

## **Chapter 3 The Development Strategy**

### **3.1 Introduction**

- 3.1.1 This chapter sets out the Council's strategy for delivering growth in East Herts over the Plan period up to 2033. It looks at the amount of new development that will be delivered, and where it should be located across the District. It also identifies the need for new site allocations to deliver this strategy, and what new infrastructure and services may be required.
- 3.1.2 The strategy seeks to deliver the vision and objectives in Chapter 2 and ensure that growth in East Herts is 'sustainable'. Sustainable development is defined as 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. In essence it means providing growth which meets the needs of existing and future residents, while mitigating adverse economic, environmental and social impacts. The amount and location of growth is important. It is also critical to ensure that growth is accompanied by the required infrastructure and services in order to support the quality of people's lives.
- 3.1.3 This chapter also sets out how local people can facilitate the delivery of growth themselves, and influence their local area – through Neighbourhood Planning. The Government's localism agenda has raised the profile and importance of community involvement in planning. The Council is supportive of this approach.

### **3.2 Level of Growth**

- 3.2.1 This section looks at the amount of housing, employment and retail growth that the Council will seek to facilitate over the Plan period. Other types of development will also be needed in the District over the Plan period including, for example, green infrastructure and community facilities. These requirements are explored further in the relevant topic chapters (see Part 2 of the Plan) and settlement chapters.

## Housing Growth

- 3.2.2 Following the abolition of the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy in 2013, the Council is responsible for identifying a housing ‘target’ in the District Plan. The right level of housing can help to support economic growth, meet local housing needs, and facilitate the delivery of infrastructure. Having a housing target also allows a local authority to work with service providers and other organisations to ensure that suitable infrastructure is provided to meet the needs of new development.
- 3.2.3 The Council has worked closely with its housing market area partners (Harlow, Epping Forest and Uttlesford Councils) in order to prepare a technical document known as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The purpose of the SHMA is to identify an ‘objective assessment of housing need’ (NPPF paragraph 47), taking into account population projections, affordable housing needs and jobs growth.
- 3.2.4 The SHMA concludes that the combined level of housing need across the four local authority areas is 46,058 homes for the period 2011 - 2033. This figure has been disaggregated amongst the four authorities. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed which commits all four Councils to meeting their individual housing needs within their own administrative boundaries. For East Herts, the level of need is 745 new homes per year, or 16,390 by 2033<sup>1</sup>.
- 3.2.5 In order to meet this challenging housing target, the District Plan has allocated a number of sites across East Herts. These sites are identified in Section 3.3 later in the chapter.
- 3.2.6 It is important to note that the housing need figure for the District does not include the projected increase in the number of people within residential institutions. The SHMA identifies the projected growth in population aged 75 or over living in communal establishments in the District, as 529 persons,

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<sup>1</sup> The Plan Period is 2011 – 2033 (22 years). Therefore 745 homes x 22 = 16,390.

between 2011-2033. Therefore, in addition to the overall housing target, this Plan supports a gross increase of approximately 530 bed-spaces of C2 provision, primarily to help meet the accommodation needs of older people who need to live in an environment which provides residential or nursing care.

- 3.2.7 The Government released new household projections in July 2016. These figures show that, by 2033, the population of East Herts is likely to be greater than originally expected. Following the release of these figures, further work on the SHMA has shown that the level of housing need in the District has increased to around 19,500 new homes by 2033. While the Council is unable to identify sufficient sites to meet this higher target at present, the District Plan does take account of the upward trend in housing need, and therefore seeks to provide for more than 745 new homes per year.

The SHMA is available to view on the Council's website at: [www.eastherts.gov.uk/shma](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/shma).

### **Economic Growth**

- 3.2.8 In addition to housing need, the Council has also worked with our neighbouring authorities in order to understand how many new jobs are likely to be created within the plan period. This work, which was undertaken to inform the SHMA, indicates that between 435 and 505 new jobs will be created each year in East Herts.

The SHMA Economic Evidence is available to view on the Council's website at: [www.eastherts.gov.uk/shma](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/shma).

- 3.2.9 In order to help support jobs growth in the District, this Plan seeks to ensure sufficient provision of land and premises for office, industrial and warehousing uses (B1, B2, B8 uses) in sustainable locations which meet the needs of local

businesses. As such, 10-11 hectares of new employment land will be provided in the following locations:

- 3 hectares to the north of Buntingford Business Park;
- 4-5 hectares within the development at South of Bishop's Stortford; and
- 3 hectares within the development at North and East of Ware.

In addition, 3,000 square metres of additional B1 employment floorspace will be provided at Mead Lane, Hertford.

3.2.10 In order to recognise the valuable role existing businesses have, the following locations have also been designated as Employment Areas:

- 0.23 hectares at Millside Industrial Estate, Bishop's Stortford;
- 0.36 hectares at Southmill Trading Estate, Bishop's Stortford;
- 7.71 hectares at Pegs Lane/Hale Road, Hertford;
- 0.43 hectares at Leaside Works, Stanstead Abbots; and
- 0.59 hectares at Riverside Works, Amwell End, Stanstead Abbots.

3.2.11 In addition, all Employment Areas that were previously identified through the East Herts Local Plan 2007 have retained their designation through the District Plan. The Council encourages the provision of new employment land created through mixed-use developments, which should contain small-scale business units. These will make valuable contributions to balancing new residential developments with local employment opportunities. These employment areas may be designated through future revisions to the District Plan.

3.2.12 More detail on the approach to employment is contained in the settlement chapters and in Chapter 15 (Economic Development). Proposals that affect designated and non-designated Employment Areas will be considered in accordance with Policies ED1 (Employment) and ED2 (Rural Economy).

### **Retail Growth**

3.2.13 As the population grows additional retail development will be required to provide shopping opportunities at the local level. The Council's 'Retail and Town Centres Study Update' (2013) assesses qualitative issues and quantitative requirements for additional retail floorspace to meet future needs. The Study concludes that there will be a need over the Plan period for:

1. Convenience (food) retail – an additional 7,600m<sup>2</sup> (net) of new floorspace
2. Comparison (non-food) retail – an additional 6,100m<sup>2</sup> (net) of new floorspace

3.2.14 These floorspace requirements take into account current planning permissions, but not the potential reoccupation of vacant floorspace.

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| <p>The Retail and Town Centres Study Update (2013) is available to view on the Council's website at:<br/><a href="http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/retailstudy2013">www.eastherts.gov.uk/retailstudy2013</a>.</p> |
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3.2.15 The Plan seeks to ensure that new retail development occurs in a manner that secures the vitality and viability of the District's retail centres but is not too restrictive as to stifle innovation and investment. There is a need for a balanced approach to enabling retail centres to respond to changing retail behaviour, whilst preserving and enhancing the essence and historic character which is key to the attractiveness of the District's historic market towns.

- 3.2.16 More detail on the approach to retail requirements is contained in the settlement chapters and in Chapter 16 (Retail and Town Centres).
- 3.2.17 New retail provision will be encouraged within major urban extensions in order to support the new and existing communities. These will be neighbourhood centres or local parades<sup>2</sup> as appropriate and will complement the existing town centres.

### **Policy DPS1 Housing, Employment and Retail Growth**

In the period 2011 to 2033 the Council will:

- (a) Provide for a minimum of 16,390 new homes in the District up to 2033.
- (b) Maximise opportunities for jobs growth in the District, with the aim of achieving a minimum of 435 - 505 additional jobs in East Herts each year. This will include making provision for 10-11 hectares of new employment land for B1/B2/B8 uses.
- (c) Encourage an additional 7,600m<sup>2</sup> of convenience and 6,100m<sup>2</sup> of comparison retail floorspace in the District.

## **3.3 Development Strategy**

- 3.3.1 This section sets out where growth should be focused, and where it should be restricted. The aim is to ensure that growth takes place in the most suitable locations in the District i.e. where it is needed, where it is deliverable, and where it is sustainable. This section sets out the broad policy framework, which is then carried through into the separate settlement-level policy sections.

## **Guiding Principles and Strategy**

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<sup>2</sup> As defined within Section 15.8 of Chapter 15: Retail and Town Centres.

3.3.2 The District Plan is based on a number of guiding principles. The principles are based on national policy and legal requirements applied to the local circumstances of the East Herts area.

### **Guiding Principles**

1. To allocate sufficient sites in order to meet the full housing needs of East Herts;
2. To prioritise the development of brownfield land and other appropriate sites within the urban areas of the settlements, but to avoid over-development of such sites;
3. To promote self-containment by directing development to areas where there is reasonable proximity to services and facilities, and which reflect existing travel to work areas, school catchments, and retail spend patterns and functional geographies;
4. Wherever possible to utilise readily available features to provide clear and unambiguous Green Belt boundaries;
5. To co-operate with adjoining authorities on cross-boundary strategic matters where it is reasonable to do so;
6. To focus development in locations where the impacts on the historic and natural environment are minimised as far as possible;
7. To acknowledge that the capacity for the market towns and villages to grow is constrained by the existing capacity and future potential of these settlements, and therefore the provision of large-scale strategic development will be required, both within this Plan period and beyond;
8. To protect and enhance the rural area and the Green Belt outside the allocated development areas to maintain the countryside and the rural character of the District;
9. To encourage limited small-scale development in and around the identified villages, with an opportunity for neighbourhood planning to influence the type and location of development sites.

- 3.3.3 The strategy must have regard to a number of housing requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 3.3.4 Firstly, the NPPF requires that every effort should be made to meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area. As set out above in Section 3.2, the housing need in the District is for 745 new homes each year. East Herts' projected need is back-dated to 2011 when the previous Local Plan figures ended, meaning that the total need is for 16,390 homes up to 2033.
- 3.3.5 Secondly, the NPPF requires a supply of specific deliverable sites in order to meet housing needs in the first five years of the plan period. For East Herts, the first five year period is 2017 to 2022.
- 3.3.6 In the period 2011-2017 (the 'pre-plan' period) it is anticipated that only 3,161 homes will be built, leaving a shortfall of 1,309 homes when measured against the projected need of 4,470 over 5 years<sup>3</sup>. The Plan seeks to make up this shortfall in the first five year period (2017 – 2022).
- 3.3.7 Thirdly, the NPPF also requires the provision of an additional buffer in the first five year period (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. A 20% buffer should be applied where there is a persistent record of under-delivery. Given the significant shortfall in housing delivery since 2011, the Council accepts that a 20% buffer should be applied. Taking into account identified need, the shortfall and the 20% buffer, the total housing requirement for the first five year period is 6,041 new homes<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The pre-plan period is 2011 – 2017. Therefore the level of housing need in this period is 745 homes x 6 years = 4,470 homes. Expected number of housing completions in this period is 3,161 homes. This leaves a shortfall of 1,309 homes (4,470 – 3,161).

<sup>4</sup> The first five year period is 2017 – 2022. The level of need for this period is 745 homes x 5 = 3,725 homes. 3,725 homes plus the shortfall of 1,309 homes = 5,034 homes. The 20% buffer is then added: 5,034 homes x 1.2 = 6,041 homes.



3.3.8 Policy DSP2 (The Development Strategy 2011-2033) below identifies how housing need, both within the first five year period and beyond, will be met. More detailed information about individual sites can be found in the settlement chapters.

### **Policy DPS2 The Development Strategy 2011-2033**

I. Provision will be made to meet the projected housing need of at least 745 homes per year, making a total minimum requirement of 16,390 homes in the period 2011-2033.

II. In the first five years of the Plan after adoption (2017-2022), the housing requirement will total at least 6,041 homes, comprising:

(a) 3,725 based on projected housing needs for 5 years;

(b) 1,309 to address the shortfall from the period 2011-2017;

(c) 1,007 to allow a 20% buffer for choice and flexibility, brought forward from later in the plan period.

III. Brownfield locations in the towns will be prioritised for mixed-use development. The remainder of the housing and development needs in the Plan period will be met on a range of greenfield sites across the District.

IV. Development in the villages shall be delivered in accordance with local initiatives led by Parish Councils, subject to the review triggers set out in Policy VILL1 (Group 1 Villages).

3.3.9 The main policy elements of the development strategy are shown on the Key Diagram. Inset maps showing further detail on particular locations are shown in the relevant section of the Plan. The Key Diagram including the main map and inset maps is included at Appendix A.

### **Housing Supply**

3.3.10 There are a number of potential sources of housing supply as follows:

1. Completions and commitments are shown in the period 2011-2017, based on monitoring data up to March 2016.
2. Within the urban areas of the towns, a limited number of sites with capacity for 10 or more homes have been identified through the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA).
3. It is also anticipated that there will be a number of permissions granted on small sites of less than 10 homes that have not currently been identified. These are known as windfalls. A windfall allowance has been made on the basis of an analysis of past windfalls.
4. The majority of new homes will be provided on sites that have been allocated within this Plan. These are shown on the Policies Map and the site locations are shown in red alongside each of the site specific policies in the settlement chapters.
5. Finally, in addition to providing new homes within the Plan period, the Gilston Area will provide a further 6,950 new homes after 2033 while North and East of Ware will also provide a further 500 homes subject to the identification of suitable highways mitigation measures.

3.3.11 Policy DPS3 (Housing Supply 2011-2033) reflects these different sources of housing supply. It also sets out the contribution from each source for the important first five year period after adoption (2017-2022).

3.3.12 The identified housing supply to 2033 exceeds the requirement by 1,650 homes<sup>5</sup>. This serves two functions. Firstly, it provides a contingency to allow for flexibility. Contingency planning is necessary to allow for eventualities beyond the Council's control, including the economic cycle and factors relating to specific sites or developers, which could result in stalled sites.

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<sup>5</sup> The housing need for the Plan period (2011 – 2033), is 16,390 homes. The District Plan identifies sufficient sites to deliver 18,040 new homes. Therefore 18,040 minus 16,390 = 1,650 homes.

The Plan provides a range of sites in different locations which means that it is not reliant on delivery at a single location. A full breakdown of the housing supply is included at Appendix B.

3.3.13 Secondly, as identified within paragraph 3.2.5, the Council recognises that recent household projections demonstrate a further upward trend in housing need. While this Plan is not able to identify sufficient sites to meet these additional needs in full, providing a level of housing that is significantly in excess of 745 homes per year demonstrates the Councils commitment to positive planning. The positive approach is further enforced by a commitment to bring forward a significant amount of new housing beyond the Plan period.

**Green Belt**

3.3.14 Green Belt land is a valued resource for many residents in East Herts. However, the challenging level of housing need in the District cannot be met in a sustainable way without undertaking a carefully planned review of the Green Belt in certain locations. Therefore approximately 6% of the District’s Green Belt has been removed in order to help meet a significant proportion of the housing need, both within this Plan period and beyond.

**Policy DPS3 Housing Supply 2011-2033**

The overall housing supply will meet projected housing need over the plan period 2011 to 2033.

| Supply Source | Housing supply:<br>First five years<br>2017-2022 | Housing supply:<br>Total 2011-2033 |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|               |                                                  |                                    |

|                                                                                                   |       |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Windfall allowance                                                                                | 250   | 800   |
| Completions                                                                                       | 0     | 2,625 |
| Commitments                                                                                       | 1,899 | 2,435 |
| Villages                                                                                          | 300   | 500   |
| Deliverable sites in existing urban areas as identified by Strategic Land Availability Assessment | 88    | 88    |
| Bishop's Stortford Goods Yard                                                                     | 250   | 400   |
| Land at Old River Lane, Bishop's Stortford                                                        | 0     | 100   |
| Hadham Road Reserve Secondary School Site, Bishop's Stortford                                     | 0     | 163   |
| Bishop's Stortford High School Site, London Road                                                  | 150   | 150   |
| North of Bishop's Stortford                                                                       | 800   | 2,529 |
| South of Bishop's Stortford                                                                       | 250   | 750   |
| Bishop's Stortford – East of Manor Links                                                          | 50    | 50    |
| Hertford - Mead Lane Area                                                                         | 100   | 200   |
| North of Hertford                                                                                 | 50    | 150   |
| South of Hertford                                                                                 | 50    | 50    |
| West of Hertford                                                                                  | 550   | 550   |

|                                     |       |           |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-----------|
| Sawbridgeworth – North of West Road | 125   | 125       |
| Sawbridgeworth – South of West Road | 175   | 175       |
| North of Sawbridgeworth             | 0     | 200       |
| North and East of Ware              | 0     | 1,000 (1) |
| East of Stevenage                   | 600   | 600       |
| Gilston Area                        | 0     | 3,050 (2) |
| East of Welwyn Garden City          | 210   | 1,350     |
| TOTAL                               | 5,897 | 18,040    |

(1) With a further 500 homes beyond 2033, subject to suitable mitigation.

(2) With a further 6,950 homes beyond 2033.

### **Infrastructure Planning**

3.3.15 When development occurs, it places additional demands on infrastructure, including water and energy supply, wastewater disposal, roads, education and healthcare as well as open space, and green infrastructure. Therefore it is important to ensure that appropriate levels of infrastructure are provided to support growth and meet the objectives of the District Plan.

3.3.16 The Council plays an important role in coordinating a range of agencies and bodies which deliver infrastructure in East Herts, in order to ensure delivery alongside housing growth. Infrastructure providers include Hertfordshire County Council (including transport and education), NHS England and the Clinical Care Commissioning Group (healthcare), utility companies, as well as the Council itself.

- 3.3.17 The planning system can be used in a number of other ways, including securing the provision of infrastructure or contributions towards infrastructure from developers. The District Plan also assists by protecting existing facilities against loss.
- 3.3.18 Policy DPS4 (Infrastructure Requirements) identifies the key infrastructure requirements that are likely to be needed over the plan period to support the levels of growth envisaged in Policy DPS2 (The Development Strategy 2011-2033). This list has been informed by discussions with key infrastructure providers. The list is not exhaustive and does not include site-specific infrastructure which may be required in connection with individual development sites to mitigate their impact.
- 3.3.19 A full list of infrastructure schemes can be found in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which also provides information on costs, funding and phasing. The IDP will be reviewed on a regular basis in order to monitor the implementation of infrastructure schemes and identify where interventions might be required.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan can be viewed on the Council's website at: [www.eastherts.gov.uk/idp](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/idp)

- 3.3.20 The Council will work closely with infrastructure providers to ensure inclusion of infrastructure schemes within their programmes, plans and strategies, and delivery of specific infrastructure requirements in conjunction with individual development schemes and the expected timing of development coming forward.

### **Policy DPS4 Infrastructure Requirements**

I. Infrastructure needed to support development must be phased appropriately with the delivery of residential and other development to ensure that capacity is provided and impacts are satisfactorily mitigated in a timely manner.

II. The following strategic infrastructure will be required to support the development identified in East Herts and the wider housing market area:

- (a) a new Junction 7a on the M11;
- (b) upgrades to Junction 7 and 8 of the M11;
- (c) widening of the existing River Stort crossing, and provision of a second crossing;
- (d) improvements to the A414 through Hertford;
- (e) the Little Hadham bypass;
- (f) upgrades to the A602;
- (g) upgrades to the rail network;
- (h) new schools and the expansion of existing schools;
- (i) healthcare facilities;
- (j) broadband telecoms; and
- (k) upgrades to waste water and water supply networks.

III. The Council will use planning obligations with landowners and developers to secure direct provision or financial contributions towards infrastructure necessary to support the District Plan, including both on-site and off-site provision to address the cumulative impacts of development on strategic infrastructure.

3.3.21 Strategic infrastructure is defined as infrastructure which meets more than site-specific needs and supports the overall level and pattern of growth outlined in the Development Strategy. Site specific infrastructure serves just the needs of the occupiers and visitors to the site that it is located in. The site-specific policies in the settlement sections within this Plan contain both strategic and site-specific infrastructure.

### **3.4 Review of the District Plan**

- 3.4.1 As noted in paragraph 3.2.7, the Government has recently published updated 2014 household projections. As a result, the level of objectively assessed needs across the housing market area has increased to 54,600 homes by 2033. For East Herts, this equates to around 19,500 homes.
- 3.4.2 Given the upward trend in housing needs across the housing market area, and the fact that the Council is unable to identify sufficient sites to meet this higher housing target at present, an early review of the District Plan will be undertaken following adoption.

#### **Policy DPS5 Review of the District Plan**

Following adoption of the District Plan, the Council will undertake an early review in order to seek to meet the additional housing needs arising from the 2014 household projections.

### **3.5 Neighbourhood Planning**

- 3.5.1 Neighbourhood Planning is a new right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011. Communities can shape development in their areas through the production of Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders.
- 3.5.2 Once approved, Neighbourhood Development Plans will become part of the Development Plan and the policies contained within them will be used, together with the District Plan, in the determination of planning applications. A Neighbourhood Development Plan can set out a vision for an area and planning policies for the use and development of land. Any Neighbourhood Plan prepared will need to support the strategic development needs of the District as set out in this Plan. However it will be able to shape and influence where development in the local area will go and what it will look like.

Further information on Neighbourhood Plan can be found on the Council's website at: [www.eastherts.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning)



- 3.5.3 A Neighbourhood Development Order can grant planning permission for specified developments in a neighbourhood area. Once established there would be no need for anyone to apply to the Council for planning permission if it is for the type of development covered by the order. This should make it easier and quicker for such development to go ahead in the future.
- 3.5.4 A Neighbourhood Development Order must still be in line with national planning policy, with the strategic vision for the wider area set by the local planning authority, and any other legal requirements.
- 3.5.5 Community Right to Build Orders are a new way for communities to choose for themselves where and when to build homes, shops, facilities and businesses – putting power back into the hands of local people.
- 3.5.6 Community Right to Build is an enabling right supporting local people to undertake community led development (communities collectively owning, developing and/or managing their own land and developments).
- 3.5.7 As an alternative to the traditional application for planning permission, it gives communities the power to decide for themselves what happens in their neighbourhood i.e. local people will be able to decide what their community needs. The benefits of any development, such as any profits generated, should be managed by a community organisation on behalf of the whole community.

### **Policy DPS6 Neighbourhood Planning**

The Council will support in principle development brought forward through Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders, where such development is in general conformity with the strategic objectives and policies set out in this District Plan.