



Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

Local Development Scheme

July 2023

Introduction

What is a Local Development Scheme?

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) introduced the requirement for local planning authorities to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS).

A Local Development Scheme (LDS) provides information on the timetable to produce new or revised Development Plan Documents which will form the Council's Local Plan. This LDS will supersede previous versions.

What development plan documents are being prepared?

Development Plan Documents are planning strategies that contain policies for the use, protection and/or development of land. These must have regard to government guidance, in particular the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance. Development Plan Documents are:

- **Local Plans** for a council area (or for more than one council area if working together). Preparation of a Local Plan is a statutory requirement. A Local Plan may be a single document or a suite of documents, with some covering specific policy matters or specific geographical areas (for example Area Action Plans). In areas that have County and Borough Councils, the County Council has the responsibility for producing Minerals and Waste Local Plans.
- **Neighbourhood Plans** are not compulsory, however when duly prepared they are a statutory document that forms part of the statutory development plan. They would be prepared by a relevant (qualifying) body. In parished areas, the relevant body would be a town or parish council or councils, and elsewhere this would be a neighbourhood forum. The plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the local plan and are prepared in a timescale that is set by the relevant body. More information can be found on the Council's webpage.

What documents make up the current development plan?

On publication of this Local Development Scheme the statutory development plan comprises:

- Saved policies of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (adopted 2005)
- The Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2007
- The Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012
The Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations 2014
- The Northaw and Cuffley Neighbourhood Plan 2023

Emerging Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

Work commenced on preparing the strategic policies of the Local Plan in 2005. Preparation of the evidence base, and various rounds of consultation were undertaken, culminating in consultation on the Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission in 2016. The Draft Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in May 2017, who appointed an Independent Inspector to examine the soundness and legal compliance of the Plan. Several Local Plan

examination hearing sessions have taken place as well as consultation on Main Modifications in 2023 (January - February and June - July)

Stage	Timetable
Regulation 18 Consultation	January – March 2015
Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Consultation	August – October 2016
Submission	15 May 2017
Examination	September 2017 - ongoing
Adoption	September 2023

When completed, the new 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. Some aspects of this timetable are not within the control of the Council, particularly the timing of the Examination Hearing and the length of time the Inspector takes to consider matters and issue their report.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide guidance and more detail on the application of Local Plan policies. Since the publication of the Planning Act 2008, such documents no longer need to be included in the LDS before they can be prepared. This provides considerable flexibility for the preparation of such documents as and when necessary.

Neighbourhood Planning

Regulations introduced in 2012 concerning neighbourhood planning make provision for Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build. The Northaw and Cuffley Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2023 following its referendum and Welwyn Parish Council are continuing the preparation of a plan. The Council is not responsible for their Neighbourhood Plan preparation and as a result no details are included in the LDS.

Annual Monitoring Report

The Council usually publishes this document at the end of each year. The report monitors the effectiveness of planning policies and proposals, provides information for the emerging Local Plan and monitors the progress of the Local Plan. The current AMR can be viewed on the council webpage.

Local Plan Evidence Base

A robust evidence base is needed to support the planning policies in the emerging Local Plan. Further information on the evidence base prepared so far is available on the Council's webpage