



East Herts Local Plan News: September 2026

Dear Consultee,

Welcome to the latest update on preparation of the new East Herts Local Plan.

The Local Plan will shape how East Herts grows and changes over the coming years, including where new homes, jobs and infrastructure are located, and how we protect and enhance the district's environment, heritage and communities.

Gateway 1 Assessment

The next milestone in the Local Plan process is the [Gateway 1 Assessment](#), which is programmed for October 2026. This is a required self-assessment that demonstrates that the Council is ready to begin the 30-month plan-making process. Further information on the Local Plan [process](#) and [timetable](#) is available on our website.

Once we pass through Gateway 1 in October, we will begin the formal stage of plan-making, and the Council's timetable currently anticipates adoption of the Plan in April 2029.

These newsletter emails will ensure you receive notifications periodically regarding progress on the new Local Plan and any opportunities to engage and share your views with us.

Call for Sites 2026

A 'Call for Sites' was undertaken in 2024, which saw over [280 sites submitted for consideration](#). Assessment of these sites is ongoing and an update on this work

will be published later this year. Where further information is required from site promoters, the planning policy team will be in contact directly.

In the meantime, we will be reopening the Call for Sites in October 2026 to further support the preparation of the new Local Plan. This is an opportunity for landowners, developers and other interested parties to suggest new sites that may have potential for development or alternative uses, such as green space or land for nature recovery.

Sites submitted through the 2024 Call for Sites do not need to be submitted again and will continue to be assessed.

Since the first Call for Sites was undertaken, national planning policy has changed, and the Council has continued to develop its evidence base. Reopening the Call for Sites will ensure that the Council has the most up-to-date understanding of land availability and potential development opportunities as preparation of the new Local Plan progresses.

You will receive a further email in October when the Call for Sites opens including a link to the submission portal and guidance on how to submit a site. There is information available on our [website](#) in the meantime to help you prepare to submit a site.

Evidence Documents

You can view the Local Plan evidence base [here](#).

Recent evidence approved by the Council includes:

- Green Belt Assessment ([FAQs webpage](#))
- Retail and Town Centres Study
- Employment Studies for the main settlements
- Indoor Sport Needs Assessment
- Open Space Assessment

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Government published a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 17 August 2026. The Framework represents the most significant change to

national planning policy for many years and introduces major changes to both plan-making and decision-taking, including new approaches to housing delivery, development around well-connected stations, higher-density development in sustainable locations, climate change and economic growth. It also introduces national decision-making policies which take effect immediately.

The planning policy team is currently reviewing the implications of these changes for the preparation of the new East Herts Local Plan and future planning decisions across the district. The new NPPF can be viewed [here](#).

District Design Code

Work is continuing on the preparation of the East Herts District Design Code, one of the Council's key place-shaping projects.

The Design Code will establish clear expectations for the design of new development across the district, helping to ensure that future growth contributes positively to the character, appearance and quality of places across East Herts, whilst supporting sustainability objectives and creating attractive, healthy and well-designed environments.

Further updates and opportunities to engage with the District Design Code will be provided over the coming months.

What's Next?

Over the next six months we expect to:

- Complete the Gateway 1 Assessment.
- Launch the 2026 Call for Sites.
- Continue developing the Local Plan evidence base.
- Publish a summary of responses received during the Local Plan Scoping Consultation.
- Prepare for the first formal consultation on Local Plan content and evidence in early 2027.

Stay Connected

For updates and future consultations:

- Visit our [website](#)
- Follow us on social media

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We will continue to provide regular updates as the new Local Plan progresses and as further opportunities arise for you to get involved.

Planning Policy Team

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