

# Local Planning Authority Update | Hertfordshire

## Covid-19 and current working arrangements

April 2020



The following provides latest available information on how Local Planning Authorities are responding in the face of the current public health situation. It is based on information obtained from discussions with officers of the respective Councils, and from information published by Councils. It is intended to provide an accurate a position as possible as at 1 April 2020, and is subject to change. The map above relates to Local Planning Authorities' approach to engaging with applicants / prospective applicants at this time.



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**LOCAL AUTHORITY****CURRENT POSITION**

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**Broxbourne**

- No Planning Committees are currently taking place until further notice. The council are exploring the possibility of holding Planning Committees virtually, once this has been concluded all applicants will be notified.
- There is no update regarding the emerging Local Plan's progression. The planning Inspector is due to finalise a report which sets out the future progression however there is no public deadline date available.
- The Council did not provide an update regarding how meetings will currently be conducted during this unprecedented time.

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**Dacorum**

- Planning Committee meetings are currently postponed until further notice.
- A Council meeting has been scheduled for April where it is expected that that powers will be delegated to Officers to conclude applications and issue decisions.
- No update was provided regarding how other services at the council will be conducted in the current situation.

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**East Hertfordshire**

- The Council are currently undertaking internal discussions regarding setting up virtual Planning Committees. There is no confirmed date for when this will be decided or implemented.
- The Council did not provide an update regarding how they will currently be conducting meetings and how applications will be decided; internal discussions are still being conducted in which these matters are being considered.
- The Local Plan was adopted on 23 October 2018, therefore there is no anticipated impact as there were no reviews planned.

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**Hertsmere**

- All Planning Committees have been suspended until the end of June.
- The Council are currently reviewing the option to reduce members and officers present at committees and are awaiting Government advice on the next stages.
- The emerging Local Plan is still progressing as before with no need for public meetings and consultations at this stage. Therefore, there is no anticipated impact as a result of the current situation.

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**North Hertfordshire**

- The Council intends to run Planning Committees virtually and all scheduled Committees will continue. The details of how this will work are currently being discussed and an update is due to be released in shortly.
- All scheduled meetings will be undertaken via the phone or virtually. Officer's will be in contact regarding scheduled meetings.
- The two week hearing period for the emerging Local Plan scheduled to take place on the 16 March has been postponed until further notice.



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**St. Albans City and District**

- All Planning Committees have been cancelled until further notice. More information will be released when internal discussions have taken place.
- The Council submitted its Local Plan for examination in March 2019 with Inspectors Louise Crosby MA MRTPI and Elaine Worthington BA (Hons) MTP MUED MRTPI appointed by the Secretary of State.
- The examining Inspectors wrote to the Council on 27 January 2020 setting out that due to serious concerns in relation to legal compliance and soundness, it was considered appropriate to cancel the hearing sessions in w/c 3 February and w/c 10 February. A follow-up letter providing greater detail is due to be issued. Given this, it is not anticipated the current situation will have an immediate impact on the progression and adoption of the emerging Plan.

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**Stevenage**

- The Council has not provided information on its position in light of the current situation, and has not responded to requests for information.
- The Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted on 22 May 2019. The Local Plan replaces the District Plan (Second Review). Thus, there is no anticipated direct impact on the Local Plan.

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**Three Rivers**

- The Council hopes to provide meetings as usual and these will be held over the phone or virtually.
- Delegated applications are still being validated, determined and assessed as usual, however site visits are not currently being undertaken by Case Officers who are requesting videos and photos of the site as an alternative.
- Planning Committees are not yet delayed and the Council are exploring ways to hold these meeting virtually. A decision will be made 'shortly'.
- The emerging Local Plan is still progressing as usual, the next public consultation will be held towards the end of the year. An update will be provided nearer to the time, should this be impacted by COVID-19.

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**Watford**

- All Planning Committees and meetings have been postponed until further notice.
  - Planning applications under delegated decision will continue to be determined in the usual manner.
  - The Final Draft Local Plan is due for consultation in summer 2020. The Council did not provide an update regarding the likelihood of this consultation still being conducted within the same timescale.
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**Welwyn Hatfield**

- All planning applications which are called-in for determination by Development Management Committee will be delayed until further notice. Borough councillors and town and parish councils have been encouraged to only call in planning applications that truly require consideration by Development Management Committee.
- Planning applications will continue to be determined as normal under delegated powers, however where site visits are required or if the consultation period has not yet started then delays occur.
- Stage 8 of the examination hearing sessions for the Local Plan were scheduled for 11-15 May could potentially be postponed, the Council will provide an update in due course regarding this matter.

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