

Appendix 12: Present Duty to Co-operate Actions with St Albans District Council



17/10/2025 - Email from HBC	Initial Duty to Co-operate request
20/10/2025 - Email from SADC	Confirmation of contact at SADC
28/10/2025 - Email from HBC	Proposed meeting for duty to co-operate
29/10/2025 - Email from SADC	SADC unable to attend due to Local Plan Examinations
29/10/2025 - Email from HBC	Apologies and request for alternative dates
29/10/2025 - Email from SADC	Proposed meeting date
03/11/2025 - Email from HBC	Proposed meeting date for 21_11_25
03/11/2025 - Email from SADC	Confirmation of attendance
07/11/2025 - Email from HBC	Meeting link circulated for 21_11_25
20/11/2025 - Email from HBC	Meeting agenda

Hertsmere Initial Duty to Co-operate Meeting with St Albans District Council, Three Rivers District Council, Watford Borough Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

21 November 2025, 12:02pm

Attendees:

- Planning Policy Officer, Hertsmere
- Planning Policy Team Leader, Hertsmere
- Planning Strategy & Implementation Manager, Hertsmere
- Spatial Planning Manager, St Albans
- Head of Planning Policy & Conservation, Three Rivers
- Place Shaping Lead, Watford
- Planning Policy Manager, Welwyn Hatfield
- Senior Planning Policy Officer, Welwyn Hatfield

Purpose of Meeting

- Ensure legal compliance with Duty to Co-operate (DtC) for Hertsmere's emerging Local Plan. The Council are keen to ensure that matters of legal compliance do not derail the future examination.
- Share progress updates in relation to the emerging technical evidence base, and the emerging spatial strategy, planning policies and site allocations.
- Identify strategic cross-boundary issues for Statements of Common Ground (SoCG).
- Build collaborative relationships across Hertfordshire authorities.

Key Updates from Authorities

- **St Albans**
 - At Stage 2 examination hearings; main modifications expected early 2026.
 - Signed SoCG with Hertsmere; cross-boundary issues include Harper Lane and Bowmans Cross.
 - Inspector demanded extensive DtC evidence; clear Green Belt and site selection methodology critical.
- **Three Rivers**
 - Targeting Reg 19 consultation in Feb 2026; timetable very tight.
 - Housing provision at ~75% of standard method; risk of further reduction.
 - Will seek legal advice and inspector advisory visit on unmet need.
- **Watford**
 - Adopted Local Plan in Oct 2022; waiting for new NPPF.

- Preparing for future unitary plan; evidence base outdated.
- Has SoCG with Hertsmere (Aug 2021).
- **Welwyn Hatfield**
 - Reg 18 consultation planned for Feb 2026; Reg 19 by summer 2026.
 - Tight timetable; Green Belt review and viability work ongoing.
 - Potential cross-boundary site near Little Heath flagged.
- **Hertsmere**
 - Ambitious LDS: submission before end of 2026 under current system.
 - Reg 18 consultation in Q1 2026.
 - Evidence base: AECOM leading 25 studies; AR Urbanism preparing settlement visions.
 - Spatial strategy:
 - Meet housing need in full.
 - Urban intensification, regeneration, taller buildings, windfall sites.
 - Green Belt changes inevitable.
 - Exploring new settlement (long-term, post-year 11 of plan period).

Strategic Issues Identified

- Settlement hierarchy remains broadly unchanged (Borehamwood top tier).
- Green Belt review and site selection methodologies critical for soundness.
- Future boundary changes and approach to plan reviews noted.
- Industrial/employment land diversity: film industry reliance vs. strategic logistics/data centres.
- Water scarcity and flood risk highlighted as emerging issues.

Next Steps

- Share missing SoCGs, historic DtC records, and key evidence documents – Hertsmere is seeking to create a chronology that maps duty to co-operate activities that lead up to and informed current plan-making.
- Where necessary, develop SoCGs with partners covering strategic issues (housing, Green Belt, infrastructure, employment land).
- Monitor Hertfordshire SDS implications and London Plan review.
- Continue bilateral discussions on cross-boundary sites (e.g., Bowmans Cross, Little Heath).

Note for Hertsmere Neighbouring Authorities on settlement classification

St Albans

Introduction

On behalf of Hertsmere Borough Council, AECOM is undertaking a Green Belt Assessment (GBA) aimed at identifying grey belt, in line with the Green Belt PPG.

The aim of this note is to explain key aspects of the Hertsmere GBA methodology to allow neighbouring authorities to comment, and if relevant to enable suitable aligned methodologies. The key matter to discuss is the settlement classification.

Settlement classification

With regards to large built up areas (LBUAs), we are proposing three of relevance to the study area: Borehamwood, London, Watford. In each case the LBUA extends only as far as the Green Belt inset boundary.

With regards to distinguishing between settlement types, we recognise that there is no accepted definition, and so there is a need to account for locally defined factors. The factors taken into account in our definition included:

- Population (based on Census data available at OA level)
- Settlement hierarchy
- Transport accessibility (including presence of a rail station and its level of connectivity, relationship to strategic and major road networks)
- Education facilities (including presence of primary and secondary schools)
- Wider facilities (including shops, healthcare, leisure, services, etc.)

As rules of thumb, we have been using approximately 5,000 as the population cut-off between a village and a town, and 75,000 as the population cut-off between a town and a LBUA. However, some judgement is required depending on the accessibility and services available in the settlement as per the points above.

With regards to historic towns, the previous study identified Watford, Bushey and Radlett. For the purposes of this study, it was found that the historic nature of these settlements was not significant due to lack of adjacency to the Green Belt, and the historic areas not being strongly associated with a landscape setting.

With regards to **St Albans**, we are currently intending to classify London Colney as a town and Bricket Wood as a village.

The full settlement classification, including settlements in or near the adjacent neighbouring authorities, is as follows:

Settlement type	Settlement	Relationship to LPA
LBUA	Borehamwood	Wholly within
	Watford	Neighbouring authority (Watford)
	Greater London (including South Oxhey)	Neighbouring authorities (Barnet, Enfield, Harrow, Three Rivers)
Town	Potters Bar	Partly within
	Bushey	Wholly within
	Radlett	Wholly within
	London Colney	Neighbouring authority (St Albans)
Village	Shenley	Wholly within
	Elstree	Wholly within
	South Mimms	Wholly within
	Aldenham (including Wall Hall)	Wholly within
	Letchmore Heath	Wholly within
	Patchetts Green	Wholly within
	Ridge	Wholly within
	Brookmans Park	Neighbouring authority (Welwyn)
	Bricket Wood	Neighbouring authority (St Albans)

Question for St Albans City & District Council

- Do you agree with the classification of the settlements within St Albans?

03/12/2025 - Email from SADC	Agreement to notes subject to St Albans being a LBUA
19/01/2026 - Email from HBC	Proposed second Duty to co-operate meeting
20/01/2026 - Email from SADC	Confirmation of attendance
32/01/2026 - Email from HBC	Confirmation of availability for D2C meeting
23/01/2026 - Email from SADC	Request for clarification
26/01/2026 - Email from HBC	Further details provided
26/01/2026 - Email from SADC	Confirmation of details
27/01/2026 - Email from HBC	Reschedule of meeting for other parties
27/01/2026 - Email from SADC	Confirmation of attendance
28/01/2026 - Email from HBC	Circulation of meeting link for 09_02_2026

09_02_2026 Hertsmere Duty to Co-operate meeting with St Albans, Watford, Three Rivers and Welwyn Hatfield

Executive Summary

The Duty to Co-operate meeting (9 February 2026) between **Hertsmere, St Albans, Watford, Three Rivers**, and **Welwyn Hatfield** focused on Local Plan updates, early findings from Hertsmere’s evidence-base studies, cross-boundary issues, and emerging strategic considerations — including Green Belt, housing delivery, viability, and potential new settlement proposals.

Authorities provided updates on their Local Plan positions, with several facing tight government deadlines, holding directions, or complex adoption/transition processes. Hertsmere presented initial findings from key studies: **Settlement Hierarchy, Retail, Viability**, and **Green Belt** (Purposes A & B, and Footnote 7 constraints). These indicate Borehamwood as the main settlement focus; significant leisure and retail constraints; strong viability but delivery challenges; and early identification of areas with potential for release or provisional “grey belt.”

The group also discussed housing delivery pressures, market capacity concerns, the impact of the Building Safety Levy, and differing approaches to density and viability expectations. Initial conversations began regarding a potential new settlement (Bowman’s Cross), with Hertsmere committing to follow up individually with neighbouring councils.

The meeting closed with agreement to continue sharing evidence as it becomes publishable, maintain collaboration regardless of national changes to the Duty to Co-operate, and hold further targeted discussions on new settlements, HMOs, and Article 4 Directions.

Attendees

(from introductions and interventions in the transcript)

Hertsmere Borough Council

- Planning Policy Officer (Duty to Co-operate lead)
- Planning Policy Team Leader

Three Rivers District Council

- Head of Planning Policy & Conservation

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

- Planning Policy Manager

Watford Borough Council

- Place Shaping Lead

St Albans City & District Council

- Spatial Planning Manager

Actions

For Hertsmere

- Circulate edited PowerPoint slides (excluding sensitive content) and share further technical study outputs as they become publishable.
- Send housing allocation letters to neighbouring authorities.
- Arrange separate discussions with St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield regarding the potential new settlement (Bowman's Cross).
- Email authorities requesting insight on HMOs and Article 4 Directions.
- Continue progressing Regulation 18 consultation for late April, with subsequent quick transition to Regulation 19.

For Partner Authorities (St Albans, Watford, Three Rivers, Welwyn Hatfield)

- Review forthcoming evidence from Hertsmere once provided, including Green Belt, viability, retail and settlement hierarchy studies.
- Engage early with Hertsmere regarding discussions on the potential new settlement, especially impacts on strategic infrastructure and cross-boundary considerations.
- Share any relevant insights on housing delivery challenges, developer behaviour, viability pressures, or approaches to Article 4 for HMOs.

Joint / Ongoing

- Continue Duty to Co-operate engagement regardless of future national policy changes.
- Maintain cross-boundary dialogue on market capacity, delivery constraints, and emerging spatial strategy implications.
- Consider future joint evidence opportunities where appropriate (e.g., Watford's potential joint studies funded by grant review).

28/01/2026 - Email from HBC

Circulation of meeting link for 09_02_2026

10/02/2026 - Email from HBC

Circulation of PowerPoint used in 09_02_2026 D2C meeting

10/02/2026 - Email from HBC

Letter sent to SADC regarding HBC housing numbers

10_02_2026 Letter from Hertsmere Borough Council to St Albans District Council regarding Unmet Housing need

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am contacting you in relation to the on-going discharge of the Duty to Co-operate that forms part of Hertsmere's Local Plan-making process. Hertsmere Borough Council (the Council) is already engaging with your organisations, in discharging the requirements of the Duty, in respect of relevant strategic cross boundary matters. It is envisaged that process will continue through the remaining stages of the regulatory process.

This communication is specific to Hertsmere's housing requirement. For the purposes of discharging the requirements of the Duty, this communication identifies the anticipated housing requirement. It confirms that the Council intend to meet the supply and delivery of the housing requirement in full during the forthcoming plan period. Regardless of this objective, Hertsmere's neighbours are invited to state whether they have the capacity to supply and deliver any unmet housing need that may arise during the forthcoming plan period. Responses will be recorded as part of the Duty and reported as necessary. It is anticipated that this will form a necessary part of the future examination in public.

The adopted Hertsmere Local Plan sets out the requirement for housing provision for the Borough between 2012 and 2027. This equates to 266 homes per annum. However, as the adopted plan is now more than five years old, this figure is now out-of-date and no longer applies for plan-making or decision-taking. The figure that must now be used to calculate the Borough's housing requirement is the latest standard method set out in the national planning guidance. Using the standard method leads to a housing requirement of 1,010 additional homes per annum without any buffer applied.

The Housing Delivery Test measurement has shown that the development industry has performed poorly in building-out their consents in the anticipated timely manner – falling below 85% delivery over the three year reporting period. As a consequence, the Borough is subject to the application of the 20% buffer on the five year housing supply. Annualised, this equates to 1,212 additional homes per annum, which will apply for as long as delivery performance remains below 85% over a three year period. Once delivery exceeds 85% the buffer will fall away and Hertsmere's housing target will return to 1,010 additional homes per annum.

Hertsmere Borough Council is currently reviewing its local planning policy. This work is supported by a comprehensive technical evidence base, including the Local Housing Need Assessment, Green Belt Study, and Local Plan Viability Assessment. A full assessment of sites identified through the HELAA and the Call for Sites process is also underway. Collectively, this evidence will inform the preparation of the new Local Plan, which will be published for consultation under Regulations 18 and 19.

To be found sound at examination, the Council is seeking to meet all of its housing needs. However, in order to discharge the Duty to Cooperate, we are asking neighbouring authorities to confirm their housing capacity and whether they have the ability to accommodate the supply and delivery of any unmet housing need that may arise during the plan period.

The Council is already engaging with relevant national bodies and neighbouring authorities through the Duty to Cooperate. We expect this engagement to continue through the

forthcoming regulatory stages, and we anticipate agreeing Statements of Common Ground that set out actions on strategic spatial planning issues.

If you have any queries regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact me.

09/03/2026 - Email from HBC

Request for meeting regarding Bowmans Cross

09/03/2026 - Email from SADC

Response to HBC's housing need letter

**09_03_2026 Response from St Albans District Council to Hertsmere Borough Council
Unmet Housing Need request**

Thank you for your letter to St Albans City and District Council (SADC) regarding “Hertsmere Local Plan – Meeting the Housing Requirement”.

In response to your specific query: This communication is specific to Hertsmere’s housing requirement. For the purposes of discharging the requirements of the Duty, this communication identifies the anticipated housing requirement.

It confirms that the Council intend to meet the supply and delivery of the housing requirement in full during the forthcoming plan period. Regardless of this objective, Hertsmere’s neighbours are invited to state whether they have the capacity to supply and deliver any unmet housing need that may arise during the forthcoming plan period. Responses will be recorded as part of the Duty and reported as necessary.

It is anticipated that this will form a necessary part of the future examination in public. I can confirm that St Albans City and District does not have the capacity to supply and deliver any unmet housing need that may arise during Hertsmere’s forthcoming plan period. St Albans Council looks forward to continued productive Duty to Cooperate working with Hertsmere Borough Council and at the same time wishes you the very best of luck in next steps with preparing your Plan.

We trust that the comments above will be of assistance as you continue with your work on your Plan. We are very happy to discuss further as appropriate.

09/03/2026 - Email from HBC	Dates for requested for Bowmans Cross meeting
09/03/2026 - Email from HBC	Teams meeting circulated for 19_03_2026
09/03/2026 - Email from HBC	Acknowledgement of response to letter

19_03_2026 Summary Hertsmere Duty to Co-operate meeting with St Albans District Council regarding Bowmans Cross.

1. Attendees

- Hertsmere Borough Council (HBC)
- St Albans City & District Council (SADC)

2. Purpose of Meeting

To update SADC on the status of the Bowmans Cross new settlement proposal within Hertsmere's emerging Local Plan, discuss cross-boundary implications, and ensure ongoing Duty to Cooperate engagement.

3. Hertsmere Local Plan Update

3.1 Plan Progress

- HBC is preparing the Regulation 18 consultation document, expected mid-April 2026.
- Plan period currently runs to 2043.

3.2 Spatial Strategy

- Focus on urban regeneration and strategic urban extensions to meet housing needs.
- Bowmans Cross is not required to meet the plan-period housing requirement.
- It is positioned as a long-term strategic opportunity for growth beyond 2043.

4. Bowmans Cross – Role in the Local Plan

4.1 Expected Delivery

- Anticipated delivery years 11–15 of the plan period.
- Approx. 500 homes expected before 2043.

4.3 Red Line Boundary

- A boundary will be shown in the consultation.
- Land south of the M25 (within U&C's wider option) will not be included.

5. Sustainability, Infrastructure & Viability

5.1 Current Sustainability Position

- Bowmans Cross is not currently a sustainable location, but could become one with major investment.

5.2 Infrastructure Requirements

- HCC discussions have identified a 1,000-home trigger point for major infrastructure investment, especially highways.
- Education provision also under discussion.

5.3 Delivery Rates

- U&C's projected delivery rates described as "surprisingly slow".

5.4 Viability Concerns

- SADC and HBC both raised concerns about:
 - Transport mitigation
 - Minerals extraction
 - Cost of required infrastructure
 - Risk that the scheme becomes unviable

6. Cross-Boundary Issues Raised by SADC

6.1 Impacts on Local Communities

- Concerns about effects on London Colney and Colney Heath.
- Sensitivity around development north of Coursers Road.

"Development north of Coursers Road... is really sensitive to us."

6.2 Environmental Constraints

- Protected species and habitats around Colney Heath noted as key issues.

6.3 Need for Clear Spatial Representation

- SADC requested diagrams showing:
 - What is likely to be delivered by 2043

- The long-term end state separately
- To avoid public misunderstanding.

“People will go straight to the end state... assume that’s three weeks on Friday.”

6.4 Engagement Expectations

- Hard copies of consultation documents requested in:
 - Colney Heath
 - London Colney
- Early notification of events requested.

7. Wider Strategic Context

- Both councils acknowledged the scale of future housing numbers across Hertfordshire.
- Recognition that Bowmans Cross may become part of the long-term growth mix, even if not ideal.

8. Actions Agreed

Action	Owner
Add spatial representation showing likely development by 2043	HBC
Ensure consultation documents available in Colney Heath & London Colney	HBC
Notify SADC of consultation event details	HBC
SADC to raise issues formally through Reg 18 consultation	SADC
Continue Duty to Cooperate engagement with SADC, Welwyn Hatfield, and HCC	HBC