

HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD

Memorandum of Understanding

October 2019



Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Broxbourne Borough Council
Dacorum Borough Council
East Herts District Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Hertsmere Borough Council
North Hertfordshire District Council
St Albans City and District Council
Stevenage Borough Council
Three Rivers District Council
Watford Borough Council
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

The local authorities listed above comprising of county council, district councils and borough councils are together referred to as “Local Authorities”. The Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership is referred to as the “LEP”. The Local Authorities and the LEP are collectively referred to in this Memorandum of Understanding as the “Partners”. A list of the Partners and their principal addresses are listed at Schedule 1 “the Partners”.

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is for the Partners to:

- Raise awareness of their joint working intent to Hertfordshire residents, partners, businesses and central government;
- commit to continued collaborative place-based working across Hertfordshire;
- set out the joint working intention between the Partners; and
- demonstrate how they will work together as equal stakeholders with different roles to manage future growth in Hertfordshire.

2. Background

2.1. Since September 2018, the Partners have been working collaboratively through the Hertfordshire Growth Board – an alliance consisting of the Leaders of all of the Local Authorities and the Chair of the LEP. Together, the Partners are responding to the place leadership and growth challenges that face Hertfordshire now and in the future and are committed to ensuring that the Partners work in a proactive, positive and inclusive way.

2.2. To date, the Partners have identified the following growth challenges:

- demand for residential homes of a variety of types and tenures;
- need for infrastructure and local services serving both new and existing residents;
- securing jobs and inward business investment within Hertfordshire;
- responding to growth pressures from outside Hertfordshire in a considered and appropriate way;

- pressure on green belt and providing a sustainable and high-quality environment, and
- the threat climate change poses to the county and its residents.

Through the exploration of the joint place-based ambitions that the Partners have been developing, working together to achieve this challenge will result in positive benefits for Hertfordshire, now and in the future.

2.3. The Partners are keen to ensure that growth delivers for both current and future Hertfordshire residents and supports a thriving county. The three pillars of the Hertfordshire Growth Board will be people, place and prosperity. People means enabling happy, healthy, diverse communities who feel they belong in Hertfordshire and can benefit from its successes. Place means making places contribute to people's health, happiness, and wellbeing without compromising the future or our environment. Prosperity means delivering Hertfordshire's contribution to the UK and national economy while maintaining and further developing a sustainable local economy that creates value for Hertfordshire residents.

2.4. Hertfordshire is a net contributor to the UK economy, and good growth is key to ensuring that the Partners continue to build on that while locally providing good quality jobs, skills, and opportunities for all Hertfordshire residents. Hertfordshire's location between London and the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and its unique 'offer' make the Partners perfectly placed to work with government and co-create ideas and solutions to meet the challenges and maintain the momentum and growth of UK plc that benefits all of Hertfordshire. However, in parts of Hertfordshire our productivity is falling behind the national average, and without change, we risk not being able to deliver on local and national economic objectives.

2.5. This Memorandum of Understanding builds on a history of successful partnership working in Hertfordshire on issues like property, infrastructure and planning as well as the two emerging joint strategic spatial planning partnerships in North East Central Herts and South West Herts.

2.6. This Memorandum of Understanding sets out:

- the core objectives and aims of the Hertfordshire Growth Board; and
 - the principles of collaboration for Hertfordshire
- subject to the terms and conditions set out within this Memorandum of Understanding.

3. Core Objectives and Aims

3.1. The core objective of the Hertfordshire Growth Board is to respond to the key growth challenges facing Hertfordshire. The Partners have agreed a set of place-based ambitions and agreed to work together on delivering those ambitions through the future work programme:

- Strategic planning and positioning – the need to raise Hertfordshire's profile and secure central government support for scaled and accelerated delivery, helping to overcome the challenges faced by the local plan system, and growing strategic employment and housing corridors within Hertfordshire;

- Homes – the need to overcome market failure to deliver the housing Hertfordshire needs. This includes more social and affordable housing; good and inclusive growth that delivers sustainable communities, housing, and places into the future; and accommodating housing and economic growth with sustainable construction and excellent design that does not compromise the attractiveness of our existing places;
- Infrastructure – the need to access sufficient forward funding to put ‘infrastructure in first’ ahead of development delivery, reduce our carbon footprint, and plan for active and sustainable travel; and
- Economy – the need to further unlock the potential of our key sectors, stimulate new sectors, and create quality local jobs growth, in alignment with the emerging Local Industrial Strategy.

3.2. The Hertfordshire Growth Board will support the Partners to lead on, facilitate and support each other to collectively fulfil this core objective.

3.3. The Hertfordshire Growth Board, through its future work programme commitments aims to:

- Set out the shared vision for place and growth in Hertfordshire and the strategic priorities that will guide how the Partners collectively respond to demographic, economic and social challenges and work together for the continued success of a thriving Hertfordshire;
- Identify investment opportunities and potential sources of funding, including from central government, from private sources and locally, and where appropriate agree investment locally for the benefit of Hertfordshire;
- Speak with one voice to central government, academia, delivery partners, business and Hertfordshire residents, taking advantage of its place narrative and the scale of twelve Partners coming together;
- Agree and deliver on Partners’ shared priorities for infrastructure investment and development now and in the future;
- Lead on developing and securing the emerging agreement with central government to support infrastructure and housing, engaging with central government to secure buy-in, and acting as the accountable body for governance and delivery;
- Support the North East Central Herts and South West Herts planning partnerships and help facilitate strategic alignment of the joint planning work undertaken with each other and adjacent Local Planning Authorities.

4. Principles of Partnership

4.1. The Partners recognise the following benefits of stronger partnership working on place-based working in Hertfordshire:

- Building on the strengths of the two-tier system of local government, delivering at a local level while solving problems at a larger scale;
- Identifying and delivering local needs in collaboration with other strategic partners such as NHS, Police Constabulary and local businesses;

- Responding to challenges that extend beyond local authority boundaries such as strategic infrastructure delivery, traffic congestion, air quality, carbon reduction and affordable housing;
- Providing leadership of place at a county wide scale, helping to deliver joined up strategic and spatial planning appropriate for Hertfordshire’s villages, towns, and cathedral city;
- Delivering at scale, with greater impact (the sum of what the Partners deliver together being greater than the sum of each individual authority’s part) and with a single voice and message that commands the attention of government, investors and residents.

4.2. The Partners agree to the following principles to achieve the core objectives and aims set out in paragraph 3 above:

- The shared growth agenda – the Partners will individually work towards the Partners’ shared growth challenges and ambitions, and in alignment with a collective coherent growth programme. The Partners may take advantage of their collective scale to maximise impact and shall endeavour to work across departments, authorities and boundaries;
- Strategic alignment – the Partners will seek strategic alignment with the emerging Hertfordshire Local Industrial Strategy, the emerging North East Central Herts and South West Herts Joint Strategic Spatial Plans, other groups and forums within Hertfordshire, regional bodies and neighbouring areas;
- Governance – the Partners will collectively secure the right governance, scrutiny, and transparency arrangements for the Hertfordshire Growth Board and underlying programmes, mindful of our local political environment and two-tier system of government. Local identity is one of Hertfordshire’s strengths and the Partners will ensure that local identities and voices are not lost, and that pragmatic and flexible policies reflect local need;
- Designed around places – the Partners will support the development of Joint Strategic Spatial Plans and adopt a place-based delivery approach that addresses our shared challenges – connectivity, affordable homes, inclusive economic growth, protecting the environment, tackling climate change, and building healthy, safe communities;
- Collaboration – the Partners will ensure that they use and support existing successful examples of joint working across Hertfordshire where appropriate and will share and build on the substantial best practice and expertise that has been developed by each individual Partner. Each Partner will work effectively with its stakeholders, including residents, the private sector and academia; and
- Programme governance approach – the Partners will adopt robust project and programme management disciplines to bring pace, momentum and manage progress in achieving growth outcomes; and
- Resourcing – Partners will work together and with Government to put the resources that are necessary in place to deliver the core ambitions of the programme.

5. Scope of Memorandum of Understanding

- 5.1. The Partners intend to work together to enable good growth in Hertfordshire, subject to each individual Partner making decisions in accordance with its own decision-making process and the right to exercise its powers accordingly. Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding shall affect the sovereignty of any individual Partner.
- 5.2. Each individual Partner agrees that the following shall remain in the domain of each individual Partner:
 - decisions regarding housing and employment numbers, targets, and sites shall remain the responsibility of each Local Authority;
 - development management shall remain the responsibility of each Local Authority; and
 - discharging any function currently the responsibility of any Partner will remain the responsibility of that partner exercising that function.
- 5.3. The Growth Board will operate in accordance with its agreed Terms of Reference.

6. Term and Termination

- 6.1. This Memorandum of Understanding shall commence on the date of the final signature of the Partners;
- 6.2. This Memorandum of Understanding shall wholly terminate if the Hertfordshire Growth Board is dissolved by a majority vote.
- 6.3. Any individual Partner may withdraw from this Memorandum of Understanding by giving 30 days written notice to the Hertfordshire Growth Board. The future of any projects and work streams that the individual Partner is involved in at the date of withdrawal shall be agreed by the Hertfordshire Growth Board and any individual Partner agrees that involvement may continue (financial or otherwise) until the end of the project or work stream unless agreed otherwise.

7. Variation

- 7.1. This Memorandum of Understanding may be varied by written agreement of all of the Partners.
- 7.2. The Partners shall review this Memorandum of Understanding on an annual basis.

8. Charges and Liabilities

- 8.1. Unless expressly agreed by the Hertfordshire Growth Board, each Partner shall bear their own costs and expenses incurred in complying with their obligations under this Memorandum of Understanding.

9. Status

- 9.1. This Memorandum of Understanding is not intended to be legally binding and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the parties from this Memorandum of Understanding.
- 9.2. This Memorandum of Understanding cannot override the statutory duties and powers of the Partners.

- 9.3. Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding shall constitute a partnership or joint venture between any of the Partners.
- 9.4. Notwithstanding paragraph 9.1 above, each Partner covenants with the other Partners that they shall act in good faith towards the others and agrees to work together in accordance with this Memorandum of Understanding.

Signed by:

Local Authority	Leader	Chief Executive	Date
Broxbourne Borough Council			
Dacorum Borough Council			
East Herts District Council			
Hertfordshire County Council			
Hertsmere Borough Council			
North Hertfordshire District Council			
St Albans District Council			
Stevenage Borough Council			
Three Rivers District Council			
Watford Borough Council			
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council			
Local Enterprise Partnership	Chair	Chief Executive	Date
Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership			

Schedule 1 – The Partners

BROXBOURNE BOROUGH COUNCIL whose principal address is: Bishops College, Churchgate, Cheshunt EN8 9XG

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL whose principal address is: The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead HP1 1HH

EAST HERTS DISTRICT COUNCIL whose principal address is: Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8EQ

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL whose principal address is at County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8DE

HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL whose principal address is: Civic Offices, Elstree Way, Borehamwood WD6 1WN

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL whose principal address is: Council Offices, Gernon Rd, Letchworth Garden City SG6 3JF

ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL whose principal address is: Civic Centre, St Peter's St, St Albans AL1 3JE

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL whose principal address is: Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage SG1 1HN

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL whose principal address is: Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth WD3 1RL

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL whose principal address is: Town Hall, Watford WD17 3EX

WELYWN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL whose principal address is: The Campus, Welwyn Garden City AL8 6AE

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP whose principal address is: One Garden City, Broadway, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3BF