



Local Development Scheme 2018-2024

September 2023

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Borough Council, as local planning authority, is required to prepare a Local Development Scheme (LDS) under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 1.2 The main role of the LDS is to describe the documents that Dacorum Borough Council is preparing, or has already prepared, as part of its Local Plan. It explains the role of the individual documents, how they relate to one another and the timetable for their preparation – highlighting the stages at which public consultation will take place. It also summarises the evidence, resources and risks associated with this review process.
- 1.3 This LDS supersedes the previous version dated January 2022. It will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis, with any necessary adjustments made to the timetable in Chart A through the Council’s Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) process.
- 1.4 In terms of managing the Local Plan process, this LDS is supported by a number of other key documents, including the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) and the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 1.5 The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) assesses the implementation of the LDS itself and the extent to which planning policies are being achieved. It also provides a mechanism through which to keep ‘saved’ policies, schedules and guidance under review and delete any parts the Council no longer considers appropriate or relevant.
- 1.6 The Council’s Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted in September 2019. It sets out arrangements for public consultation in the connection with both the Local Plan and planning applications.

2. Overview of the Development Plan System

- 2.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the requirements for producing a development plan for the Borough.
- 2.2 The development plan is essentially a document, or series of documents, containing the planning policies that the local planning authority will take into account when determining planning applications. The Borough Council is responsible for preparing most, but not all, documents that comprise the development plan.

(a) The current Development Plan

- 2.3 The current development plan for Dacorum Borough Council is made up of the following:

- Dacorum Borough's Local Planning Framework Core Strategy (adopted September 2013);
- Dacorum Site Allocations DPD (adopted July 2017);
- 'Saved' policies from the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 (adopted April 2004), not superseded by the above;
- Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan (May 2018)

and

- Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016 (adopted March 2007);
- Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (adopted November 2012); and
- Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations Document (adopted July 2014).

- 2.4 The preparation of Minerals and Waste Plans is the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council, although the Borough Council is an important consultee. For further detail please refer to the County Council's website:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/planning-in-hertfordshire/minerals-and-waste-planning/minerals-and-waste-planning.aspx>

- 2.5 All Development Plan Documents (DPDs) are the subject of an independent examination (or inquiry) by an Inspector. As part of the examination an Inspector will examine the "soundness" of the document(s): i.e. whether the proper procedures have been followed; how the document(s) relate to national/strategic planning policy or other relevant strategic advice; whether the document(s) are coherent and stem from a credible evidence base: and whether the policies in the document(s) are effective and deliverable. Whilst the Inspector's report is not formally binding, the Council cannot adopt a DPD unless it has been found 'sound.'

Core Strategy

- 2.6 The Core Strategy¹ sets out the planning framework for the Borough to 2031. Its aim is to deliver sustainable development i.e. new homes, facilities and businesses, whilst maintaining the quality of the environment. It provides a basis for planning for and securing new infrastructure provision, which should be aligned with new development.

Site Allocations

- 2.7 The principal role of the Site Allocations DPD² is to set the Council's detailed proposals and requirements for particular sites and areas in order to assist in the delivery of the levels of growth set out in the Core Strategy. It:
- Allocates sites for future development in the Borough;
 - Defines the boundaries of planning designations; and
 - Ensures appropriate infrastructure is identified and delivered alongside new development.
- 2.8 All designations and allocations are illustrated on a Policies Map.

Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011

- 2.9 All policies of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 (DBLP), except Policy 27 relating to Gypsies and Travellers, were 'saved' in 2007 under transitional arrangements. Some DBLP policies have now been superseded by the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs. The remainder will be replaced through the new Dacorum Local Plan, or additional guidance provided through the preparation of new supplementary planning documents (SPDs). For a full list of existing policies and replacement arrangements see:

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/policy-advice-note.pdf?sfvrsn=8>

Neighbourhood Plans

- 2.10 The Localism Act 2011 allows for Town and Parish Councils, and established 'Neighbourhood Forums' to prepare Neighbourhood Plans for their areas. Provided these conform with the strategic planning policies³ for the area and gain a majority vote in a local referendum, these plans will be adopted as part of the Development Plan for Dacorum.

¹ <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/local-planning-framework/core-strategy/core-strategy-adopted-sept-2013>

² www.dacorum.gov.uk/siteallocations

³ Definition of Strategic Policies available at: <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/policy-advice-note.pdf?sfvrsn=8>

- 2.11 A Neighbourhood Plan for the Grovehill neighbourhood in Hemel Hempstead was supported at a local referendum on 15th February 2018, and Made (adopted) by Dacorum Borough Council on 16th May 2018. It now forms part of the area's statutory development plan. It is available at:

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/regeneration/grovehill-future-project/neighbourhood-planning> or via:
[http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/regeneration/grovehill-future-neighbourhood-plan---examination-version-\(pdf\).pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/regeneration/grovehill-future-neighbourhood-plan---examination-version-(pdf).pdf?sfvrsn=0)

(b) The emerging Development Plan

New Dacorum Local Plan

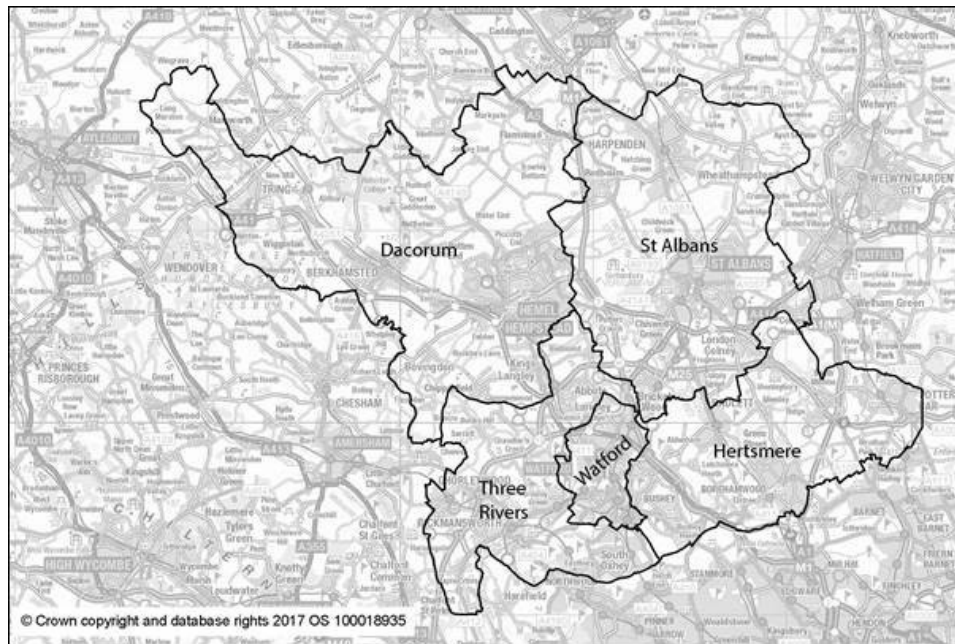
- 2.12 The Council has made significant progress on its new Local Plan, beginning with an Issues and Options document published for consultation in November/December 2017. Following detailed consideration of the responses to that consultation and the completion of further evidential work the Council consulted on the Emerging Strategy for Growth between November 2020 and March 2021. The consultation document was prepared and consulted on during multiple national lockdowns arising from the Covid-19 Pandemic. The consultation was undertaken completely virtually following some temporary changes to the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 2.13 When completed, the new Dacorum Local Plan will comprise a single document, containing site allocations and development management policies in addition to strategic policies covering the development of the Borough of Dacorum. Existing policies and designations will be reviewed and updated as appropriate, taking into account new evidence and the outcome of discussions under the duty to co-operate.
- 2.14 It is envisaged that the new Dacorum Local Plan will cover at least a 15 year timeframe to reflect the guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). A summary of expected plan content and governance arrangements for the Local Plan is set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.15 Chart A (below) sets out the expected programme for production of the Dacorum Local Plan.

Joint Strategic Plan

- 2.16 Neighbouring authorities are increasingly being encouraged by Government to work together to provide the homes, jobs and infrastructure where people want to live.
- 2.17 In Spring 2018, Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers, and Watford Councils gave formal endorsement to begin work on a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South West Hertfordshire (see Figure 1 below). Work on the JSP will

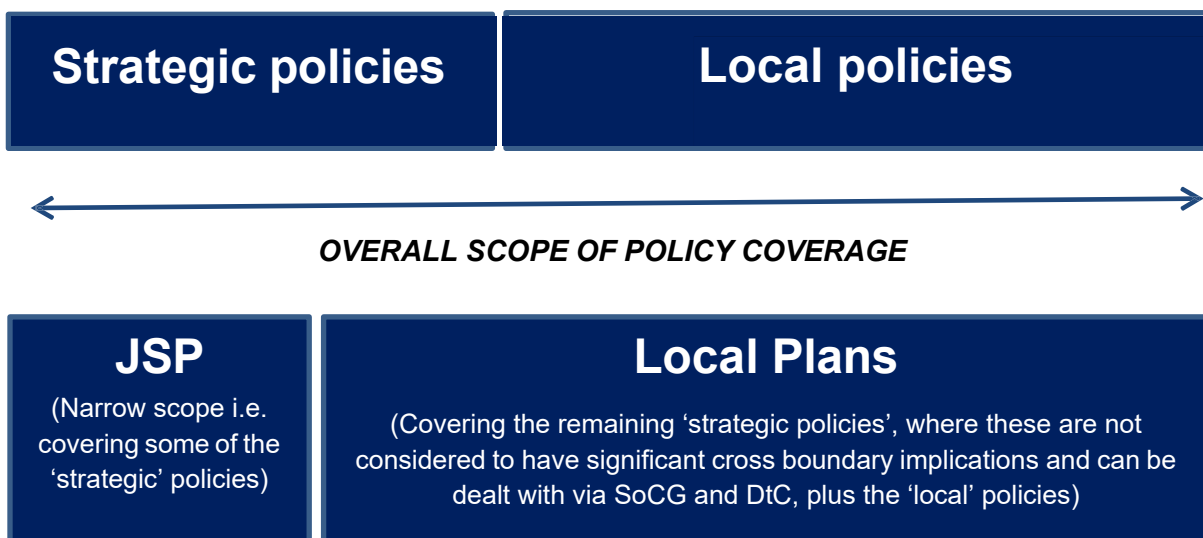
progress in accordance with its own Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement.

Figure 1: Extent of South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan Area



2.18 Each council will still be responsible for preparing its own Local Plan, but the JSP will provide the platform to consider how the challenges of growth in the wider South West Hertfordshire area can be addressed longer term (i.e. to 2050). Figure 2 below illustrates how these two key planning documents will fit together. A summary of expected plan content and governance arrangements is set out in Appendix 1.

Figure 2: Relationship between the JSP and the Local Plan



2.19 By working together, the South West Herts Councils will also be in a stronger position to deliver, and better fund essential local transport links, health services and educational facilities that local people want to see alongside new homes and jobs.

3. Additional Guidance

3.1 A range of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD), Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and Advice Notes has been prepared to support policies and proposals within the existing Development Plan. A full list is available online at:

[http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home%5Cplanning-development/planning-strategic-planning/supplementary-planning-documents-\(spds\)](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home%5Cplanning-development/planning-strategic-planning/supplementary-planning-documents-(spds))

3.2 New Supplementary Planning Documents and other supporting documents will be developed to support the new Plan. These documents will replace the existing suit of documents, however, there may be a transition period between adoption of the new plan and completion of the supporting documents where weight will still be given to the older documents if they are not in conflict with the up to date policy framework in the NPPF and Local Plan 2020-2038.

Chart A: Dacorum Local Plan – Local Development Scheme

Stage	2022												2023												2024												2025												2026																						
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb																					
Undertaking the Duty to Co-operate																																																																							
Plan Preparation (Reg 18)																						C																																																	
Formal Publication (Reg 19)																																																																							
Submission of Plan for examination (Reg 22)																																																																							
Examination Period																																																																							
Adoption																																																		A																					

Key:
 C – Revised Strategy for Growth Local Plan Public Consultation
 P - Pre-Submission / Publication Consultation (*representations stage*)
 S - Submission of plan and associated documents to Secretary of State
 E – Examination Commences
 R – Inspector Issues Interim Report
 A - Adoption of plan by the Council

4. Evidence, Resources and Risks

(a) Evidence

- 3.1 A range of technical studies have been prepared, or are being prepared, to use as the evidence base to support production of the Local Plan, Joint Strategic Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/new-single-local-plan/technical-work-for-the-early-partial-review>

- 3.2 Land Position Statements for employment and housing are prepared annually. They, together with other sources of information, are used to prepare the Council's Authority Monitoring Report. The most recent report is available online at:

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/monitoring-reports-and-land-position-statements>

Historic reports can also be found using the link.

- 3.3 If the timetable within this LDS is revised as part of the AMR process, the revised timetable will supersede that contained in Chart A of this LDS and will provide the most up-to-date work programme.

(b) Resources

- 3.4 The Council attaches high priority to the expeditious delivery of both the Dacorum Local Plan and SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan, and despite financial stringency is maintaining the necessary mainstream funding. Budgets will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis and appropriate provision made. Where necessary some of the Local Plan budget will be used to bring in additional temporary staff resources, or consultancy support. Opportunities for additional funding sources such as grants from the Government's Planning Delivery Fund will also continue to be pursued.
- 3.5 Some 'pump-priming' funding has also been secured from Government to help take forward the Joint Strategic Plan, with a most recent award in March 2020. A dedicated team for the JSP is now resourced and in place. Evidence is being progressed ahead of public consultation later this year. Further funding will be required in due course from both Government and Council budgets to support the completion of the JSP through to adoption.

(c) Risk

- 3.6 The timetable for the production of the new Dacorum Local Plan has been modified to take account of progress to date. The programmes has also had regard to the emerging programme for production of the new South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan. It will continue to be managed to ensure that it remains both realistic and achievable, with the most recent update being made in July 2020. The Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) will track performance and highlight any amendments required to the work programme set out in this LDS. This will be supported through monthly reporting on milestones via the Council's in-house project management software (Rocket).
- 3.7 There are however a number of sources of risk that could impact upon the delivery of the work programme set out within Chart A. These risks, together with appropriate mitigation measures are set out in Appendix 1.

5. Contact information

For further information regarding planning policy matters please contact:

Email: Strategic.Planning@dacorum.gov.uk

Address: The Forum
Marlowes
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP1 1DN

Appendix 1

Summary of DPD content and governance arrangements

Title		Dacorum Local Plan
Description	Single composite plan incorporating the early partial review of the Core Strategy, together with the Site Allocations and updated development management polices (currently within the 'saved' Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011).	
Area Covered	Borough wide, with some site specific elements.	
Status	DPD	
Chain of Conformity	In general conformity with the NPPF	
Priority	High	
Key milestones		
Issues and options (R18)	November - December 2017	
Emerging Strategy (R18)	November 2020 – March 2021	
Revised Strategy (R18)	October –December 2023	
Publication (R19)	October 2024	
Submission (R22)	February 2025	
Examination (R23/24/25)	May 2025	
Adoption (R26)	February 2026	
Arrangements for Production		
Lead	Strategic Planning Team	
Management arrangements	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council. Senior Leadership Team.	
Studies/evidence required	To include update of key technical studies relating to Sustainability Appraisal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment), the Habitats Regulations Assessment, housing, employment, retail, Green Belt, infrastructure, open space, leisure and site assessment matters.	
Resources required	See section 3.	
Stakeholder/community involvement	To comply with adopted Statement of Community Involvement. Strong emphasis on close liaison with adjoining local planning authorities and others regarding strategic planning matters, as required under the duty to co-operate.	
Monitoring and Review Arrangements		
Review of policy performance carried out as part of Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) process.		

Appendix 2

Risk Assessment

Theme	Risk	Mitigation	Likelihood (with mitigation)	Impact (with mitigation)	Overall
Legislation and National Policy changes	In August 2020 Government published a White Paper looking at a comprehensive review of all aspects of the Planning system. At the time of writing Government has yet to publish the responses to this consultation and it is still unclear what aspects of the White Paper will be taken forward and when we can expect legislation and changes to policy.	The Council will continue to liaise with Government on the timing of the Planning reforms.	4	4	8
Legal challenge	A legal challenge against the Local Plan could lead to significant costs to the Council and, if successful, could result in all or part of the plan being quashed.	The likelihood of a successful legal challenge is substantially reduced where the Local Plan is prepared in accordance with relevant regulations, is strongly aligned to the conclusions of the evidence that underpins it and the plan-making authority can demonstrate it has met the necessary 'tests of soundness'. Specialist external legal advice will be taken as and	4	4	8

		when necessary to help guide key decision-making.			
Capacity of Planning Inspectorate (PINs) and other statutory consultees	The capacity of the Planning Inspectorate is finite and is outside the Council's control. Public examinations could take longer than anticipated or be delayed against the PINS indicative timetables.	This will be mitigated through ensuring appropriate evidence is prepared and submitted and there is close liaison with the Programme Officer. Critical Friend and Legal Support has been retained to ensure that any issues or gaps in the plan coverage, evidence base or legal challenge are mitigated prior to submission of the plan to ensure that the Examination can be rapid and any delays minimised.	3	4	7
Habitats Regulation Assessment	The work being undertaken as part of the Habitats Regulation Assessment has identified the potential for likely significant effects to occur because of planned growth in the Local Plan. With this, further work is needed to understand this and if appropriate, a mitigation strategy will be progressed.	The Council has prepared and adopted a mitigation strategy, and is continuing to liaise with key stakeholders to understand requirements for mitigation and suitable alternative natural greenspace.	4	3	7
Financial Resources	Pressure on financial resources	Budgetary provision has been made for plan-making work, however the length of public examinations and cost of defending any subsequent legal challenges could add significantly to the amount required.	3	3	6
Reliance on External Parties	Preparation of the Local Plan requires specialist skill input from a number of external organisations. There are continued pressures on their resources which could have implications on the Local Plan.	We will continue to work closely with external partners and share detailed programmes with them to ensure necessary resources are secured at the appropriate time.	3	3	6

Infrastructure Planning	The Council will require the completion of a sufficiently detailed Infrastructure Delivery Plan to support the Local Plan. Any delays by infrastructure providers and other key stakeholders in completing their assessments and delays to decision making from key stakeholders could delay the Plan or leave gaps in the evidence.	Discussions with key stakeholders are ongoing through the Duty to Cooperate process to ensure that third parties are aware of Local Plan Deadlines and identify strategies to ensure targets to be met.	3	3	6
Developer negotiations	Prior to completing the Plan the Council needs to obtain commitments from developers on certain policy requirements and infrastructure. If this process is delayed or sites are not able to deliver essential infrastructure then the Council may need to reconsider its strategy. Officers do require sufficient time to ensure all of the site requirements are known and can be agreed with individual developers. A comprehensive engagement programme with developers and infrastructure providers is in place and is being adapted to be carried out remotely.	Discussions are underway with landowners and developers to set out and agree the precise requirements they need to include on their sites (inc. affordable housing numbers, schools, highways improvements, climate change mitigation).	3	3	6
COVID-19 Pandemic	The UK continues to live with the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Although restrictions have progressively eased throughout 2021 the emergence of new strains of the virus continue to be a risk. This may necessitate the imposition of further restrictions which could have implications for the Local Plan.	Officers are continuing with Plan drafting, evidence gathering and engagement wherever possible through home working and virtual meetings and electronic communications.	3	3	6

Duty to Cooperate	Failure to agree critical cross boundary strategic planning issues with prescribed Duty to Co-operate bodies.	A comprehensive programme of Duty to Cooperate meetings are underway to discuss strategic issues for plan making. These meetings have identified key issues and potential opportunities and solutions to address the issues identified. Risks relating to how these issues will be addressed will be reduced through the production of a Statement of Common Ground with adjoining authorities. Regular meetings with other DtC bodies will help minimise any wider issues arising, or enable them to be addressed early on in the plan-making process.	2	3	5
Soundness Issues	Local Plans must be underpinned by detailed evidence. This evidence will face detailed scrutiny from the Planning Inspector and other stakeholders during the independent examination process. There is a risk that in the absence of robust, up-to-date evidence the Local Plan is found 'unsound' and the Council may need to return to an earlier stage of Plan preparation.	The Council will continue to work with critical friend, PAS and the Planning Inspectorate to ensure that the appropriate evidence is in place to support the Local Plan. Evidence has been commissioned jointly across South West Hertfordshire and between two or more of the SW Herts authorities to ensure that wider (strategic) impacts are acknowledged and addressed. This will ensure that evidence is robust and consistent across the wider area. The Council is also commissioning further work to mitigate this risk.	2	3	5