing and the needs of specific groups	<p>+ Development of this site is likely to contribute to some housing needs, but unlikely to provide a range of housing typologies (up to 9 units)</p> <p>0 Development of the site will have no or negligible impact to meeting housing needs</p> <p>- Development of this site is likely to lead to a loss of housing (up to 9 units)</p> <p>-- Development of this site is likely to lead to a loss of housing (10+ units)</p> <p>? Uncertain how development will impact housing provision</p>
Economy and employment	To support a strong and diverse economy that provides accessible employment opportunities for all	<p>++ The site provides additional employment land and or will provide a range of additional job opportunities through new employment uses in a sustainable and accessible location</p> <p>+ The site provides additional employment land and or will provide additional job opportunities through new employment uses</p> <p>0 Development of the site will have no or negligible impact to jobs or employment land</p> <p>- Development of the site will lead to a loss in part of an existing employment site, a loss to the number of jobs or the quality or ability of the employment site to function effectively</p>

Topic	SA/SEA Objectives	Potential assessment
		<p>-- The site will lead to a loss in an entire employment site providing no new employment space and/or a loss of the number of jobs</p> <p>? Uncertain how development will impact the economy and employment opportunities</p>
Natural environment and landscape	To protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the district	<p>++ The site does not contain and is not adjacent to any locally, nationally, or internationally protected sites. The proposal is unlikely to harm any priority habitats or species and has potential to deliver Biodiversity Net Gains or other enhancements.</p> <p>+ The site does not contain and is not adjacent to any locally, nationally, or internationally protected sites. The proposal is unlikely to harm any priority habitats or species.</p> <p>0 The proposal is likely to have negligible or no impact on any locally, nationally or internationally protected sites with limited potential for biodiversity enhancements.</p> <p>- The site contains or is adjacent to a locally protected site. The proposal is likely to harm priority habitats or species.</p> <p>-- The site contains or is adjacent to a nationally or internationally protected site. The proposal would likely cause significant loss or harm to priority habitats or species.</p>

Topic	SA/SEA Objectives	Potential assessment
		? Uncertain how development of the site or the proposal will impact on biodiversity and geodiversity.
Natural environment and landscape	To maintain, conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the landscape character within the district	<p>+ The development provides opportunity for regeneration of previously developed land and will protect the identified landscape character areas</p> <p>0 Development of the site will have no or negligible impact to the landscape character and local distinctiveness</p> <p>- The development is not consistent with the landscape character area and would negatively impact the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the area</p> <p>? Uncertain how development will impact to the landscape character and local distinctiveness</p>
Climate change and flooding	To reduce greenhouse Gas emissions and support a transition to net zero	Opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support a transition to net zero will likely be known at more detailed stages. Therefore, there is not enough information to compare all sites against this objective.
Climate change and flooding	To adapt and improve resilience to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events, including flooding and increased periods of heat	<p>Opportunities to adapt to increased heat will likely be known at more detailed stages. Therefore, there is not enough information to compare all sites against parts of this objective.</p> <p>++ The site is not within an area that is at risk of flooding from all sources and provides opportunities to improve flood risk elsewhere</p> <p>+ The site contains areas of flood risk from any source, but development can be provided in non-flood risk areas within the site</p>

Topic	SA/SEA Objectives	Potential assessment
		<p>0 Development of the site will have no or negligible impact to flood risk</p> <p>- The site contains areas of flood risk from any source and some development will be required within these flood risk areas</p> <p>-- The site contains areas of flood risk from any source and all development cannot be located in lower flood risk areas</p> <p>? Uncertain how development will impact flood risk</p>
Historic environment	To protect, conserve and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting.	<p>++ The site is likely to protect, conserve and enhance designated or non-designated heritage assets, and development provides opportunities to take heritage at risk off the register and restore heritage assets</p> <p>+ The site is likely to protect, conserve and enhance designated or non-designated heritage assets</p> <p>0 Development of the site will have no or negligible impact to designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting</p> <p>- The site is likely to cause less than substantial harm to designated and non-designated heritage assets</p> <p>-- The site is likely to cause substantial harm to designated and non-designated heritage assets</p>

Topic	SA/SEA Objectives	Potential assessment
		? Uncertain how development will impact designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting
Land, soils, waste and resources	Ensure the most efficient use of land	++ All of the site is brownfield + The majority of the site is brownfield 0 Development of the site will have no or negligible impact to ensuring the most efficient use of land - The majority of the site is greenfield -- All of the site is greenfield ? Uncertain how development will impact ensuring the most efficient use of land
Land, soils, waste and resources	Protect soil, versatile agricultural land and mineral resources	++ Site is on brownfield land and/or has the ability to remediate contaminated land + Site is on brownfield land 0 Development of the site will have no or negligible impact to soil and agricultural land - The site is greenfield and/or contains any Grade 3 agricultural land

Topic	SA/SEA Objectives	Potential assessment
		<p>-- The site is greenfield and/or contains any Grade 2 or higher quality agricultural land</p> <p>? Uncertain how development will impact to soil and agricultural land</p> <p>+ Site is not within a mineral safeguarded area or allocated site</p> <p>0 Development of the site will have no or negligible impact to mineral resources</p> <p>- Site is within a mineral safeguarded area or allocated site</p> <p>? Uncertain how development will impact on mineral resources</p>
Land, soils, waste and resources	Promote sustainable management of waste	Opportunities to promote sustainable waste management will likely be known at more detailed stages. Therefore, there is not enough information to compare all sites against this objective.
Water resources and quality	Ensure the efficient use of water resources, whilst protecting and improving water quality of the district's waterbodies	<p>++ The site is over 400m from a waterbody and is completely within zone 3 of a Ground Source Protection Zone</p> <p>+ The site is over 400m from a waterbody and is partly within zone 3 of a Ground Source Protection Zone</p> <p>0 Development of the site will have no or negligible impact to water resources and quality</p> <p>- The site is within 400m from a waterbody and the majority of the site is within zone 2 of a Ground Source Protection Zone</p>

Topic	SA/SEA Objectives	Potential assessment
		<p>-- The site is within 400m from a waterbody and the majority of the site is within zone 1 of a Ground Source Protection Zone</p> <p>? Uncertain how development will impact to water resources and quality</p>
Transport, air quality and noise	Reduce the need to travel and maximise sustainable transport and active travel opportunities	<p>++ The site is within walking distance to railway station and public transport facilities with options to walk and cycle to key transport hubs and centres</p> <p>+ The site is within walking distance to public transport facilities with options to walk and cycle to the facilities</p> <p>0 Development of the site will have no or negligible impact to</p> <p>- The site is not within walking distance of a railway station and public transport facilities and is likely to be private vehicle dependant</p> <p>? Uncertain how development will maximise sustainable transport and active travel opportunities</p>
Transport, air quality and noise	To improve air quality and reduce noise pollution	<p>+ The site is located over a kilometre outside an AQMA and away from noise generating uses such as major roads, railways and commercial uses</p> <p>0 Development of the site will have no or negligible impact to air quality or noise pollution</p>

Topic	SA/SEA Objectives	Potential assessment
		<p>- The site is located within a kilometre of an AQMA, but not within and/or is within an area with a noise of 50 decibels or more from noise generating uses such as major roads, railways and commercial uses</p> <p>-- The site is located within or partly in an AQMA and/or within an area with a noise of 50 decibels or more from noise generating uses such as major roads, railways and commercial uses</p> <p>? Uncertain how development will impact air quality or noise</p>

11.2 Next steps

The SA/SEA Scoping document and proposed SA/SEA Framework will be consulted upon with statutory bodies, interested parties and the wider public. These responses will inform a final SA/SEA Framework that will be used to test the policies, options and proposals through the local plan process.

APPENDIX 1 – Relevant Plans, policies and programmes

The SEA Directive requires the production of the following information:

“an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;” Annex 1(a); and

“the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;” Annex 1(e).

The following tables set out relevant international, national, sub-national and local plans, policies and programmes. Additionally, there are a number of evidence base documents that will help to inform the local plan and help to inform policies, these are found on the Council’s [Evidence Base](#) page.

Internationally relevant plans, policies and programmes

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
Kyoto Protocol and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change , 1997	This Protocol commits parties to limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with agreed individual targets. It also seeks to establish a monitoring and review system.	A local plan can integrate targets and schemes that can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. All of which are relevant to this international agreement to work together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
United Nations Sustainable	World leaders came together in 2015 and made a promise to secure the rights and well-being of everyone on a healthy, thriving planet, this sets out 17	A number of these sustainable goals may not be relevant to the quality of living that is experienced in East Herts,

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
Development Goals, 2015	sustainable development goals. These range from access to clean and affordable energy to improved health outcomes.	however the Local Plan can help to work towards reducing emissions, improving water quality and creating good quality homes.
The Paris Agreement, 2015	The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 195 Parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, on 12 December 2015. It entered into force on 4 November 2016. Currently, as of 27 January 2026, there are 194 Parties to the Paris Agreement. The aim is to limit global warming to 1.5°C. It also aims for greenhouse gas emissions to peak before 2025 at the latest and decline 43% by 2030.	A local plan can integrate targets and schemes that can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. All of which are relevant to this international agreement to work together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
European Directive 2001/42/EC	Commonly known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, it was transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans or Programmes Regulations 2004 and amended by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232).	This legal framework outlines how the SEA process must comply with the Directive, ensuring that environmental considerations are integrated into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes from the outset.
The European Landscape Convention, 2000	The Convention aims to encourage public authorities to adopt policies and measures at local, regional, national and international level for protecting, managing and planning landscapes throughout Europe. It covers all	There is a vast range of landscape in the district. The East Herts Local Plan can help to protect certain landscape through protections or location of development.

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
	landscapes, both outstanding and ordinary, that determine the quality of people's living environment.	
World Commission on Environment and Development 'Our Common Future' (Brundtland Report), 1987	This commission sought to propose long-term environmental strategies for achieving sustainable development, to allow different countries at different stages of growth and wealth to work effectively together to tackle international environmental issues and secure appropriate methods for dealing with these environmental issues.	The Local Plan would have to contribute to the co-operative effort to reduce the environmental impacts of development through policy to promote more efficient and low carbon techniques to design and materials in relation to buildings. As well as protection and enhancements to the environment.

Nationally relevant plans, policies and programmes

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966 (the Park Act)	This Act establishes the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority for the development, preservation and management for recreation, sport, entertainment and the enjoyment of leisure of the area adjoining the River Lee as a regional park. This gives powers to this authority and other authorities to make such provisions.	The Lee Valley Regional Park falls within the East Herts district, policies therefore within the Plan can help to incorporate and enable the provisions of the Lee Valley Regional Park Act.
The Environmental Protection Act, 1990	This legislation aims to safeguard the environment by establishing rules around waste management and	The Local Plan will set out policies that consider waste and pollution, in

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
	pollution control. It sets out legal duties for businesses, local authorities, and individuals to prevent environmental harm and ensure that waste is handled, stored, and disposed of responsibly. The Act provides a broad framework for environmental protection, covering key areas such as air and water quality, noise pollution, and the sustainable management of waste.	particular around construction and linkages to the Waste Local Plan.
The Environment Act, 1995	One of its key provisions requires local authorities to regularly assess air quality in their areas and, where standards are not being met, to designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). In such cases, local authorities must prepare and implement Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs) to address the issues identified.	There are three AQMAs within the district currently. The Local Plan will seek to support proposals that will help to improve air quality within these areas, as well as ways to prevent other AQMAs emerging elsewhere in the district, by having a positive approach to air quality through the Plan policies.
Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000	This Act has provisions in relation to Public Rights of Way (PROW) and the relationship with nature conservation with wildlife protection, SSSIs and biological diversity amongst other elements of the environment, including regulations to restrict the impacts of vehicles on the environment.	There are many protected sites and PROW in the district, the Local Plan can therefore have influence on these designated sites through appropriate policies and policies.
Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes	The SEA Regulations set out the mandatory requirements regarding SEA for Local Plans and also the requirements of the process.	This is a mandatory process to test the proposals within the emerging Local Plan, it will help to test alternatives as

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
Regulations , 2004 (the SEA Regulations)		well as the likely significant impacts and cumulative impacts of the Local Plan.
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act , 2006	This document relates to nature conservation, biodiversity, SSSIs and PROWs, providing a duty to protect and enforce codes of conduct in relation to these designated and non- designated elements of the environment.	There are many protected sites and PROW in the district, the Local Plan can therefore have influence on these designated sites through appropriate policies and policies.
The Climate Change Act , 2008	This Act commits the UK to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, initially by 80% compared to 1990 levels, with a new net zero target by 2050.	A local plan can integrate targets and schemes that can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. All of which are relevant to this Act and its purpose.
Safeguarding Our Soils – A Strategy for England , 2009	This strategy sets out an approach to achieve a vision that all of England’s soils will be managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully by 20230. This will improve the quality of England’s soils and safeguard their ability to provide essential services for future generations.	The emerging Local Plan will have policies that are related to soil, either through location of development, impact to groundwater, contaminated uses, flooding, pollution or agricultural land.
Equalities Act , 2010	This Act ensures that strategic decisions consider different protected characteristics to ensure equality. This includes but not limited to disability, race, ethnicity, sex and sexual orientation.	The Local Plan will have policies that impact the population that live, work and visit the district, of which many will have protected characteristics. It is important that the Plan therefore considers how policies will impact everyone and strive for equality across the district.

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
The Air Quality Standards Regulations, 2010	<p>Established legally binding limits and targets for key air pollutants, aimed at protecting both public health and the environment. They implement the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) and the Fourth Daughter Directive (2004/107/EC). These regulations set concentration limits for pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), ozone (O₃), and heavy metals. Following Brexit, these standards remain in force, with domestic legislation and regulatory bodies now responsible for monitoring compliance and enforcement.</p>	<p>The Local Plan will seek to support proposals that will help to improve air quality within the areas, by having a positive approach to air quality through the Plan policies.</p>
Flood and Water Management Act, 2010	<p>Outlines an approach to managing flood risk from all sources, rivers, surface water, groundwater, and coastal flooding. It promotes the integration of resilience measures into the design of new buildings, ensuring developments are better prepared for future flood events. It also encourages the use of natural processes to reduce flood risk, such as restoring wetlands and creating areas for temporary water storage. A key component is the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), which help manage surface water runoff in a way that mimics natural drainage, reducing pressure on traditional infrastructure and enhancing local biodiversity.</p>	<p>The Local Plan is required to consider flood risk from all sources, and ensure that development does not contribute to increased flood risk. These will be set out in relevant policies and infrastructure requirements.</p>

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
Localism Act , 2011	This Act was designed to devolve decision making from powers away from central government. It includes key planning reforms including the introduction of Neighbourhood Planning.	Neighbourhood planning is prominent in East Herts as it has a number of adopted Neighbourhood Plans and designated neighbourhood areas. Working with these groups and understanding the local desires is therefore important to the formation of the East Herts Plan.
The Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations , HM Government, 2012	These regulations require any buildings, when sold, rented or constructed, to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). The regulations were designed to increase the energy efficiency of buildings, reduce their carbon emissions and lessen the impact of climate change.	The regulations require recommendations to be made for improving the energy performance of buildings at specific trigger points. Policies can be used in the Local Plan to require higher standards of energy efficiency and sustainability of buildings.
National Planning Policy for Waste , 2014	This document sets out detailed waste planning policies for the nation, this includes delivery of sustainable development and resource efficiency through waste management. It ensures that waste is considered within planning and how it can contribute to sustainable development.	Management of waste can be considered through the Local Plan through the design of waste facilities through new developments, ensuring they are designed effectively, as well as the appropriate disposal of materials through construction waste, as well as recycling.
Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015	This Act introduced the requirement for a self and custom build register. This requires local authorities to keep a list of individuals and groups that wish to	The Council is required to keep the self and custom build register up to date and seek appropriate land for individuals on

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
	acquire plots of land to bring forward self-build and custom housebuilding projects.	this register. This could be through the creation of policies in the Local Plan.
Housing and Planning Act 2016	In relation to planning this Act implements an ability for local authorities to allow permission in principle for land that meets a certain criteria, it also mandates local authorities to promote a supply of starter homes which would provide discounts for first-time buyers.	The Local Plan will have specific policies setting out the provision for affordable housing within the district.
UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations, 2017	Aims to improve air quality by meeting statutory nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) limits, cutting carbon emissions, and accelerating the shift to cleaner vehicles. As part of the UK's 25 Year Environment Plan, it also promotes broader environmental benefits, such as mandatory BNG, urban tree planting, and cleaner fuel supplies.	These measures within this programme support healthier communities through cleaner air, greener transport, and a more resilient natural environment. These will all be considered as part of the East Herts Local Plan.
The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations, 2017	These regulations seek to return water bodies to a condition that is as close as possible to their natural state, ensuring long-term sustainability and resilience. It applies to surface water and groundwater, emphasising the need to prevent further deterioration of these ecosystems and to prioritise the protection, enhancement, and restoration of water bodies. They require development proposals to assess impacts on water sources and set out improvements in water quality and ecological health. This includes ensuring that there is adequate wastewater treatment capacity to cope with new development and incorporating water	Policies that seek to protect waterbodies from deterioration will be assessed as part of the Local Plan, ensuring that development does not have a negative impact on these attributes. Additional policies may include flood mitigation measures and infrastructure requirements.

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
	efficiency measures and sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS).	
The Road to Zero , 2018	This plan seeks to transition the UK to cleaner road transport. This includes the expectation that the majority of new cars and vans sold will be 100% zero emission by 2040.	The Local Plan will need to consider the changes to design of parking and new buildings to accommodate the change towards cleaner transport. This could include more electric car charging points within developments to ensure a smoother transition to meeting the goals set out in this strategy.
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment , 2018	The plan outlines how government, businesses, and communities will work together to improve the natural environment, leaving it in a better state than it was found. It seeks to achieve this through cleaner air and water, thriving wildlife, reduced waste, and more sustainable use of resources.	The Local Plan can have implications to the environment, that is why certain policies will be provided that seek to improve air quality, reduce pollution and waste and enhance wildlife and biodiversity, in line with this strategy.
The Clean Air Strategy , 2019	This strategy sets out measures to reduce public exposure to air pollution through new legislation that will create a stronger and more coherent framework for action to tackle air pollution. This was highlighted to be underpinned by new England-wide powers to control major sources of air pollution, in line with the risk they pose to public health and the environment, plus new local powers to take action in areas with an air pollution problem. Together these would support the creation of	Local authorities play a vital role in delivering the actions needed to tackle air pollution. Local Plans can help achieve this through sustainable development, reducing the reliance on cars through improved transport infrastructure.

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
	Clean Air Zones to lower emissions from all sources of air pollution, backed up with clear enforcement mechanisms.	
The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations , 2019	<p>Often referred to as the 'Habitats Regulations', this is the UK transposition of EU Directive 92/43/EC on the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora and the Wild Birds Directive (2009/147/EC). These provide protection for habitats and species considered to be of importance, including the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).</p>	<p>The Local Plan has a duty to protect designated habitat sites through its policies.</p>
Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener , 2021	<p>The Government set out its plan to achieve its legally binding 2050 net zero emissions target, outlining policies for decarbonising all sectors of the economy and framing the transition as an economic opportunity for jobs.</p>	<p>The 10-point plan set out in this document promotes renewable energy, low emissions vehicles, green public transport, sustainable aviation, greener buildings, carbon capture and storage, protecting the environment and green finance. All of which are relevant to the Local Plan, where policies can help to achieve higher standards.</p>
The Environment Act , 2021	<p>This Act introduced mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain targets for new developments. It also introduces the National Nature Recovery Network, which seeks to create a coherent national ecological network, this is broken up by a number of Local Nature Recovery</p>	<p>Local Plans can set higher Biodiversity Net Gain targets than the minimum 10% mandatory target through its policies. Additionally, the Local Plan should have</p>

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
	Strategies that once combined will contribute to the national network. The aim is to create bigger, better and more joined up biodiversity. The Act also creates legally binding targets for fine particulate matter in relation to air quality, and requirements for improvements to water quality and introduction of the biodiversity duty.	regard to Hertfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain , 2021	This Strategy sets out how the government will address the decarbonisation of transport across all modes. A key element of this is increasing levels of walking and cycling, with the delivery of a world-class walking and cycling network by 2040.	Walking and cycling routes can be improved through policies in the Local Plan to encourage more active travel and less car usage. This will support the aim to reduce carbon emissions from transport.
National Design Guide , 2021	This guide provides principles and tools for the delivery of well-designed, high-quality buildings and places. The government's priorities for place shaping are identified. The government has also consulted on an update to this document in 2026.	Local Plan policies can require design tools, such as masterplanning, to be undertaken to deliver well-design and locally related development.
Waste Management Plan for England , DEFRA, 2021	This plan provides an overview of waste management in England, including how litter can be prevented, recycling can be increased, and waste sent to landfill can be reduced. This plan promotes the integration of waste considerations into the design and layout of new developments, ensuring infrastructure supports waste minimisation, reuse and recycling from the outset.	The Local Plan can support the transition to a circular economy by encouraging the design and layout of well-located, modern waste facilities and infrastructure.

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, 2022	<p>This risk assessment is undertaken every five years by government to understand the risks of climate change on the UK. This document identifies a wide range of climate risks that will potentially affect multiple sectors, including costly impacts on health and productivity. The risk assessment identifies eight priority risk areas and how they will be approached. These include risks to habitats, species, natural features, supply of food and goods, power systems, human health and wellbeing, and increased heat in homes and buildings.</p>	<p>The eight priority risk areas identified can all be planned for and addressed in the Local Plan in relation to climate change impacts. For instance, policies are likely to look to protect and enhance natural features, habitats and protected species and health and wellbeing in the district.</p>
The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy report to Parliament, 2022	<p>This strategy specifies the financial resources available from the Secretary of State to meet objectives. The objectives are to increase walking activity, double cycling activity, and increase the percentage of children that usually walk to school.</p>	<p>East Herts Local Plan will also encourage walking and cycling activity for adults and children. This can be achieved by improving cycling and walking routes and connectivity, and integrating active travel with the development of sustainable communities.</p>
The British energy security strategy, 2022	<p>This strategy looks at solutions to the increase in energy prices, such as improving energy efficiency to reduce the amount of energy that households and businesses need. The strategy also looks at investing in the North Sea, expanding renewable energy capacity, and investing in nuclear power.</p>	<p>The Local Plan can support the strategy to improve energy efficiency of houses and other buildings, reducing the demand for energy. Additionally, renewable energy systems can be encouraged or required on new developments and across the district through policies.</p>

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
Green Infrastructure Framework, Natural England, 2023	The Framework is a commitment in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and provides a suite of guidance documents providing structure to support equitable access to greenspace across the country, including five headline Green Infrastructure Standards.	The Local Plan can improve local access to green spaces across the district, ensuring green infrastructure is protected and enhanced.
Air Quality Strategy, 2023	Poor air quality has negative impacts on public health and has consequences for the natural environment and biodiversity. This strategy proposes how local authorities can share knowledge, increase awareness, and take actions to improve air quality for the human and natural population.	Local authorities have a key role in delivering cleaner air. Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and Air Quality Action Plans are tools used to set out how air quality can be improved for health of residents and nature in the district.
UK National Air Pollution Control Programme (NAPCP), 2023	This programme sets out measures for how emission reduction commitments can be met across the UK. These measures apply to five pollutants: nitrogen oxides, ammonia, non-methane volatile organic compounds, particular matter, and sulphur dioxide.	Local Plans can work with local air quality action plans to ensure measures and targets are set to reduce emissions. For example, active travel can be encouraged through planning policies and site design.
Environmental Improvement Plan, 2023	This plan is a revision of the 25 Year Environment Plan, detailing how working with stakeholders will deliver the goals for improving the environment. The actions aim to reduce environmental pollution, restore nature, and increase the prosperity of the country.	The Local Plan can support these aims by requiring improvements to biodiversity and green spaces through policies, and ensuring new developments are sustainable and respectful of natural features.

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
Future of Transport: Supporting Rural Transport Innovation , DfT, 2023	<p>This document shows how innovative transport technologies can address major challenges in rural communities. Some of the rural issues the document include poor access to services, lack of choice for journeys, increased loneliness and isolation, and commercial challenges due to long distances.</p>	<p>Local authorities have an important role to play in planning and delivering the future transport system. The Local Plan can use transport policies to ensure sustainable connectivity is considered in the rural areas of the district.</p>
The Waste Prevention programme for England: Maximising Resources, Minimising Waste , DEFRA, 2023	<p>This programme sets out the priorities for managing resources and waste across the country. The aim is to move towards a circular economy by increasing reuse, repair and remanufacture of goods.</p>	<p>The Local Plan can require waste considerations are integrated into design and layout of new developments.</p>
UK Biodiversity Framework , 2024	<p>This Framework supersedes the previous Framework (the UK Post-2010 UK Biodiversity Framework). This Framework sets out the shared objectives for co-operation and collaboration between the four countries of the UK and establishes a governance structure for overseeing and achieving the shared objectives. These include how to work together towards meeting international biodiversity commitments. This builds upon the foundations of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) launched in 1994, this approach set out targeted action plans for the country's most threatened species and habitats, laying the groundwork for their recovery and long-term protection.</p>	<p>The protection of UK habitats through the Priority Habitat lists are important in local ecological networks and can be protected through policies in the East Herts Local Plan.</p>

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
Planning Policy for Traveller Sites , 2024	This policy framework requires local planning authorities to assess local need, work collaboratively, and identify suitable land for sites. The government's aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, to facilitate their traditional and nomadic way of life and respect the interests of the settled community.	The Local Plan may allocate sites for Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Show People to ensure local demand is met.
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) , 2024	The NPPF forms the foundation of planning policy for the country by providing a framework within which Local Plans can deliver for housing and other development in a sustainable manner. The NPPF encourages a proactive approach to delivering sustainable communities by preparing and maintaining up-to-date Local Plans. It aims to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.	The Framework must be taken into account when preparing the Local Plan and policies must reflect the framework and other relevant regulations. The Framework outlines the standard method which authorities are expected to follow to calculate their local housing need. This figure is used to identify the housing requirement for the plan period.
National Planning Practice Guidance	This provides national guidance to support local planning authorities in delivering sustainable development. Guidance is provided across a range of topics to ensure the policies in the NPPF are applied.	Guidance is provided to ensure local plan policies reflect national policies and support sustainable development.
National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for 2030 , 2025	This plan looks to work collectively with stakeholders to address biodiversity loss across the UK and the UK's Overseas Territories.	The Local Plan will comply with BNG requirement and have regard to the LNRS. Additional policies on biodiversity can be applied to improve habitats and natural spaces.

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls , 2025	This strategy looks across governmental departments to reduce violence against women and girls (VAWG). The strategy highlights the importance of design and planning as critical tools in achieving this aim.	Considerations of VAWG can be embedded into planning and transport guidance and policy to ensure safety is built into the fabric of communities, making spaces more welcoming and secure.
The National Framework for Water Resources , 2025	This framework responds to the national water resources challenges. The main aims are to support long term water resources planning, enable sustainable abstraction, strengthen resilience across sectors, and support integrated water management.	The Local Plan will seek to support the aims of this framework to ensure water resources are managed sustainably and development is planned appropriately in response to water supply and waste infrastructure.
River Basin Management Plans , 2022	These management plans provide legal environmental objectives for local areas. They incorporate the goals of the government's Environment Improvement Plan of 'clean and plentiful water'.	East Herts is located within the Thames River basin district; therefore, the Local Plan and any site allocations will need to consider the objectives provided in this management plan. The Local Plan will also seek to meet goals around protecting water sources, enhancing biodiversity, and ensuring supply and waste are dealt with in appropriate and sustainable ways.
Inclusive spaces and places for girls and young people , 2023	This report was published by Homes England and Make Space for Girls as an introduction for Local Government about public space provision for girls, women and other	East Herts can seek to make spaces more inclusive and safe for women, girls and other people with protected

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
	<p>young people. Currently, parks and public spaces tend to provide facilities which are dominated by boys, meaning young and teenage girls are excluded and often feel a lack of safety and belonging in local areas. This report provides information and guidance for local councils to make spaces more inclusive, safe and engaging for girls.</p>	<p>characteristics by requiring inclusive design and integrating inclusivity into Local Plan policies. A range of guidance documents have been produced by the charity Make Space for Girls, and good quality engagement is recommended to ensure all groups within the district are included and considered within planning.</p>
<p>Decent Homes Standard, 2026</p>	<p>The Decent Homes Standard (DHS) requires all rented homes in England are decent, safe and warm. There are five criteria which outline the requirements for rented housing, which include the absence of dangerous hazards, being in a reasonable state of repair, provision of core facilities and services, thermal comfort, and absence of damp and mould.</p>	<p>New homes that will be delivered via the Local Plan must meet these standards to ensure residents live in safe, warm and decent housing. The new DHS (2026) will apply from 2035 which is within the new Local Plan period.</p>
<p>Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023, 2026</p>	<p>This act provides updated regulations for the plan-making system, including the new 30-month timeline and details of the statutory consultations that must take place.</p>	<p>The new Local Plan will be prepared in accordance with this act to ensure a sound and up-to-date plan is produced.</p>

Sub-nationally relevant plans, policies and programmes

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
The Hertfordshire Water Study , 2017	This study identifies how future growth is likely to affect water infrastructure systems in Hertfordshire, and what changes may be needed to facilitate growth and how new systems could impact the environment.	The Local Plan will consider water infrastructure, its capacity, and its environmental impacts when planning for future growth and new housing.
Perfectly Placed for Business: The Refreshed Strategic Economic Plan: 2017 – 2030 , 2017	The Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) produced this economic plan to outline the vision for the county's economic development up to 2030. The plan focuses on enhancing productivity, supporting high-quality employment, and unlocking the county's economic potential.	The Local Plan will seek to support high-quality, sustainable employment provision and growth for the district.
Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan , 2018	The county's Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out how transport can support the delivery of a positive future by impacting areas such as economic growth, housing delivery, public health, and environmental quality.	The LTP encourages walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport use to support connectivity, health and the environment. The Local Plan will reflect this by promoting and improving opportunities to travel sustainably across the district and further.
Lee Valley Regional Park Development Framework , 2019	This framework outlines the blueprint for the future of the Lee Valley Regional Park. Part of the park is within East Herts. The framework proposes areas where stakeholders will be collaborated with to protect, promote and enhance the natural, historic and leisure features.	Area 8, the Upper Valley, of the Lee Valley Regional Park is within East Herts. Policies in the new Local Plan will have regard to the proposals and policies in this framework, to ensure natural habitats are enhanced and protected.

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
Hertfordshire's State of Nature 2020	This document presents data on the current situation for wildlife in the county. The report assesses how species numbers have changed between 1970 and 2020.	The Local Plan will identify areas to protect in terms of habitats and areas of natural value.
Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy, 2020	This strategy addresses the climate emergency and discusses measures to reach net-zero emissions and embed sustainability into development.	The Local Plan will aim to tackle to the climate emergency which has been declared in the district.
"Our Way Forward" – Hertfordshire's Plan for Children and Young People (2021-2026)	This plan sets out aims to improve outcomes for young people and families. This plan follows the COVID 19 pandemic, looking at how improvements can be made to deal with the disruptions caused.	The Local Plan will look to deliver sustainable communities which will include provision and connections to education and services for young people and families.
Hertfordshire Emerging Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2040 , 2022	This plan sets out the county council's spatial vision for the future of minerals and waste management and the objectives through which it will be achieved.	The Local Plan will comply with this plan to ensure key mineral and waste sites are restored, conserved and enhanced.
Hertfordshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026	This sets out the vision and priorities for improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities in Hertfordshire. The three key ambitions identified in this strategy are strong communities, healthy and fulfilling lives, and effective, joined up health and care services.	The strategy identifies six priorities to improve health and wellbeing. These can be supported through policies in the Local Plan by ensuring residents have opportunities to make healthy choices.
Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) -	This plan identifies actions that are needed to restore and enhance biodiversity across the county. Its actions are intended to ensure that outcomes resulting from new development, agricultural practices, and local	The Local Plan will protect habitat sites and seek to enhance biodiversity within the district.

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
Strategic Action Plan for Biodiversity , 2023	authority greenspace management, can not only halt but reverse the decline in biodiversity.	
Hertfordshire & West Essex Integrated Care Strategy , 2023	This sets out how the Integrated Care System (ICS) will ensure healthy and safe communities. It outlines how healthy life expectancy will be improved and how health inequalities will be reduced.	The Local Plan is expected to reflect the strategy's aims and deliver health and safe communities.
Affinity Water Resources Management Plan , 2024	This plan looks at how water resources can be managed in the region to address future potential shortfalls in supply.	The Local Plan can include policies to reduce water usage and improve efficiency of new housing and buildings, meaning supply will decrease which will align with the management plan's aims.
North East Central Hertfordshire: Vision 2050 , 2024	This document represents the vision for the future of the north and east area of Hertfordshire. It identifies strengths, weaknesses, challenges and potential threats in the area over the next 25 years.	The Local Plan will seek to maintain and enhance the relationships between the district and surrounding areas, working collaboratively and strategically with neighbouring authorities.
Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2025	As a result of decline in natural and biodiversity, this strategy provides a guide for landowners, developers and other stakeholders to deliver nature recovery.	Certain areas across the district have been mapped to identify where actions will have a positive impact. The Local Plan will consider these areas and comply with the strategy.
Thames Water - Drainage and Wastewater	This plan sets out how wastewater systems and drainage networks are to be extended, improved and maintained to ensure they are resilient to future pressures.	The Local Plan will need to consider wastewater infrastructure and management when developing new sustainable communities.

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
Management Plan , 2025-2030		
Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, 2025, Part 1 , Part 2a , and Part 2b	This strategy highlights the strengths and weaknesses of Hertfordshire's green infrastructure network and identifies the priorities and actions to make improvements.	This strategy provides evidence to support policies to protect and enhance green infrastructure in the district.
Hertfordshire Healthy and Safe Places Framework , 2026	The framework aims to ensure health is considered in planning policy to ensure inequalities in health across the county are address. This document focuses on the environmental and social determinants that influence health outcomes and how they can be improved through strategic planning.	The framework recommends that districts and boroughs in Hertfordshire apply a 'Health in all Policies' approach. It also advises on how to use masterplanning, visioning and evidence work to support a healthy approach in Local Plans.
Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for Developers	This guide provides information to ensure developments meet the requirements to achieve effective waste storage and collection on new sites.	The Local Plan can implement policies regarding waste to ensure collections and storage are effective, well-designed and sustainable.

Locally relevant plans, policies and programmes

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
Landscape Character Assessment SPD , 2007	This document identifies distinct landscapes within the district, providing evaluations, strategies, and guidelines	The Local Plan will seek to update any significant landscape areas and

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
	for conserving and enhancing the character of each area.	strategies for conserving and enhancing these areas.
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) , 2016 (addendum in 2024)	The SFRA looks at available flood risk data to provide an analysis of areas of risk and the impact of potential development on flooding.	The SFRA provides evidence for the Local Plan which will feed into site allocation proposals and policies on flooding. This work will be updated as part of the emerging Local Plan.
Sustainability SPD , 2021	This document provides guidance related to climate change and sustainable design to improve the environmental sustainability of new development.	Guidance from this document will be considered and implemented where relevant into policies in the Local Plan to ensure sufficient regard is given to environmental sustainability.
East Herts District Plan 2018	The 2018 District Plan sets out the framework for East Herts between 2011 and 2033. It aims to deliver sustainable development through new homes, jobs, facilities and infrastructure. It also contains Development Management policies used to determine planning applications.	The new Local Plan will replace the 2018 District Plan. Evidence will be collected of the conditions and need in the district to understand how past policies need to be updated to reflect local and national changes.
East Herts Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019 – 2023 and Action Plan	This strategy focuses on the efforts and actions of East Herts Council to empower, educate and enable residents to take a role in their health, and to create a supportive environment to achieve better health outcomes. The documents provide details about strategic priorities and how they will be addressed through council and partner health and wellbeing work.	The strategy and associated action plan will work with the Local Plan to ensure new developments and neighbourhoods have significant, positive impacts on health and wellbeing of the population in East Herts.

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
Homelessness and Homeless Prevention Strategy 2019- 2024	This strategy takes a view on the housing issues in East Herts and looks at actions to alleviate homelessness. The strategy has been extended to remain in place until a new strategy is adopted.	The Local Plan can ensure the delivery of suitable and affordable homes through policy and site allocations to provide options for vulnerable households in East Herts.
East Herts Disability Equality Strategy	The aim of this strategy is to highlight the priorities of the council in terms of promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities and those without.	The Local Plan will need to ensure it is providing for those with disabilities, aiming to reduce inequalities, and improve the lives of disabled people in East Herts.
East Herts Housing Strategy, 2022 - 2027	The strategy sets out four strategic priorities: to deliver more affordable housing, enable a wider range of accommodation and support for the most vulnerable residents, provide high quality housing options for older people, and improve the sustainability and quality of homes.	The Local Plan can use policies to ensure delivery of affordable housing and suitable accommodation to meet local needs. Sustainability and efficiency of housing can also be delivered by integrating into policies.
East Herts Tenancy Strategy 2021 - 2026	This strategy aims to set out the requirements of Registered Providers operating within the district to ensure housing to built to meet local needs, and tenancy policies are reviewed and adopted by providers.	The Local Plan will set out policies outlining the housing mix and tenures needed in the district based on local need.
Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plans	East Herts Council has designated 42 conservation areas in the district. These are areas of special architectural or historic interest with appraisals and	The Local Plan will seek to have policies regarding conservation areas to ensure they are protected and enhanced.

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
	management plans to show how they can be enhanced or improved.	
East Herts Climate Change Strategy 2022 - 2026	In July 2019, East Herts Council approved a Climate Change Declaration in recognition of the climate emergency being faced. This declaration committed the Council to take action to address the causes and impacts of climate change across the district. This strategy laid out a route map for the Council itself to achieve a net-zero carbon position by 2030 while at the same time working with residents, community groups and other public and private sector partners to encourage the whole district to achieve the same position by that date.	The strategy recommends implementing planning policies which can help with the mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the district.
East Herts - Climate Emergency 2023	In 2023, East Herts Council declared a climate emergency, recognising the harmful impacts to the health and wellbeing of residents and the environment in the district. This declaration committed the Council to take action to address the causes and impacts of climate change across the district and laid out a route map for the Council itself to achieve a net-zero carbon position by 2027 while at the same time working with residents, community groups and other public and private sector partners to encourage the whole district to achieve the same position by that date.	Various commitments have been identified to prioritise protecting the environment, including ensuring policies in the new Local Plan are compatible with the Council's drive to achieve net zero carbon.

Plan, policy or programme	Summary of the aims and objectives	Relevance to East Herts Local Plan
East Herts Corporate Plan, 2024	The Corporate Plan sets four priority areas including being environmentally focussed. Under this priority the Council is seeking to develop and implement the Air Quality Action Plan, update Parking Strategy to encourage sustainable travel, reduce carbon emissions, roll out more EV chargers and to encourage residents to play their part in supporting local wildlife and improving our natural environment.	The Local Plan can help to implement the Council's corporate priorities through policies in particular relating to EV chargers, design, parking and air quality interventions.
Air Quality Action Plan 2024-2029 for the district of East Hertfordshire	This action plan provides priorities that the Council has identified to undertake in order to improve air quality. The priorities are around reducing traffic levels, mitigating impacts of future growth, supporting active travel, and reducing the Council's own impact on air quality.	Many of the actions described in the action plan can be integrated into policy in the Local Plan to promote better air quality, such as expansion of EV infrastructure and supporting active travel connections.
East Herts Heritage at Risk Register 2025	The Heritage at Risk Register (HAR) identifies heritage assets that are at risk and need intervention.	The Local Plan will seek to preserve and enhance heritage assets in the district.
2025 Air Quality Annual Status Report	This annual report identifies the latest air quality data in the district and provides priorities for the East Herts Council regarding air quality management in the district.	The Local Plan will seek to follow these priorities, including mitigating the impacts of future growth and development in the district.
East Herts Council Biodiversity Duty Report 2026	This report demonstrates how East Herts complies with the biodiversity duty, and any other relevant work on improving biodiversity in the district.	The Local Plan will continue this compliance and will seek to ensure biodiversity is protected and enhanced in the district.

Agenda Item 5

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date of meeting: Wednesday, 10 June 2026

Report by: Councillor Carl Brittain – Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

Report title: Proposal from Millstream Property Investments Ltd to Sell the Company to Enable Disposal of All its Properties

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary

At its meeting of 26 February 2025, Council, acting as Millstream's sole shareholder, resolved that the company should sell all its properties. This was because changes in both the local and national financial landscape and regulations rendered the council's capital investment in the company less advantageous to the council than other uses of its monies. The approval did not grant permission to Millstream's directors to sale the company itself in pursuit of this aim. Now that an acceptable offer to acquire the company has been received, the company is seeking the permission of its shareholder (Council) to do this.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL, that:

- a) acting as Millstream's sole shareholder, Council uses its reserved power, under the Shareholder Agreement with the company, to consent to Millstream's request to sell the company in pursuit of the shareholder's existing resolution that the company disposes of all of its properties.

1.0 Proposal

- 1.1 It is proposed that in order to fulfil the resolution of its shareholder (Council) that it should dispose of all its properties, Millstream is now putting before the shareholder a request for consent to sell the whole company as an acceptable offer, the acceptance of

which will expedite the liquation of the council's investment in the company, has been received.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At its meeting of 26 February 2025, Council, acting as Millstream's sole shareholder, resolved that the company should sell all its properties. This was because changes in both the local and national financial landscape and regulations rendered the council's capital investment in the company less advantageous to the council than other uses of its monies. In short, the revenue costs of borrowing to fund its capital programme had come to outstrip the revenue income derived by the council from tying up a commensurate amount of capital in Millstream.
- 2.2 Council's decision that Millstream should sell all its properties so as to return the council's capital investment, via the repayment of debt and dividends arising from profits, was reaffirmed at the Council meeting of 4 March 2026.
- 2.3 Members are directed to the Millstream Business Plan reports to Council on [26 February 2025](#) and [4 March 2026](#) for more details of the financial case for property disposal.

3. Reasons

- 3.1 Following the Council decisions discussed above, Millstream commenced disposal of its properties as soon as any existing tenants gave notice. This has led to one sale being completed and two more sales being made subject to contract. Of note, perhaps given the current economic climate and/or exist from the market of some landlords following enactment of the main provisions of the Renters' Rights Act 2025 earlier this year, no further Millstream tenants have handed in their notice to date, which represents a lower turnover rate than previously. This means that the four-month notice period that landlords now need to give under the Renters' Rights Act combined with the void

period pending sale means that individual disposals relying on Millstream to give notice are unlikely to complete before 2027/28.

- 3.2 In March this year, the estate agent handling Millstream's property disposals informed the company that they were aware of two property rental companies who was looking to add to their portfolio in the area. One company fell away, however, following discussion and negotiation between Millstream and the other potential purchaser, via the estate agent, an offer price was received that directors felt was acceptable.
- 3.3 Millstream's directors sought the views of the council's Director of Finance, Risk and Performance on whether the final price offered would, subject to Council approval, be acceptable to the council based on assumptions about income from Millstream and the anticipated timescale disposal of the company would allow the council to gain a capital receipt. It should be noted that if Council approves disposal of the company, Millstream will remain open to any other higher offers prior to progressing the current one.
- 3.4 Having satisfied themselves that the offer price for the company was acceptable in terms of the council's budget assumptions, the company convened a Shareholder Advisory Group meeting (of the three elected members nominated to the group) at which it informed the council that it wished to dispose of the company in pursuit of the shareholder's (Council's) wish to liquate its investment in the company. The members of the Shareholder Advisory Group, having taken advice from the council's Director for Finance, Risk and Performance agreed that the matter should be put to Council for consideration.
- 3.5 While consent has been granted by Council to Millstream specifically to dispose of its properties, that consent did not make explicit that the directors of the company could sell the whole company.

- 3.6 The Shareholder Agreement between the council and the company is framed in such a way the company cannot take significant decisions, as itemised in the Agreement, without the written consent of the shareholder (Council). Thus, although disposal of properties could be inferred to include disposal of the company, that this was not explicitly included in the consent to sell properties granted by Council on 26 February 2025, the matter is now before Council for consideration.
- 3.7 EXEMPT Appendix A gives the financial details of the proposed company disposal. It should be noted that members are being asked to consider the proposal to give consent to disposal of the company; members are not being asked to agree the disposal price nor give approval of the specific purchaser – neither matter is reserved for the shareholder – although, of course, members may take into consideration these details in determining whether to consent to the sale of the company.

Would disposal represent a good financial outcome for the shareholder?

- 3.8 It is the company directors' view that the disposal of the company would represent a good financial outcome. Of note:
- the directors twice negotiated up the offer price
 - the price is favourable when compared with the sales prices achieved for individual sales in the open market – see EXEMPT Appendix A
 - the legal costs are likely to be lower for the company disposal than sale of individual properties – see EXEMPT APPENDIX A.
- 3.9 The council's Director of Finance, Risk and Performance has confirmed that the final offer price is in keeping with assumptions about income from Millstream's disposals included in the council's budget projections and that disposal of the company would bring

forward the receipt to the council, to the council's financial advantage – this is illustrated in the EXEMPT Appendix A.

3.10 Millstream's directors are aware that disposal of a company will require specialist legal and financial/tax treatments as it is more complex than simply disposing of individual properties. Thus, the directors have already:

- instructed their longstanding auditors and accountants, Ensors, to ready themselves, should Council approve company disposal, to structure the deal in the most tax way possible
- sought fee estimates from suitably qualified and experienced legal practices.

4.0 Options

4.1 Do not approve Millstream's proposal to sell the whole company in pursuit of Council's resolution that the company should dispose of all of its properties. NOT RECOMMENDED as work by the directors of the company as scrutinised by the Director for Finance, Risk and Performance and the three elected members on the Shareholder Advisory Group indicates that there are distinct benefits of selling the company to achieve a timely disposal of all properties when compared with individual sales as already approved by Council.

4.2 Seek to instruct Millstream's directors to dispose of the company on different terms. NOT RECOMMENDED as Council has no legal basis within the Shareholder Agreement to do this and so risks its actions being ultra vires. Members can be assured that (a) Millstream's directors have already negotiated the price upwards, (b) the directors will commission specialist and legal and financial advice to ensure the sale proceeds on the most advantageous terms for the company and the shareholder and (c) the council's Director of Finance, Risk and Performance has confirmed that the sales price is commensurate with assumptions of the proceeds of property disposals already built into the

council's budgets and would enable the council to benefit from the receipt earlier than under the individual sales option.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 Millstream's directors have identified a series of risks and accompanying mitigations.
- 5.2 First, as with any commercial transaction, there is a risk of the deal falling through. This risk is being mitigated by the company engaging suitably experienced legal and financial specialists to expedite the transaction and thus, it is anticipated, maintain the confidence of the buyer.
- 5.3 Second, there is a risk that the buyer will seek to reduce the price as the transaction proceeds. This risk is being mitigated by (a) having already shared valuation data with the purchaser prior to arriving at an acceptable offer and (b) as has been the case throughout Millstream's operation, keeping all property-related compliance checks and documentation fully up-to-date so that there is limited opportunity for the purchaser to claim unforeseen liabilities that will need to be reflected in the price.
- 5.4 Third, directors' limited experience of company disposal could lead to a disadvantageous outcome. This risk is being mitigated by commissioning legal and financial/tax specialists. Of note, Ensors, who have been the company's auditors and accountants since 2020 will be engaged, should Council approve company disposal, to handle the financial aspects of the transaction. Ensors have established an in-depth understanding of the company and have, for example, already entered into dialogue with the company about how to legitimately minimise any tax leakage.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 The directors have consulted the Shareholder Rep (the Chief Executive), the Director for Finance, Risk and Performance and the three elected members on the Shareholder Advisory Group

about the proposal to sell the company. All these consultees have endorsed seeking the Shareholder's (Council's) consent to sell the company.

Community Safety

None arising directly from this report.

Data Protection

None arising directly from this report.

Equalities

None arising directly from this report.

Environmental Sustainability

None arising directly from this report.

Financial

The financial aspects of the disposal are covered in the EXEMPT Appendix A. In summary, the Director for Finance, Risk and Performance has confirmed that the anticipated proceeds of selling company accord with the assumed income to the council from individual property sales already built into the council's budgets.

Health and Safety

None arising directly from this report.

Human Resources

None arising directly from this report.

Human Rights

None arising directly from this report.

Legal

The matter before Council, acting as Millstream's shareholder, is whether to approve the company's wish to dispose of the company in

pursuit of Council's resolution made at its meeting of 26th February 2025 that the company sell all its properties so that the council could liquidate its investment in the company.

Paragraphs 10.1 and 10.1.5 of the Shareholder Agreement between the council and the company state, when read in combination, that '*no action shall be taken or resolution passed by the Company or any Group Member of the Company in respect of any of the following matters except with the prior written consent of the Shareholder:... 10.1.5 the sale, transfer or disposal of the whole or a substantial part of the Business, or any dilution of the Company's interest in any Subsidiary Undertaking;...*' This part of the Shareholder Agreement has the effect of reserving for the shareholder (Council) the final say on disposal of the company itself.

It may be noted that the decision by Council on 26 February 2025 to dispose of the properties relied on this same reserved power in the Shareholder Agreement and thus one interpretation could be that selling the whole company itself could come within the meaning of the existing approval granted by Council that Millstream '*disposes of its properties*'. This, however, is open to challenge as, even though the minutes of the 26 February 2025 meeting show that during discussion the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability gave his opinion that '*it was the intention to wind up the company when properties had been disposed of*', the Shareholder Agreement is framed in such a way that the shareholder (Council) '*shall take all such steps and do all such acts and things as may be necessary or desirable, including, without limitation, exercising all voting and other rights and powers of control available to it in relation to the Company, so as to procure... that at all times during the term of this Agreement no action shall be taken or resolution passed by the Company or any Group Member of the Company in respect of any of the following matters except with the prior written consent of the Shareholder*'. The intention of this clause is clearly that the shareholder (Council) shall not enable the company to take any of the reserved, substantive decisions without its express permission. Thus, as existing

approval granted by Council does *not* explicitly cover the sale of the whole company, it is apparent that the company cannot now proceed with such a sale without Council's explicit permission.

Specific Wards

No.

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 [Council report - 26 February 2025](#) and [Council report - 4 March 2026](#)

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