



**WATFORD**  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL



**St Albans**  
City & District Council



**THREE RIVERS**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



---

## **SW Herts Group**

### **Infrastructure Provider Meetings – HCC Education**

**Date:** Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019

**Time:** 2pm-4pm

**Venue:** Hertsmere Borough Council Offices, Civic Offices, Elstree Way,  
Borehamwood, Herts, WD6 1WA. Committee Rooms A and B.

---

#### **Attendees**

##### **Hertfordshire County Council**

Dan Hardy (DH)  
Martin Wells (MW)  
Velda Wong (VW)  
Michael Dunnage (MD)  
Phil Brunt (PB)

##### **Joint Strategic Plan**

Chris Outtersides (CO)

##### **Three Rivers**

Lauren McCullagh (LM)

##### **St Albans**

Wendy Frost (WF)

##### **Watford**

Phil Dodshon (PD)

##### **Dacorum**

Andrew Horner (AH)  
Emma Cooper (EC)

##### **Hertsmere**

Laura Wood (LW)  
Beckie Nudds (BN)  
Joe Lambert (JL)

#### **OBJECTIVES OF MEETING**

Through the SW Herts Group, the authorities (Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers and Watford) and Hertfordshire County Council are working with relevant service providers to develop a closer relationship and better understanding of the growth and infrastructure needs across the area.

The purpose of the meeting is to enable each authority to provide an update of their current local plan position and long term growth ambitions and for infrastructure providers to give an update of their position, highlighting any current or foreseeable issues for the SW Herts districts. The aim is to liaise with infrastructure providers to obtain a holistic vision of the infrastructure requirements for the SW Herts area.

## **POSITION STATEMENT**

Each Council's latest Local Plan position statement has been provided in Appendix 1.

## **NOTES OF MEETING**

### **1. Welcome and introductions**

LW welcomed attendees and outlined the purpose of the meeting.

There was a discussion on the changes to HCC with the creation of the Growth and Infrastructure Unit. It was noted that Matthew Wood would be re-joining the team to support work on the new Garden Communities at Hemel east and Gllstone.

**Action HCC:** Structure diagram of Growth and Infrastructure Unit to be circulated

### **2. Minutes from last infrastructure provider update meeting in February 2018**

All agreed the minutes circulated from the previous meeting in February 2018.

### **3. Update on SW Herts Joint Strategic Plans**

CO gave a short presentation on the SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan (JSP).

LW asked whether the JSP boundary reflects the HCC Growth Team structure. The answer from DH was that it does.

It was noted that future growth in SW Herts will be equivalent to the size of Swindon (180,000-190,000) if the current levels of housing need continue.

DH asked for clarification on the timing of the JSP and how this related to individual Local Plans. CO explained that the adoption was programmed for winter 2022 but it won't come in to effect/deliver for local plans until 2030. It will therefore inform the LP review processes.

It was noted that the JSP was likely to need to consider secondary school provision, but due to its more strategic nature, was unlikely to go down to the scale of considering primary school needs.

**Action HBC:** Circulate CO slides on the SW Herts JSP.

#### 4. Update from HCC and discussions

It was confirmed that for education matters, LPAs should use the Growth and Infrastructure Team as the initial contact point to then speak to other teams. Main contacts for SW Herts are Russel Monck and Martin Wells.

HCC provided the following school update. *Note: all current school provision is to meet existing school place needs, rather than to address future growth.*

##### **St Albans**

St Albans Katherine Warrington School in Harpenden

- JR by local residents last year
- Funding now agreed from Department of Education
- Aim to open September
- 13ha site – bigger than standard requirement to allow expansion. There were several anomalies with area – not flat, flooding, drainage etc. which meant it was challenging.

##### **HBC**

New primary school in Borehamwood – discussions on precise site and potential abnormal costs are still ongoing.

Bushey area – definite need - Local MP has met with Harvey Cohen (Portfolio Holder)

##### **Three Rivers**

Croxley Danes is due to become operational in September 2019. TR is unsure whether they will reach this deadline at the moment, currently in temporary accommodation. This provision will only facilitate existing capacity levels.

Woodside Road Abbots Langley – primary school allocation not built out. LM asked why this was and DH explained that currently the new site is not needed and that expanding existing schools will meet the requirement. It is not expected to be required within the next few years; it will become part of future allocations.

**WBC, HBC and TRDC** – all have a similar problem with secondary school capacity.

- Looking at options through expansion etc.
- South Oxhey doesn't have any secondary in its area so cross boundary use needed
- Watford UTC could increase the age range to become a secondary school.

Issue – will need to identify sites early on in the Local Plan stages. Secondary provision will need to be provided later on than primary.

DH explained that from when dwellings are developed, the 0-5 year period the current education facilities should be able to accommodate, then from the 5-8 year period primary educations will hit the peak and then in 10-15 years secondary school educations hit the peak.

The critical point for secondary school planning is the 5-8 year window.

### **Dacorum**

- No change from previous provision. Just updates.
- Spencer's Park Phase 2 - S106 has been signed for new primary school
- Developer – paid land and a percentage of the build costs. Around 600 homes. There is a gap and options are being looking into.
- Ongoing discussions regarding primary school provision at LA3: land at west Hemel Hempstead

### **Education needs**

VW – HCC are currently undertaking a mapping exercise to identify sites and locations to provide a clearer picture of future needs for secondary education.

LW – Depends where we put growth and cross boundary area.

DH - Hertsmere currently meeting their needs and some of WBC as well. This approach is likely to need to continue.

### **Pupil yields**

LW – Asked if the 1FE per 500 dwellings 'typical mix' still applies. DH states this is the same position at the moment but HCC are currently doing a review to look at the latest demographics and they will circulate once complete.

Numbers are beginning to drop. For example Luton has a higher ratio of 1 per 350 dwellings. For Green belt housing sites with high level s of affordable housing and 3 and 4 bed units, the trigger can be less than 350. Typical mix is changing across the county.

PD – You can't assume though that flats will have no children as sometimes this is all they can afford to live in within the current market. So Watford may have lower thresholds for school and housing provision than previously assumed.

HCC also reviewing tool kit

- There will be engagement with districts
- Panel at HCC in May
- June consultation

**Action HCC:** Circulate review of tool kit

There is also a Local Plan engagement document being written by HCC. This will also be completed in June 2019. This will cover both education and highways.

**Action HCC:** Circulate the Local Plan engagement document once completed

## **Funding and Delivery**

DH confirmed:

- HCC has a statutory duty to provide sufficient education places to serve county needs
- How education has enacted has changed over the years
- HCC is the commissioner rather than provider
- Most schools are not within HCC control, for example academies
- Not as many primary school academies
  - Primary schools are happy to be under the HCC umbrella
- New school → Free schools, which are academies

How is education provided?

- HCC runs a competition for Trusts to operate schools
- HCC provide site and funding for the build of the school (often S106 etc.)
- HCC makes a recommendation to the Secretary of State for who to award it to
- If impossible to find an operator then HCC steps in

The majority of faith schools within Hertfordshire are Jewish or Catholic.

- New free schools with faith designations are only allowed to offer 50% places to faith pupils. This puts them off new academies.
  - St John's in Watford is a 50% split
- Government recently opened faith school applications process – will allow bids for new voluntary aided schools which can offer 100% of places to faith pupils.
- To date there are no new faith schools planned in Hertfordshire.

Funding for new schools

- There is an assumption that new developments will pay for all new primary and secondary school needs
- PD – Expresses concern over education provision being paid for by developers but DH explained that this is the only way in which it can be done and this is how other infrastructure works are paid for
- The developer contributions are largely the best way
- Need to look at CIL vs S106 for funding education - easier if the same approach is taken across SW Herts

## 5. Discussions and questions (ALL)

Question raised regarding whether we can change the traditional school design structure. HCC confirmed that this can be done but there would have to be heavy compromises which would conflict with the health agenda, for example playing fields – there would need to be other uses in the area which would either be adjacent to sites or close by. There could be the potential to share space with secondary schools.

Urban School examples:

- Ascot Road Community Free School and Lanchester Community Free School
  - These are both up and running in Watford
  - Smaller sites with offsite provision for the school

Community Use agreements are good for schools and for encouraging wider use of facilities.

HCC have already reviewed site standards and HCC will provide these in revised tool kit.

Regarding the question of whether schools which can be expanded could be mapped, HCC Officers explained that this is not an easy task as academies may be able to expand in principle but they don't want to and are not under HCC control.

School options:

- Different options in different areas.
- Watford – few options of schools
- Potters Bar – more scope in the existing and potential areas
- Secondary – running out of options

The issue of whether 'if we can manage to build these schools can we supply teachers?' was raised. HCC confirmed that they provide the sites, not the employment of staff, which is out of their control.

## 6. Actions Arising

**Action HCC:** Structure diagram of Growth and Infrastructure Unit to be circulated

**Action HBC:** Circulate CO slides on the SW Herts JSP

**Action WBC:** Will send timetable around for Local Plan

**Action HCC:** Circulate review of tool kit for comment

**Action HCC:** Circulate the Local Plan engagement document for comment

## **7. Date of next meeting**

Watford has agreed to host the next set of infrastructure meetings. Dates tbc.

## **8. AOB (ALL)**

None.

### Local plan updates

#### Hertsmere:

- Potential site for Housing and Employment consultation started in October 2018 and finished in December 2018. There was a huge response, of which the Local Plan team are currently going through and analysing.
- Publication has slipped from February 2020 to Spring 2020

Subsequent dates in LDS are as follows:

- Submit in October 2020
- Examination in Spring 2021
- Adoption end of 2021
- Hope to get the JSP before examination
- New housing numbers 700dpa, currently 200dpa. This is a massive change for Hertsmere and will require different growth options including green belt release and urban extensions.

#### Dacorum:

We undertook an Issues and Options consultation on the new Local Plan in November / December 2017. This document covered key issues for homes, economy, environment and infrastructure. Consideration was given to potential levels of growth needed (predominantly for housing and jobs) and how those levels of growth could be accommodated. Key site options were also consulted upon (sites of 50+ homes (previously submitted by landowners or developers) or employment sites identified in the Employment Land Availability Assessment).

We are currently working on further evidence gathering with a focus on site assessment work and identifying potential urban capacity.

The plan preparation timetable set out in our Local Development Scheme is:

- Reg19 consultation - publication Aug/Sept 2019
- Submission February 2020
- Examination June 2020
- Adoption February 2021

Against the Government's Standard Methodology, the Council now have a housing need figure of 1025 dwellings per year. This is a massive increase from the figure of 430dpa, which was the figure adopted in the 2013 Core Strategy.

#### Watford:

- Completed issues and options
- Explained policy options to members



- Similar to Dacorum
- Preferred options by the end of 2019
- Working on the HELAA
- New housing figures 800dpa, currently 260dpa.
- Running out of brownfield
- Towns demographic is changing dramatically
- Need to be thorough in showing why green belt release is necessary

We are currently processing responses to the Issues & Options consultation alongside work on the Housing Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) to identify potential development sites. Initial policy discussions are taking place with members and this will inform the preferred options consultation later this year.

Our Local Development Scheme is as follows:

- Notification - December 2016
- Issues and Options consultation - September –October 2018
- First Draft Local Plan consultation (Preferred Options) September – October 2019
- Publication - May 2020
- Submission - September 2020
- Examination - October 2020 - February 2021
- Adoption - May 2021

Against the Government's Standard Methodology, the council's housing requirement is 798 dwellings per annum. This is a significant increase from the adopted Local Plan housing figure of 260 dwellings per annum and the existing delivery rates of approx. 300 dwellings per annum. We have very few brownfield sites so maximising density will be key for Watford.

### **St Albans**

- Schedule the same as previous meeting in February last year
  - Submission March 2019
  - Examination Summer 2019
  - Adoption Spring 2020
- Housing numbers the same as for previous meeting. Standard method figures now confirmed as 896 dpa.

### **Three Rivers**

- Site document consulted on – 25 extra sites
- Currently going through responses
- In process of deciding sites
- Draft September - November 2019

- Submission March 2020
- Adoption November - December 2020
- New housing figure 620dpa, currently 180dpa

Three Rivers District Council undertook a non-statutory consultation on 'Potential Sites' during October-December 2018; this consulted on all of the sites which were put forward to the Council through various Call for Sites exercises, as well as previously considered sites. The Strategic Housing Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) process is ongoing and comments received from the consultation are being fed back into the site assessment process, along with findings from complete and ongoing evidence base studies. These assessments and the evidence base will inform the decision-making process as to which sites are suitable and deliverable to take forward to the draft publication of the Local Plan. No decisions as to which sites will be taken forward to the draft publication have yet been made.

The timetable for the preparation of the new Local Plan is set out below:

- Draft publication – September-November 2019
- Submission – February-March 2020
- Examination – April-September 2020
- Adoption – November-December 2020

Against the Government's Standard Methodology, the Council now have a housing need figure of 620 dwellings per year. This is a drastic increase from the figure of 180dpa, which was the figure adopted in the current Local Plan.