

New Hart Local Plan



Consultation on Proposed Content and Evidence

Executive Summary

October 2026

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Executive summary: help shape Hart's new Local Plan

We are still early in the process. This is not the draft Local Plan, and no decisions have been made about where growth should go, which sites should be developed or what the detailed policies should say.

We are preparing a new Local Plan to guide how Hart grows and changes. It will help us plan homes, jobs, roads, schools, health services, utilities and environmental improvements together, rather than dealing with each planning application in isolation. This is an early consultation under the 2026 rules for preparing local plans, and we would really like to hear from residents, businesses, community groups, and anyone interested in Hart. This summary explains the main issues, the choices that are still open locally and how your views can help shape the draft Local Plan before decisions are made.

The five big choices

- how far ahead the plan should look: to 2039 or to 2044;
- where the remaining growth should go after making effective use of suitable brownfield land, including which greenfield opportunities should be considered;
- what infrastructure is needed, when it should be provided and how it can be funded;
- what types of homes, jobs and services are needed; and
- how growth should respond to Hart's environment, the character of its places and quality of life.

Why a new Local Plan is needed

Hart's current Local Plan was adopted in April 2020 and is still used to help decide planning applications. Since then, the Government has increased the number of homes Hart must plan for. At the moment, Hart cannot show that enough suitable sites are ready to provide the homes needed over the next five years. Preparing a new Local Plan gives us the opportunity to update our policies, identify suitable land, and better control where development takes place and what it provides.

The Government's formula sets the minimum housing need figure that Hart must use when preparing the Local Plan: 10,452 homes between 2026 and 2039, an average of 804 homes a year.

We have to use this figure as the starting point for the new Local Plan. We cannot choose the starting number locally, but we can make important choices together about where new homes go, which sites are selected, what infrastructure and facilities they provide, and how development is designed and phased.

Homes with planning permission are expected to provide 1,751 of these homes between 2026 and 2039. We therefore currently need to find suitable land for at least 8,701 more homes. The figures will change as homes are built, permissions expire and new information becomes available. The final Local Plan will set the housing requirement through the plan-making process.

If the plan runs to 2044, an equivalent housing figure will be calculated. The current estimate is around 14,500 homes.

The Local Plan is about more than housing numbers. It will also plan for affordable and specialist homes, jobs, town centres, transport, utilities, community facilities and environmental improvements.

Our vision for Hart

By 2039, Hart will remain one of the best places to live, work and enjoy: an attractive, mainly rural and prosperous district with thriving towns and villages, varied landscapes and a high quality of life.

The draft vision is based on six connected themes:

- **Infrastructure-led growth:** directing development to accessible and sustainable places where infrastructure, services and community facilities can support thriving communities.
- **Responding to climate change:** supporting renewable and low-carbon energy, energy-efficient development, sustainable travel and places resilient to flooding and water scarcity.
- **Supporting nature recovery:** protecting, restoring and connecting habitats and green infrastructure, including internationally important habitats.
- **Meeting local accommodation needs:** providing affordable and specialist homes, homes for older people, and housing that helps younger people and families remain in the district.
- **Supporting inclusive economic growth:** retaining the best employment sites, supporting rural business and strengthening Fleet and Hart's other centres.
- **High-quality, healthy and connected places:** supporting good design, local character, settlement identity, walking, cycling, public transport, digital connectivity, health and inclusion.

These themes will provide the basis for no more than ten measurable outcomes, which will be used to monitor progress towards the vision.

This is not the full draft vision – for the full vision see the main consultation document.

What the Local Plan should achieve

To deliver this vision, the Local Plan should:

- provide a range of well-designed homes for different needs, including affordable and specialist homes;
- support jobs, local businesses and lively town and local centres;
- secure the transport, schools, healthcare, water, drainage, energy, digital connections and community facilities needed by existing and new communities;
- create healthy, well-connected places with practical access to everyday services and good opportunities for walking, cycling and other ways of getting around;
- prepare for climate change and manage flood risk, water supply and sewage treatment; and
- protect and improve wildlife, landscapes, historic places and local character.

These aims reflect the proposed vision for Hart. They will guide the detailed policies and site choices in the draft Local Plan and help us check whether the plan is delivering lasting benefits.

How far into the future should the plan look?

One of the first choices is how far ahead the Local Plan should look. **We have not yet decided whether it should run to 2039 or to 2044.**

A plan to 2039 would focus on the needs and opportunities of the next decade, using the evidence available now. Extending the plan to 2044 could give Hart a stronger opportunity to plan ahead for major infrastructure and new communities, with more certainty about where longer-term growth will happen. This could help coordinate investment and give infrastructure providers more time to plan and deliver improvements. A longer plan period would also mean planning for more homes, pitches and other development, and identifying more land now.

The suggested approach to growth

We have not yet chosen a preferred pattern of growth. Instead, we suggest a balanced mix: making the best use of suitable brownfield land, considering growth in existing settlements, looking at opportunities around railway stations, and exploring whether one or more new settlements could play a role. We want growth where people can conveniently reach jobs, schools, healthcare, shops, and other everyday services, either within the development or in nearby towns and villages. We will look at how well connected each location is overall, including opportunities for walking, cycling and rail travel. A place does not necessarily need an existing bus service to be suitable, particularly where there is a realistic opportunity to improve connections.

We must also consider infrastructure, the environment, landscape, heritage and the separate identity of Hart's communities. Because sites will be ready and build out at different rates, we will need a realistic mix of locations and sizes. We will consider when each site could start, how quickly it could deliver homes and how much it could contribute within the plan period, including the longer timetable needed for strategic development.

We will compare the options fairly taking into account comments received from this consultation. The strategy we choose is the one that will most realistically help us achieve the vision with the sites that are available to develop.

Settlement hierarchy

The draft settlement hierarchy groups Hart's towns, villages and hamlets by their size, services, facilities and transport links. It is one piece of evidence; it does not decide where development should go or how much growth a settlement should receive. The proposed tiers are: Tier 1, Fleet; Tier 2, Blackwater, Yateley and Hook; Tier 3, Hartley Wintney and Odiham; Tier 4, North Warnborough, Crookham Village, Eversley Centre, Crondall, Mill Lane, Eversley Cross and Up Green, Dogmersfield, Hartland Village, Beauclerk Green and Station Road, and RAF Odiham; Tier 5, Rotherwick, Hartfordbridge, Ewshot, Greywell, South Warnborough, Broad Oak, Winchfield Hurst, Winchfield Court, Hazeley Bottom and Long Sutton; and Tier 6, Eversley Street and Lower Common, Mattingley, Heckfield, Hazeley and Hazeley Lea, and Hound Green.

Growth in Hart's towns and villages could bring investment, support local shops, schools and services, and provide new homes close to existing communities. We will look at what scale of growth each place could support, taking account of its own

services and infrastructure as well as practical access to everyday services in nearby towns and villages. Improvements within the settlement or in neighbouring communities could strengthen those connections and, over time, support a settlement moving to a higher tier. More substantial growth at a Tier 4, Tier 5 or Tier 6 settlement would require significant improvements to infrastructure, services and connections.

Services and facilities needed for growth

Roads, transport, schools, healthcare, water, drainage, utilities, and community facilities will shape where growth goes, how much development a place can support, and when it can happen.

We will work with the organisations responsible for these services to understand what improvements are needed, who will provide them, how they will be paid for, and when they will be ready. Flood risk, water supply and wastewater will also help shape the location, design, timing and scale of growth. Development must be timed so essential improvements are in place when needed.

Developers must help pay for the services and facilities needed because of new development, but this will not cover everything. Service providers, public bodies, and other organisations will need to fund some improvements. We will look at the combined effect of all planned growth across an area, not just one site at a time. Any proposed public transport improvements must also have a realistic prospect of continuing after initial developer funding ends.

Brownfield and greenfield land

Brownfield land is land that has been developed before. Suitable brownfield sites can provide homes within existing communities, support the renewal of unused areas and reduce pressure on undeveloped land.

We will look carefully at vacant and underused land in towns, villages, centres and business areas. For each site, we will ask whether it is available, whether it can make a realistic contribution within the plan period, taking account of when development could start and likely build-out rates, whether it has suitable access and whether the necessary infrastructure can be provided. We will also consider likely costs and timing, environmental effects and the value of any jobs, community uses or wildlife already on the site.

Brownfield land will not provide enough homes, so we will also consider suitable greenfield land.

Greenfield land can create well-designed places, affordable homes, new services and facilities, green space, and environmental improvements. We will consider a range of site sizes, including opportunities for small and medium-sized builders alongside development of sufficient scale to provide wider benefits.

Station-based opportunities

National policy favours housing within reasonable walking distance of well-connected railway stations. We must assess which, if any, opportunities around Hart's stations meet the national criteria and are suitable for development.

We will consider access, walking and cycling links, rail services, other travel choices, infrastructure, the environment and effects on nearby communities. The scale, design and timing of any development will depend on these considerations.

New settlement options

A new settlement could plan homes, infrastructure, services, green space, and community facilities together from the start.

Two opportunities are currently being explored: potential growth around Winchfield Station and the promoted Rokeham New Village proposal for about 1,500 homes between Crondall and Odiham.

We will assess each opportunity on its merits. The final strategy could include one, both or neither, depending on the evidence, consultation and how they compare with other ways of meeting Hart's needs. At sufficient scale, a new settlement could help coordinate homes with schools, community facilities, shops, jobs, transport, green space and utilities.

Delivery would be phased over several years. A new settlement could contribute homes within the plan period and continue to grow beyond it, particularly where several builders are active, and infrastructure is provided at the right stages. We will make realistic assumptions about when building could start, how delivery could increase and how many homes could be completed by the end of the plan period. Each opportunity would also need practical access to jobs and everyday services, a realistic way to fund and provide the necessary infrastructure, and a deliverable first phase. **We have not chosen a preferred option and welcome your views on both opportunities.**

Homes for different needs

The Local Plan will provide for a wider choice of homes so people can find accommodation that suits their needs throughout their lives. Alongside affordable housing, we will consider homes designed to support independent living, accessible and adaptable homes, and accommodation with care or support. Evidence will inform the amount and types of affordable housing sought.

Evidence will help identify the types of accommodation needed and how to provide them through suitable individual sites and larger developments. When assessing potential sites, we will consider good design, practical access to shops, schools, healthcare and other everyday services, connections with surrounding communities, environmental effects and whether sites can be delivered.

Current evidence identifies **a need for 43 additional pitches** for Gypsies and Travellers between 2026 and 2039, rising to 57 pitches if the plan runs to 2044. We will consider how to meet this need through dedicated sites or alongside other uses, including as part of larger developments where appropriate. The Local Plan will distinguish between permanent pitches and any managed temporary stopping places needed for people travelling through Hart.

Maintaining the identity of settlements and improving the environment

Good planning can help Hart's towns and villages retain their character and distinct identities as the district grows. However, meeting the scale of housing needed may

require changes to the boundaries and extent of some existing gaps, including development on land currently within them. We will undertake a study of the gaps between settlements to help identify where separation matters most and how planned growth can be accommodated while maintaining distinct communities. The findings, alongside other evidence and consultation responses, will inform the gap boundaries and policies proposed in the new Local Plan.

Growth should protect and improve Hart's environment wherever possible. We will consider landscape, wildlife, habitats, historic places, flood risk, farmland, climate, water and wastewater. We will also look for opportunities to create better green spaces, help nature recover and improve access to the countryside. New development will need suitable measures to protect the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, known as SANG, provides accessible open space as an alternative place for recreation. The Land Availability Assessment identifies around 200 hectares of potentially available land for SANG, whose location and capacity will need to be considered alongside the eventual pattern of growth.

Jobs and town centres

The Local Plan will support jobs, local businesses and successful town centres. **The evidence identifies a minimum need to 2039 for 8,300 square metres of additional office space, equivalent to about 1.3 hectares of land, and 3,000 square metres of industrial space, including logistics, equivalent to about 0.7 hectares.** If existing planning permissions involving the loss of employment space are implemented, the additional land requirements would rise to about 2.4 hectares for offices and 1.7 hectares for industry. We will make better use of existing allocated and safeguarded employment areas, consider additional business space as part of accessible development of sufficient scale where needed, and support investment in Hart's existing centres.

Possible development sites

No decisions are being made through this consultation about which sites should be allocated for development. We will first decide the overall pattern of growth for Hart, then assess individual sites against it early next year.

The sites put forward are options for consideration; they do not determine where growth will go. They come from suggestions by landowners and others, as well as land identified by the Council. The information used to assess these sites will be available through an interactive Placemaker map, and more land can still be put forward. The map will show the sites currently submitted, including their potential uses and sites with planning permission that have not yet been fully developed. **Showing a site on the map does not mean it has been approved or selected for development.**

The process has five steps:

- land is put forward;
- possible sites are assessed;
- the Council chooses a preferred pattern of growth;
- sites are tested against that strategy; and
- selected sites are proposed in the draft Local Plan.

For each site, we will ask: Is it in a suitable place? Is the owner willing and able to make it available? When could development start, what is a realistic build-out rate, and how much could it contribute within the plan period? Can the necessary roads, schools, health services, utilities and other facilities be provided? What would it mean for nearby communities and the environment? **Your comments will help us answer these questions before any site is formally proposed for development in the draft Local Plan.**

Do we have enough sites to meet housing needs?

The housing site options could eventually provide around 17,000 homes, but this does not mean that 17,000 homes would be built during the Local Plan period. Large-scale developments would take many years to develop, with homes continuing to be built beyond 2039 and, in some cases, beyond 2044.

What matters is how many homes could realistically be built during the plan period. Based on our current estimates, the site options together broadly match the number of homes we need to plan for.

There may still be choices about which sites are taken forward. We are inviting further sites to be put forward through the consultation, and we will review assumptions about how many homes each site could accommodate and how quickly they could be built. We will also factor in 'windfall' development on brownfield sites within settlements that the local plan cannot predict, such as office to residential conversions and small site redevelopments.

Feedback from this consultation will help inform site choices and the next stage of the local plan.

The evidence supporting the plan

The consultation is supported by evidence on housing and jobs, land, infrastructure and transport, water and flooding, the environment and climate, landscape and heritage, open space and leisure, town centres, renewable energy, Gypsy and Traveller needs, delivery and the wider effects of the plan. The evidence base is on the Council's [New Local Plan evidence pages](#). Some studies are complete and others are still being prepared. We encourage you to use the evidence alongside this summary, the main consultation document and the site maps when preparing your response.

Have your say

Each section above highlights the points on which we would particularly welcome your views. You do not need to be a planning expert, and you can respond to all the topics or only those that matter most to you. Tell us what you support, what concerns you have and why, focusing on your neighbourhood, a particular site or any subject that matters to you. Your experience of living, working or spending time in Hart is

valuable. If you have a different idea, please explain it and share any local knowledge or evidence that could help us understand it.

How to respond and what happens next

Please see the full consultation document. We hope this summary provides a helpful overview, but it does not cover all the matters we are consulting on.

The easiest way to take part is through our online consultation platform Placemaker, where you can explore locations and comment on individual sites.

You can also email localplan@hart.gov.uk or write to Hart District Council, Civic Offices, Harlington Way, Fleet, GU51 4AE. Please use whichever method works best for you.

The deadline for responses is 11:59pm on Monday 7th December 2026.

We will read and consider every response alongside the evidence and further site assessment. We will publish a summary of the main issues people raise and explain how those comments have shaped the next stage. Your response can highlight something we have missed, help us understand a local issue or opportunity, and influence which approaches, options and sites are taken forward into the draft Local Plan.

This is the first stage of preparing the new Local Plan. We expect to consult on a full draft in September 2027 and adopt the final plan in October 2028.

You know Hart and your community. Please share that knowledge with us and help shape the district's future before the draft Local Plan is prepared.

Evidence and background studies

- **Air Quality Assessment (emerging)**
Assesses the potential air quality impacts of the spatial strategy on sensitive ecological sites and informs any mitigation measures required.
- **Authority Monitoring Reports**
Published annually, these report on a range of issues including new development within the district, the implementation of current planning policies and progress on plan-making.
- **Climate Impact Site Assessment (emerging)**
Assesses the relative climate impacts, risks, opportunities and constraints associated with a long list of potential site options to inform site selection, policy development and site-specific mitigation measures.
- **Ecological Assessment (emerging)**
Assesses ecological features of potential site options and the likely ecological impacts of development.
- **Employment Land Review**
Assesses the quantity, quality and suitability of existing employment sites to inform the future role of existing employment areas and the need for additional employment land.
- **Gaps Between Settlements Study (emerging)**
Assesses the contribution that land makes to maintaining the separate identity and physical separation of settlements and helps identify where designated gaps or other policy measures to avoid coalescence may be justified in the Local Plan.
- **Green and Blue Infrastructure Study (emerging)**
Maps and assesses Hart's green and blue infrastructure network and identifies opportunities to protect, enhance and connect environmental, recreational and water-related assets. Green infrastructure needs to be delivered at all spatial scales from sub-regional to local level.
- **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment**
Assesses the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and identifies the level of pitch, plot and transit provision required across Hart.
- **Habitats Regulations Assessment**
Hart benefits from a rich natural environment, including the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), which is internationally important for nature conservation.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) set out the requirement to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of a Local Plan. The purpose of the HRA is to determine whether the Plan may result in any Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) on, or Adverse Effects

on the Integrity of, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites (collectively known as Habitats Sites).

A Habitats Regulations Assessment will assess whether the policies or proposals in the plan are likely to have a significant effect on any habitats or species protected under the Regulations, as well as to advise on appropriate policy mechanisms for delivering mitigation where adverse effects on site integrity may be identified. The findings of the assessment will inform future stages of Plan preparation and will be published alongside the next stage of the Local Plan.

- **Heritage Assessment (emerging)**
Assesses potential site options to identify heritage assets and their significance, evaluate the potential impacts of development, and inform site selection and identification of site-specific mitigation measures
- **Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment**
Assesses Hart's future housing and employment needs, including affordable housing, specialist housing needs and employment land requirements.
- **Indoor Built Facilities Assessment**
Assesses the quantity, quality, accessibility and future need for indoor sport and recreation facilities across Hart to identify future provision requirements and investment priorities.
- **Infrastructure Delivery Plan Stage 1 (Stage 2 to follow)**
Stage 1 establishes a baseline understanding of existing infrastructure provision, planned investments, infrastructure constraints and opportunities across Hart. Stage 2 of the IDP will assess infrastructure requirements arising from the spatial strategy and identify delivery, funding and phasing requirements.
- **Land Availability Assessment**
Identifies and assesses land that may be suitable, available and achievable for housing, employment and other forms of development, providing the starting point for further site selection and allocation decisions as the plan progresses. The Land availability assessment has itself drawn on other evidence including the [Brownfield Land Register](#) and the [Settlement Capacity and Intensification Study 2023](#).
- **Landscape Character Assessment**
Identifies and describes variation in the character of the landscapes within Hart. This provides a framework to help protect and manage landscape character through identification of key characteristics, forces for change, landscape management guidelines and development guidelines for future decisions across the district
- **Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (emerging)**
Assesses the landscape sensitivity of defined areas of land within the district to specific development typologies to inform future spatial planning and development management decisions.

- **Open Space Study (emerging)**
Assesses the quantity, quality, accessibility and future need for parks, natural greenspaces, amenity greenspace, play provision, allotments and cemeteries across Hart to inform future open space standards, policy development and investment priorities
- **Parking standards (emerging)**
Revised/updated cycle and car parking standards to ensure alignment with national policy and up to date local evidence.
- **Pitch Delivery Assessment (emerging)**
Assesses the potential capacity of existing sites and other opportunities to help meet identified Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs
- **Playing Pitch Strategy (emerging)**
Assesses the quantity, quality, capacity and future demand for playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities across Hart to identify priorities for future provision, enhancement and investment
- **Renewable Energy Study (emerging)**
Identifies and assesses opportunities for renewable and low-carbon energy development across Hart and identifies areas that may be suitable for future renewable energy generation and supporting infrastructure
- **Retail and Leisure Needs Study**
Assesses future retail and commercial leisure needs, reviews the hierarchy and boundaries of centres, and provides recommendations to support the future strategy and policy framework for Hart's centres.
- **Self and Custom Build Register**
Records a register of individuals or associations looking for self and custom build housing in the district and informs our understanding of the potential demand for self and custom build housing in Hart
- **Settlement Hierarchy and Boundary Review (Draft)**
Assesses the relative role, function, accessibility, service provision, growth opportunities and constraints of settlements across Hart. At the next stage it will review settlement boundaries to support further development of the spatial strategy.
- **Strategic Environmental Assessment**
The New Hart Local Plan is supported by an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), which incorporates the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The purpose of the IIA is to assess the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the Local Plan and reasonable alternatives, helping to ensure that sustainability considerations are taken into account throughout plan preparation.

The IIA is being undertaken in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and relevant Government Planning Practice Guidance. As required by the SEA

Regulations, the Council consulted the statutory environmental bodies, namely Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England, on the scope and level of detail of the assessment. [The IIA Scoping Report](#) was consulted upon between 30 June and 5 August 2026 and was also shared with neighbouring local authorities and other key stakeholders. Feedback received has informed the development of the assessment framework that will be used to assess the emerging Local Plan and reasonable alternatives.

An Interim IIA Report has been published alongside this Local Plan content and evidence consultation. It provides an assessment of the draft vision, proposed spatial strategy and reasonable alternatives considered to date. The assessment will continue to evolve as the Local Plan progresses and will inform future stages of plan preparation.

- [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment \(emerging\)](#)
Assesses the risk of flooding from rivers, surface water, groundwater, sewers and artificial sources across Hart to provide the evidence base for applying the Sequential Test and informing preparation of the new Local Plan. The Level 1 SFRA (2026) will provide a strategic assessment of flood risk across the district, whilst a future Level 2 SFRA will be prepared to undertake more detailed site-specific assessments and support application of the Exception Test where required.
- [Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Study \(emerging\)](#)
Identifies and assesses potential Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) opportunities to support future growth and mitigate recreational impacts on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)
- [Strategic Transport Assessment](#)
Establishes a baseline understanding of transport conditions, accessibility, travel patterns and committed transport infrastructure across Hart. Future stages of the assessment will consider the transport impacts of planned growth, using transport modelling and site-specific assessments to identify mitigation measures and infrastructure requirements.
- [Town Centre Health Check](#)
Assesses the current health of Hart's town, district and local centres, including their vitality, viability, occupancy levels
- [Water Cycle Study \(emerging\)](#)
Assesses the potential implications of planned growth on water resources, water supply, wastewater treatment, water quality and flood risk across Hart. The current Scoping Water Cycle Study provides a high-level assessment of constraints, opportunities and evidence gaps, whilst a Detailed Water Cycle Study will assess proposed development locations and growth options in greater detail to inform the Local Plan. With regards to a particular water supply issue affecting the west of Hart and into neighbouring areas, a separate joint study is being commissioned with Basingstoke and Deane and East Hampshire.

- **Whole Plan Viability Assessment (emerging)**
Assesses the cumulative viability implications of the Local Plan's policies and development requirements to ensure that the Plan is deliverable and that contributions expected from development are appropriate and achievable.

Available Site Options







