



Datchworth

PARISH COUNCIL

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF DATCHWORTH, BULLS GREEN, BURNHAM GREEN & HOOKS CROSS

Datchworth Parish Council Briefing Note

Agenda item heading East Herts Local Plan Scoping Consultation	Date 11th July, 2026 Committee/ Working Group Planning
Why On 7th July, 2026 the parish Council received a “reminder” e-mail from East Herts District Council (EHDC) concerning its Local Plan Scoping Consultation exercise and inviting comments from all key stakeholders. Comments are intended to help inform the direction of the new Local Plan as it develops. Comments are requested by 10th July (starting 11th June, 2026, although there is no record of DPC having been consulted before now). The current Local Plan was adopted by EHDC in 2018 and is intended to have a ‘shelf life’ of approximately 5 years. The new Local plan will eventually replace the current 2018 version once it has travelled through a number of key stages which will involve additional consultation exercises, (e.g. evidence base gathering, consultation of plan content and evidence, consultation of the proposed local plan, independent examination of the proposed Local Plan leading to proposed adoption of new local plan in April, 2029, although this timescale is subject to change)	
How (including Time and Money) The scoping consultation is conducted via a series of questions at the following link: https://consult.eastherts.gov.uk/kpse/event/AECCFD42-BBAA-47CF-8B47-FACB018845B2 <u>HOWEVER</u>, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE LINK FOR RESPONDING HAS NOW BEEN REMOVED (CLOSED 10/07/26) SO ANY SUBMISSION BY DPC WOULD NEED TO BE WITH THE AGREEMENT OF EHDC THROUGH MEANS OUTSIDE THE WEBSITE. Q1. 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? <i>(This question is broken-down into categories covering the following topics: housing; green/grey belt; employment; town centres; recreation and leisure; community infrastructure and transportation; urban design and conservation; climate change; environment and landscape; movement; sustainability).</i> Q2. Are there any other issues, in addition to those identified above, that you think the new Local Plan should address?	

Q3. 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 from the list below and provide reasons for your choices. *(Editors note: topic list appears to have been removed)*

Q4. Is there anything else you would like to tell us that should be considered as part of the new Local Plan?

Q5. Does the Vision Statement reflect your aspirations for East Hertfordshire over the next 20 years? Please explain your views.

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”.

Q6. Do you have any suggestions for how the wording of the Vision Statement could be improved?

Q7. Do you agree that the six themes (people, place, economy, environment, infrastructure and movement) reflect the key priorities for East Hertfordshire?

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.

Q8. Are there any themes you think should be changed, added to, or given more emphasis? Please explain your reasons.

Q9. How would you prefer to be engaged during the Local Plan process?

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

Q10. Are there any specific engagement methods you think would be particularly effective in helping people understand and contribute to the Local Plan?

Q11. 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?

Q12. Is there anything else the council should consider when developing its approach to community and stakeholder engagement for the new Local Plan?

Q13. Do you have any comments on the SA/SEA Scoping document?

Q14. Is there anything else that should be included within the SA/SEA Scoping document? If so, please specify. *(Editors note: the SEA refers to the Sustainability Appraisal whilst the SA refers to the Strategic Environmental Assessment, both of which have been carried out by EHDC in a combined document dated May, 2026 and can be viewed at : <https://consult.eastherts.gov.uk/kpse/event/AECCFD42-BBAA-47CF-8B47-FACB018845B2>*

When

As mentioned above, this scoping consultation took place between 11th June – 10th July, 2026. DPC was informed of the consultation exercise by e-mail on 7th July, 2026 which gave little if any time to effectively formulate its response.

It may be the case that EHDC will accept a late response although this is unlikely given that responses are required online through the district councils' relevant website page. This online opportunity has now closed (10th July, 2026).

I have been unable to contact the Local Plan team at EHDC but will endeavor to do so before the meeting of DPC on 28th July, 2026. If confirmation is received that there is no further opportunity

to respond, then discussion on the matter need only be brief. If, however, we have been afforded an opportunity then brief answers to each question will be needed. We also need to inform EHDC Local Plan team that we would like to be added to the current database to be notified in good time about later stages in the Local Plan process.

My feeling and experience on the matter is that this scoping consultation is a stage in the planning process which is afforded little weight by the planning authority and is simply a tick-box exercise as a means to comply with the governing legislation. Nevertheless, it would have been helpful if DPC had been consulted at the outset and not at the 11th hour. We are now battling to get our voices heard.