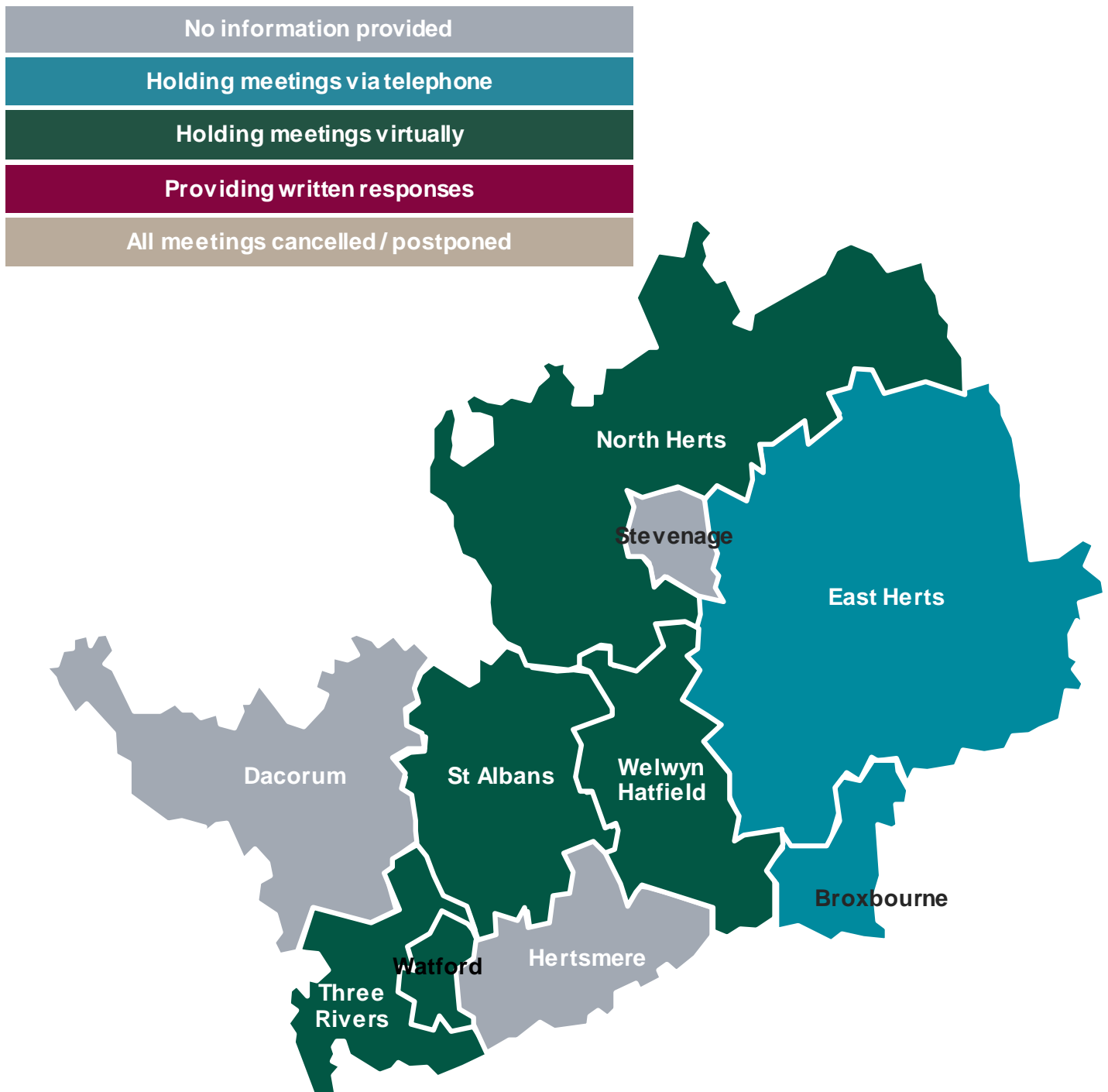


# Local Planning Authority Update | Hertfordshire

Covid-19 and current working arrangements

May 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, and is intended to provide an accurate position as at 7 May 2020. The map above relates to Local Planning Authorities' approach to engaging with applicants / prospective applicants at this time.



LOCAL AUTHORITY	CURRENT POSITION
<b>Broxbourne</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– 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.</li><li>– Pre-application meetings can be held via phone call.</li><li>– The Local Plan Inspector's final report on the soundness of the Broxbourne Local Plan 2018-2033 was published on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020. This concluded that the Local Plan is sound with modifications. The Council has issued notice of the receipt of the Inspector's report, in which they state they are unable to provide paper copies of the documents, due to the current public health situation.</li><li>– A report in respect of the adoption of the Local Plan will be presented to Council in due course.</li></ul>
<b>Dacorum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Planning Committee meetings are currently postponed, and all decisions are being delegated for a final decision to the Assistant Director and Group Manager. Although officers will have the final decision, an opportunity for members of the public to make statements or ask questions in accordance with the rules as to public participation will still be in place, albeit in writing. A five-day consultation window, where the public can submit the comments via a 3-minute deputation, replaces the ability to speak at Committee.</li><li>– No update has been provided regarding how other services at the council will be conducted in the current situation.</li><li>– The Council published a revised LDS on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020, with Regulation 19 Pre-Submission / Publication consultation anticipated in November 2020. As such, it is not expected current circumstances will have a grave impact on the new Local Plan.</li></ul>
<b>East Hertfordshire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Planning Committee meetings are being held virtually via Zoom.</li><li>– Planning applications are still being processed. There may be some delay and disruption to services received but the Council are working to keep this to a minimum.</li><li>– Pre-application meetings are still being conducted over the telephone.</li><li>– The Local Plan was adopted on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018, therefore there is no anticipated impact as there were no reviews planned.</li></ul>
<b>Hertsmere</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– All Planning Committees are being conducted virtually.</li><li>– No information has been provided as to how meetings are being conducted at this current time.</li><li>– 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.</li></ul>

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- North Hertfordshire**
- April's Planning Committee was postponed and the Council intend to discuss these items at the next Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> May. Currently, May's Planning Control Committee is going ahead however this depends on the government's guidance regarding social distancing. Any update on this situation will be posted on the website in due course.
  - 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**
- The first virtual Planning Committee is scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020.
  - Delegated powers have not been extended to allow the decision of more types of applications, however the Council have stated decisions are still being made within the statutory timescale where possible.
  - Pre-application meetings are being conducted through virtual means, using Microsoft Teams. Written feedback is still being provided.
  - 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<sup>rd</sup> February and w/c 10<sup>th</sup> February. The Inspector's Post Hearing letter to the Council was issued 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020. The current situation has not had an immediate impact on 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<sup>nd</sup> 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 is providing 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 being held virtually, the public will be able to join and participate. The next meeting is scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> May.
  - The emerging Local Plan is still progressing as usual, and 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.

**Watford**

- All Planning Committees are being conducted virtually and will continue to be in the future.
- Planning applications under delegated decisions will continue to be determined in the usual manner.
- Planning applications are still being determined within the statutory timescale.
- Pre-application meetings are being held through virtual means, using either Zoom, Skype or telephone con calls. Written feedback is still provided.
- The Final Draft Local Plan is due for consultation in summer 2020. The Council have confirmed that the timeline for the Local Plan will be adjusted to reflect the current circumstances, meaning the Regulation 19 (pre-submission) consultation anticipated for June 2020 will take place at a later date in the year. The Council has not set a timetable, given current uncertainty.

**Welwyn Hatfield**

- The Council is now conducting Planning Committees through virtual means.
- 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 may occur.
- The council is asking for extension of time's to be agreed on applications where necessary.
- Pre-application meetings are being conducted via Microsoft Teams, and written feedback is still being provided.
- Stage 8 of the examination hearing sessions for the Local Plan were scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> May could potentially be postponed, the Council will provide an update in due course regarding this matter.

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