

South West Herts Partnership

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Hertsmere Borough Council

St Albans District Council

Three Rivers District Council

Watford Borough Council

Dacorum Borough Council

Hertfordshire County Council

1. Background

- 1.1 The South West Herts Partnership (SWHP) group of councils has been considering the challenges and opportunities ahead for their part of Hertfordshire. These include developing spatial strategies, social and affordable housing, the green belt, employment and external investment, the role of central government as a key partner in realising economic and infrastructure objectives. The combined authorities are seeking to respond to such challenges within existing borders and beyond, recognising that shared resources and a combined voice representing over 500,000 residents is more effective, powerful and cogent than the voice of any single authority.
- 1.2 To explore the potential for collaborative working further, the Council Leaders and Chief Executives have been meeting every fortnight since September to assess whether a partnership could be established among willing partners. Representatives from the County's political administration and officers were also present to make their contribution. Parallel to these developments, the HCC has now established a Growth Board for the region that includes all the local authorities' Leaders and Chief Executives, as well as the LEP. The Eastern Region is also beginning to explore its own discrete partnership similar to the SWHP.

- 1.3 The dialogue to date has identified many common challenges, particularly around housing affordability, housing supply, employment, travel to work area, transport and other infrastructure. The SWHP considers that, by presenting a common voice and working together, there is a greater chance of successfully addressing these challenges strategically. The time frame is accordingly medium to long-term up to 2050. The LAs acknowledge the pressing needs of their communities to be able to live and work in areas that support a good quality of life, leisure, educational and employment opportunities.
- 1.4 The SWHP will both work together as a distinctive voice for the South West while also collaborating with the emerging agenda of the Hertfordshire Growth Board, the LEP and local business. The SWHP acknowledges this approach will provide challenges at the political and organisational levels that are new, uncharted and challenging. However, we consider that by working in an open collaborative manner we can apply our local knowledge and skills to taking our own agenda forward. We are therefore adopting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will be a declaration of intent and an important building block for each authority involved and the wider region.
- 1.5 This MoU sets out:
- a) The core purpose and aims of the SWHP
 - b) The principles of collaboration

2. **Core Purpose and Aims**

- 2.1 The core purpose of SWHP is to provide place leadership for South West Herts recognising that through our collaborative approach we will be best placed to develop and deliver a vision for the SWHP area up to 2050, promoting healthy sustainable growth for our communities.
- 2.2 SWHP will focus on the strategic opportunities to influence and secure the strategic infrastructure that will help our individual areas to flourish and realise their full economic and social potential. This is regardless of individual local authority boundaries.
- 2.3 The aims of SWHP will be to focus on 5 strategic priorities:
- Leadership: creating the place narrative, political relationships & agreements
 - Development: creating a joint spatial plan to that meets our housing and employment space needs
 - Connectivity: ensuring our places are accessible & sustainable

- Well Being: planning and designing our places for healthy living
- Public Services: enabling a greater influence on outcomes and being more self-sufficient

3. Principles of Collaboration

3.1 Our collaboration will be focused on three key areas:

- Tackling problems we can't solve individually
- Creating collective scale and impact
- Providing the place leadership to promote the SWHP proposition

3.2 The Authorities agree to adopt the following principles in working together:

- We will establish an effective political and officer forum for effective joint working
- We will seek to formalise our joint working through a S101 formal committee or other structure
- We shall develop and share opportunities together
- We will build our governance incrementally – learning from the lessons from other places who are more advanced
- Through our collaboration we should be gaining something, not losing something
- Local identities will not be lost
- We need to be a voice for South West Herts.

4. Term and Termination

4.1 This MoU shall commence on the date of the final signature by all Authorities, and shall expire if the SWHP dissolves.

5. Variation

5.1 The MoU can only be varied by written agreement of all the Authorities.

6. Charges and liabilities

6.1 Except as otherwise provided, the Parties shall bear their own costs and expenses incurred in complying with their obligations under this MoU.

7. Status

7.1 This MoU cannot override the statutory duties and powers of the parties and is not enforceable by law. However, the parties agree to the principles set out in this MoU.

Signed by

Local Authority	Leader	Chief Executive	Date
Hertsmere Borough Council			
St Albans District Council			
Three Rivers District Council			
Watford Borough Council			
Dacorum Borough Council			
Hertfordshire County Council			