

Hart Local Plan 2044



Scoping Consultation

May 2026

1. Purpose of the consultation

- 1.1 We are preparing a new local plan for Hart – the Hart Local Plan 2044.
- 1.2 We are seeking views at an early stage as to what matters we should consider when preparing the new plan and what the new plan should contain.
- 1.3 We also want to know how you want to be engaged during the local plan process.
- 1.4 The deadline for comments is 19th June 2026.
- 1.5 Please email localplan@hart.gov.uk if you have any queries.

2. Background

- 2.1 We need to prepare a new local plan in light of new housing numbers from the Government, to support sustainable economic growth and to ensure all our planning policies are based on up-to-date evidence.
- 2.2 The new plan will replace the [Hart Local Plan \(Strategy and Sites\) 2032](#) (HLP32) and older 'saved' policies from the previous local plan: the [Hart Local Plan \(Replacement\) 1996 – 2006](#).
- 2.3 In preparing the plan we must follow a process set out in [new legislation](#). Our [Local Plan Timetable](#) sets out the key stages.
- 2.4 From April 2028, following local government reorganisation, the local plan process will be in the hands of a new unitary council for North Hampshire. As part of our legacy, we want to hand over a new local plan to the North Hampshire Council which can be taken through examination and adopted. This will provide Hart's residents with an up-to-date local plan at the earliest opportunity.

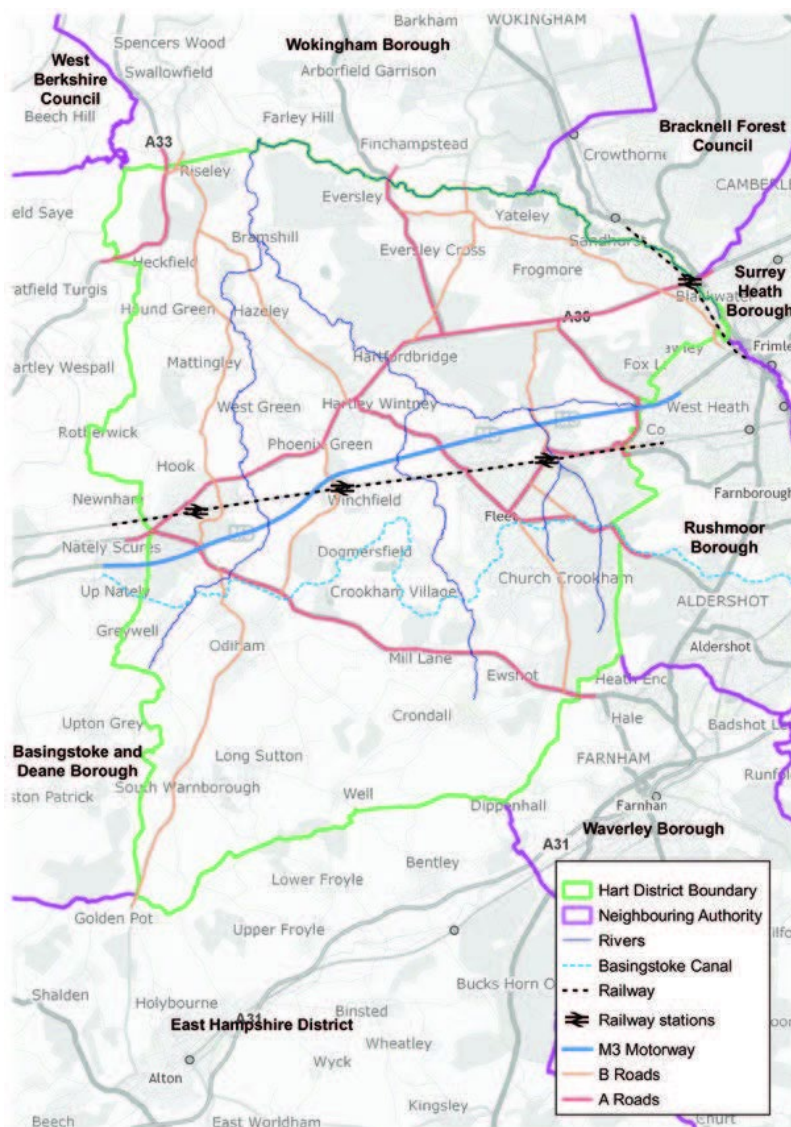
3. Policy context

- 3.1 The new plan must be consistent with national planning policy. A [Draft NPPF December 2025](#) contains plan-making policies that we will need to follow. It also contains national decision-making policies that we must not duplicate.
- 3.2 The plan must focus on a locally specific vision and objectives, a spatial strategy and site allocations to meet development needs. The plan must address the need for new homes, economic development and new infrastructure.
- 3.3 In preparing the plan we will have regard to a range of plans and strategies prepared by other organisations including Hampshire County Council, Government agencies and infrastructure providers.
- 3.4 We will also have regard to neighbourhood plans. However, neighbourhood plans will likely need to be updated to align with the new local plan and new national planning policy.
- 3.5 In due course the forthcoming [Hampshire and Solent Combined Authority](#) will prepare a [Spatial Development Strategy \(SDS\)](#); a strategic plan for the Hampshire and Solent area. Local plans need to be in general conformity with the SDS where there is one. As yet there is no timetable for a Hampshire and Solent SDS.

4. Hart District

- 4.1 Hart is a largely rural district in northeast Hampshire, with a population of approximately 104,000 residents. The main towns and villages are Fleet, Yateley, Blackwater, Hook, Odiham and Hartley Wintney.
- 4.2 The Southampton to London Waterloo railway runs through Hook, Winchfield and Fleet. Blackwater station is on the North Downs line between Reading and Redhill with many services continuing to Gatwick. The M3 motorway runs east-west through the centre of the district.

Figure 1: Location of Hart District



5. Meeting development needs

- 5.1 A key driver for the new plan is the need for more homes. Hart's current 'local housing need' is 804 homes per annum. This figure is calculated using the [standard method](#) – a formula set by the Government based on local housing stock and affordability. 804 homes per annum equates to around 14,400 homes over the plan period 2026 to 2044.
- 5.2 This figure is the start point for a 'local plan housing requirement' which will also factor in constraints to development and availability of land. We may also need to consider any unmet housing needs from neighbouring areas.
- 5.3 All new homes completed from 1st April 2026 will count towards the local plan housing requirement. This will include new homes at Hartland Village and other sites around the district currently under construction. However, we will need to allocate more land for development.
- 5.4 Our priority is the appropriate re-development of previously developed 'brownfield' land. However, we do not have enough brownfield land, and we will need 'greenfield' sites, whether its extensions of varying sizes to existing settlements or 'stand-alone' new communities. The final plan will include a spatial development strategy and site allocations to be clear where new development will take place.

Question 1 - Do you have any views on how we should address this challenge, or where we should focus growth?

- 5.5 It's not just about housing numbers. We need to address the need for affordable homes (for those whose needs are not met by the market) and the needs of different groups including older people, those that would like to build or commission their own home, and Travellers. We are updating our evidence on the needs of different groups and will shape policies to address the needs identified.

Question 2 - Which groups do you believe have specific housing needs in Hart? How should the plan address their housing needs?

- 5.6 We also need to support economic growth and the success of town and village centres. Local Plan policies will build on the Hart Economic Development Strategy: [A prosperous future for Hart](#), and we are preparing new evidence on what economic development is needed over the plan period.

Question 3 - How should the plan support economic growth?

Question 4 - How should the plan support our town and village centres?

6. Well-designed sustainable places

- 6.1 We want to meet development needs by creating well-designed, high quality, sustainable places supported by the necessary infrastructure; places that encourage people to lead healthy lifestyles, and which promote walking, cycling and public transport. We will use design codes where appropriate, and we are reviewing our parking standards to ensure they reflect national policy and have regard to the Local Transport Plan. New development will also provide an opportunity to deliver schemes outlined in the [Hart Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#).

Question 5 - How can the plan deliver well-designed, healthy, sustainable places?

7. Infrastructure

- 7.1 To support the local plan, we will work with infrastructure providers such as utility companies, Hampshire County Council and the NHS Integrated Care Board to prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This will evidence the infrastructure needed to support the planned growth and will itself be informed by a range of separate studies including on transport, water supply, wastewater treatment, green infrastructure, public open space, built facilities and playing pitches.
- 7.2 As a district council we do not ourselves provide infrastructure, but with up-to-date policies and evidence we can secure improvements to infrastructure with new development. This can be on-site as part of larger developments or via payments towards off-site infrastructure improvements. We report on developer contributions secured through planning obligations annually in our [Infrastructure Funding Statements](#).

Question 6 - What infrastructure issues or challenges do we face and how can they be overcome?

8. The natural and built environment

- 8.1 We must address development needs, but we also want to protect and enhance our built and natural environment.
- 8.2 Hart has a variety of landscapes and designated habitats including the internationally important Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Hart also has a rich heritage with conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and registered historic parks and gardens.
- 8.3 The plan will have regard to the Hampshire [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) so that areas identified for biodiversity improvements and nature recovery are protected and enhanced. We will also need to continue with a policy for avoiding and mitigating recreational impacts on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.
- 8.4 We have commissioned a new district-wide landscape character assessment, and we will assess the specific landscape and heritage sensitivities for different sites.

Question 7 - How should the local plan protect and enhance the natural and historic environment?

Question 8 - Are there any specific natural or historic assets in Hart that warrant a separate local plan policy, rather than being protected by national policies or legal protection? If so, why?

9. Climate change

- 9.1 We declared a [climate change emergency](#) in 2021 and are delivering on a climate change action plan. Through the new local plan, we will tackle greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change such as more extreme weather events which can bring increased risk of flooding, heatwaves and drought.
- 9.2 Emerging national policy may mean that energy standards in new buildings could be left to Building Regulations (rather than local plans), but there are other ways the plan can address climate change. We are commissioning a range of relevant evidence which will look at water resources/supply and wastewater, flood risk, renewable energy opportunities and site-specific climate change measures.

Question 9 - How should we address climate change in the local plan?

10. A new vision for Hart

10.1 Pulling together the themes discussed above, and taking into account your comments, we will develop a new vision for Hart; a vision that acknowledges the need for sustainable development and which protects the characteristics and features we value most.

Question 10 - What aspects of Hart do you value and want to protect?

Question 11 - What aspirations do you have for the future of the area?

Question 12 - What kind of development would you like to see more of?

Question 13 - What should the plan priorities include?

11. Any other comments

11.1 Please take this opportunity to make any other comments that do not fit under the questions above.

Question 14 - Are there any other matters that we should consider when preparing the new plan?

Question 15 - Do you have any other views on what the new plan should contain?

12. How should we engage with you?

12.1 We want to ensure that residents, businesses and other stakeholders have an opportunity to comment on the Local Plan.

12.2 The plan-making process includes two further consultations prior to the plan being submitted for examination:

October 2026 Consultation on 'Proposed Plan content and evidence'

September 2027 Consultation on 'Proposed Local Plan'

Anyone can make written representations at these public consultation stages.

12.3 The consultation material will be published on our website and made available in hard copy at the Civic Offices in Fleet and in the town and parish council offices for Yateley, Blackwater, Hook, Odiham and Hartley Wintney.

12.4 Statutory consultees and other organisations and individuals on our [local plan database](#) will automatically be notified of these consultations.

12.5 In addition, we will publicise the consultations using social media (Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Instagram), and press releases sent to local newspapers. Subject to timing we will also use the Hart e-newsletter (sign up via the [Council's homepage](#)) and the Council's twice yearly Hart News publication that goes to all residents.

Question 16 - Are there other ways we should publicise the public consultations?

Question 17 - What methods of engaging the public (such as drop-in exhibitions) should we use during public consultation?

Question 18 - Is there a group or community you are aware of that find it harder to participate? If so, what steps could we take to help those groups engage?

12.6 We can publicise the consultations and try to engage with communities, but we would like written comments to be submitted on-line through our local plan engagement software. This allows large number of representations to be processed much more efficiently speeding up local plan process.

12.7 We will hold meetings and have correspondence with some key stakeholders throughout the plan-preparation process. This can be necessary to demonstrate cooperation with other plan-making bodies, or to develop the evidence base.

Question 19 - How would you like to be engaged with during the preparation of the Local Plan?
