

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Local Plan

**Soundness Self-Assessment
Checklist**

May 2017



This Page is intentionally left blank

Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Introduction | 4 |
| Appendix 1: Soundness checklist | 6 |

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

Soundness Self-Assessment Checklist

Introduction

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has carried out self-assessments of how the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan and the Policies Map meet both the tests of soundness and the legal requirements for their preparation set out in the legislation. These statements are based on the Planning Advisory Service's self-assessment toolkits¹.

This statement sets out the key requirements relating to the tests of soundness. The starting point for the examination is the assumption that Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has submitted what it considers to be a sound plan. Those seeking changes should demonstrate why the plan is unsound by reference to one or more of the soundness criteria.

The tests of soundness are summarised in the table below².

| Test of soundness | Explanation |
|--|---|
| <p>Positively prepared The plan is <i>based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements.</i></p> | <p>This means that the plan should be based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development.</p> |
| <p>Justified <i>The plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence.</i></p> | <p>This means that the plan should be based on a robust and credible evidence base involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research/fact-finding: the choices made in the plan are backed up by facts; and • evidence of participation of the local community and others having a stake in the area. <p>The plan should also provide the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives. These alternatives should be realistic and subject to sustainability appraisal³. The plan should show how the policies and proposals help to ensure that the social, environmental, economic and resource use objectives of sustainability will be achieved.</p> |
| <p>Effective <i>The plan should be deliverable over its period based on effective joint-working on cross-boundary strategic priorities.</i></p> | <p>This means the plan should be deliverable, requiring evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sound infrastructure delivery planning; • having no regulatory/national planning barriers to delivery; • delivery partners who are signed up to it; • coherence with the strategies of neighbouring councils; and |

¹ Soundness Self-Assessment Toolkit (PAS, March 2014)

² These tests are outlined in paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

³ Sustainability appraisal is a process that tests the potential social, economic and environmental effects of local plans. It is also a legal requirement.

| | |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the plan should be flexible and able to be monitored. <p>The plan should indicate who is to be responsible for making sure that the policies and proposals happen and when they will happen. The plan should be flexible to deal with changing circumstances, which may involve minor changes to respond to the outcome of the monitoring process or more significant changes to respond to problems, such as lack of funding for major infrastructure proposals.</p> <p>Although it is important that policies are flexible, the plan should make clear that major changes may require a formal review including public consultation. Any measures which the local authority has included to make sure that targets are met should be clearly linked to an annual monitoring report.</p> |
| <p>National policy <i>The plan should enable sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.</i></p> | <p>The demonstration of this is a 'lead' policy on sustainable development which specifies how decisions are to be made against the principles of sustainable development.</p> |

This statement effectively acts as a signpost to other relevant publicised material and supporting documentation relating to the preparation of the Local Plan where more detailed information is available. These include:

- evidence base, such as housing and employment land reviews, need assessments, infrastructure plans and site selection methodologies;
- strategies and programmes relevant to the Local Plan, such as economic growth plans;
- documents associated with the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment and other relevant appraisal tools; and
- documents associated with the stakeholder engagement process, such as statements of community involvement.

Each document has a unique reference number (as indicated in italic text). Documents can be viewed or downloaded from the examination library at <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/localplanexamination>

This statement includes the following appendices.

- Appendix 1 provides a checklist relating to the tests of soundness, taking account of the National Planning Policy Framework and other relevant guidance.
- Appendix 2 sets out a checklist relating to gypsy and traveller sites, taking into account the requirements set out in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2012).

Appendix 1: Soundness checklist

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|--|--|
| <p>Positively Prepared: the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development.</p> | |
| <p>Vision and objectives</p> | |
| <p><i>Has the LPA clearly identified what the issues are that the DPD is seeking to address? Have priorities been set so that it is clear what the DPD is seeking to achieve?</i></p> <p><i>Does the DPD contain clear vision(s) and objectives which are specific to the place? Is there a direct relationship between the identified issues, the vision(s) and the objectives?</i></p> <p><i>Is it clear how the policies will meet the objectives? Are there any obvious gaps in the policies, having regard to the objectives of the DPD?</i></p> <p><i>Have reasonable alternatives to the quantum of development and overall spatial strategy been considered?</i></p> <p><i>Are the policies internally consistent?</i></p> <p><i>Are there realistic timescales related to the objectives?</i></p> | <p>The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (SUB/6) provides a spatial portrait of the borough and identifies the key issues and challenges it faces (see Chapter 2).</p> <p>The “Overarching Strategy” (Chapter 3-6 of the Local Plan) sets out the vision, objectives and the strategy for how the borough will grow and develop over the period to 2032. A diagram illustrating how this vision will be realised is also included (Welwyn Hatfield Key Diagram).</p> <p>Individual visions and objectives have also been developed to guide future change and development opportunities within Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield (see Chapters 14 and 15) to supplement the borough wide objectives. Local objectives have also been developed for the larger villages.</p> <p>The identification of issues, vision and objectives have emerged from previous consultations, the review of the evidence base and other relevant plans and programmes, including the priorities set out in the <i>Welwyn Hatfield Community Strategy 2015-2020</i> (WH/15) and the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership’s <i>Strategic Economic Plan</i> (HER/6).</p> <p>The justification/commentary to each policy provides a statement of the issues it is intending to address and the elements of the vision and objectives to which it relates.</p> <p>The Sustainability Appraisal Report (SUB/3) describes the evolution of the Plan and what options have been considered at which stage in the production of the Plan. The Overview Topic Paper (TPA/1) gives a summary of the evolution plan and the different distribution options. Each local plan consultation document has been based of different quantum of development all of which have been subject to sustainability appraisal.</p> <p>The objectives of the Local Plan have been tested against the objectives of the sustainability appraisal to ensure they are consistent with each other and broadly compatible with the aims of sustainable development set out in government guidance.</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Does the DPD explain how its key policy objectives will be achieved?</i></p> | <p>Chapter 27 sets out how the vision and objectives of the Local Plan will be realised. Tables 19 and 20 outline a series of monitoring indicators and targets that will measure progress towards achieving the vision and objectives of the Local Plan. The housing and employment trajectories (see Appendix 1) include the anticipated timescales for delivery of the allocated sites. A schedule of key infrastructure requirements is set out in the <i>Infrastructure Delivery Plan</i> (INF/20). The schedule includes the estimated timescales for the delivery of this infrastructure.</p> <p>The Local Plan includes both strategic (e.g. SP1, SP2, SP3 etc) and site allocation/development management Policies (SADM1, SADM2, SADM3 etc). Strategic policies relate to the vision and objectives of the plan and sets out how the policy will help deliver an objective. The supporting text sets out how the strategic policy will be implemented and delivered. Development management policies set out general criteria to assess planning applications. Site allocation policies set out the sites and opportunity areas which are key to the delivery of the plan.</p> <p>The <i>Sustainability Appraisal Report</i> (SUB/3) sets out the reasonable alternatives that have been considered throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, including the various means of calculating housing numbers and employment land requirements and the options to deliver new development. Further information on the timetable for preparing these documents is set out in the <i>Local Development Scheme</i> (ORD/3).</p> |
| <p>The presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF paragraphs 6-17)</p> <p>Plans and decisions need to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas.</p> <p>Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this | <p>The presumption in favour of sustainable development is set out in Chapter 4 of the Local Plan. The development needs of the borough, including homes, employment, retail and leisure, are set out in Chapters 5 and 6 (see Policies SP2, SP3, SP6 and SP8) and have been established through the evidence base and previous consultations.</p> <p>Chapter 2 explains how the Local Plan is aligned with other plans and strategies and reflects the priorities and needs of the borough.</p> <p>The vision, objectives and policies (see Chapters 3-26) of the Local Plan place a strong focus on place-shaping and have been tailored to reflect local circumstances. Each policy includes commentary on how it will put the vision and objectives into practice and how the supporting evidence has informed its content.</p> <p>Flexibility has also been built into the policies to take account of changing circumstances during the plan period (see Chapter 27). The housing target has been staged to reflect infrastructure and other constraints identified for many of the sites which may affect lead-in times and completion rates during the early years of the plan period, and the fact that the strategic development sites are likely to take a number of years to develop alongside associated infrastructure (see Policy SP2).</p> <p>Development Management policies have been included in the Local Plan and contain a criteria based approach to assessing the impacts of development proposals to allow for changing circumstances.</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|--|--|
| <p>framework taken as a whole; or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific policies in this framework indicate development should be restricted. | <p>Progress towards delivery will be measured against a series of indicators and targets (see Tables 19 and 20). The results of this process will be reported in the authority's monitoring report known as the <i>Annual Monitoring Report</i>.</p> |
| <p>Policies in Local Plans should follow the approach of the presumption in favour of sustainable development so that it is clear that development which is sustainable can be approved without delay. All plans should be based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally.</p> | <p>The Local Plan includes a specific overarching policy which sets out the principles of the presumption of sustainable development against which development proposals within the borough will be assessed (Policy SP1). The topic-based policies (see Chapters 7-13) are based on these aspirations.</p> <p>Neighbourhood plans will be expected to clearly set out how they will promote sustainable development in line with the principles set out in Policy SP1 (see Policy SP26).</p> |
| <p><i>Objectively assessed needs</i> The economic, social and environmental needs of the authority area addressed and clearly presented in a fashion which makes effective use of land and specifically promotes mixed use development, and take account of cross-boundary and strategic issues.</p> | <p>The Local Plan is considered to be founded on a robust and credible evidence base which identifies the economic, social and environmental needs of the borough. The relevant documents (including background papers and technical evidence) can be viewed and uploaded from the examination library at http://www.welhat.gov.uk/localplanexamination</p> <p>The technical papers set out forecasts and projections of future population, housing, employment and retail growth and assessments of future needs and opportunities to inform future requirements. These include the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Retail and Town Centre Needs Assessment (RTC/5/4/3)</i>. • <i>Strategic Housing Market Assessment (HOU/21/18/17/15)</i>. • <i>Welwyn Hatfield Economy Study Final Report (ECO/9/7/5)</i>. <p>The Housing and Economy Topic Papers (TPA/4 and TPA/3) explain how the evidence on need has informed the content of the Local Plan. Policy SP2 of the Local Plan sets out the borough wide targets to build new homes, jobs and shops over the period to 2032.</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| | <p>The housing target has been derived from an assessment of objectively assessed needs as set out in the <i>Strategic Housing Market Assessment</i>. Table 2 explains how this target will be distributed across the borough's settlements (see Chapter 4).</p> <p>As explained in Chapter 3 of the Local Plan, insufficient land is available within existing built-up-areas of the borough to meet all of this housing need. However, this means there would be a significant shortfall of housing supply against objectively assessed needs. As such, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council believes that exceptional circumstances exist to warrant a review of the Green Belt boundaries around existing settlements to address future identified needs. As explained in the <i>Housing Site Selection Background Paper</i> (HOU/20 and HOU/20a), Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has positively sought opportunities to release Green Belt land on suitable sites in the most sustainable locations, having regard to their contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt (as identified in the <i>Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment</i> (GB/1-3) and the Green Belt Review Stage 2 (GB/2/2a-c, GB/3/3a) and other factors, such as the findings of the <i>Sustainability Appraisal Report</i> (SUB/3) and the <i>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</i> (ENV10, 10 a-k). Nonetheless, a shortfall will still remain during the plan period due to the extent of infrastructure constraints (in particular the capacity of secondary schools and highways) and the cumulative impact on the character of the Green Belt.</p> <p>The <i>Duty to Cooperate Statement</i> (DTC/3) sets out how Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has cooperated with relevant bodies (including local authorities, government agencies and transport bodies) in the preparation of the local plan, including its evidence base. However, this indicates that adjoining/neighbouring authorities are unable at the present time to meet any shortfall arising from Welwyn Hatfield.</p> <p>As part of the process of ongoing review, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council will continue to seek to secure a commitment from adjoining authorities to consider meeting some of the borough's shortfall as part of the review of plans for those authorities within the Housing Market Area. Any such commitment would also need to address infrastructure issues which currently prevent the borough from meeting its objectively assessed need.</p> <p>Understanding the Implications of the Housing Target 2017 (HOU/22) considers the implications of the housing target in the context of the labour market and latest household projection. While the housing target falls short of the objectively assessed need, it is evident from the study that the housing target will continue to support a sustained growth of the borough's population, providing a sizeable labour force to support a continued growth in employment during the plan period, thus having a positive impact on market signals. The target will also be sufficient to support a significant increase in the provision of affordable housing.</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|---|
| | <p>The employment land target (see Policy SP2) has been derived from an assessment of future jobs growth forecast scenarios. Further details on how the evidence has been used to inform the plan is set out in the Economy Topic Paper (TPA/3) The <i>Welwyn Hatfield Economic Study Update</i> (ECO/7) identifies a potential total jobs growth of 16,900 from 2013 to 2032 (based on a hybrid scenario). The Local Plan sets a target and makes provision for at least 116,400 square metres of new B1, B2 and B8 floorspace.</p> <p>This target will be primarily addressed through the retention and expansion of existing employment areas (see Policies SP2 and SP6) and the allocation of new employment sites, including a new science park at Marshmoor, Welham Green (see Policies SP6, SP8, SP23, SADM10 and SADM30).</p> <p>The Local Plan also sets out a strong presumption against the loss of employment uses and businesses (see Policies SP2 and SP8) and identifies measures to prevent further losses (e.g. through the use of article 4 directions to remove permitted development rights).</p> <p>Opportunities to maximise the use of previously developed land to meet the borough's needs have been maximised (45% of new homes and 60% of new employment floorspace) during the plan period (see Policy SP1). Mixed-use development will also be encouraged across a range of locations such as strategic development sites, mixed use sites and town centres where appropriate. Higher densities will be permitted close to town centre and good transport hubs (see Policy SP9).</p> |
| National Planning Policy Framework principles: delivering sustainable development | |
| Building a strong, competitive economy (paragraphs 18-22) | |
| <p>Set out a clear economic vision and strategy for the area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth (21)</p> | <p>The Local Plan sets out a strong commitment to promote and support the growth and prosperity of the local economy, building on its inherent strengths, such as job diversity, excellent accessibility and a high quality environment, with a clear focus on identifying and maximising opportunities within key economic sectors such as higher education, bioscience, pharmaceuticals and advanced engineering. This clearly articulates the priorities of the <i>Strategic Economic Growth Plan</i> (HER/6) and the <i>Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Business Plan</i> (ECO/6).</p> <p>Key aspects of the vision include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making best use of the borough's strategic location along the London and Cambridge development corridor (e.g. wider A1(M) / East Coast Main Line) and benefits associated with its role as a centre of higher education; • providing new employment opportunities both within existing employment areas and a new science park at Marshmoor, linked to the timely delivery of new infrastructure; |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the attractiveness of the main towns (Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield) as key shopping and commercial designations with a more vital evening economy, in partnership with local businesses and communities; and • promoting a wide range of employment and business opportunities close to where people live (in line with garden city principles). <p>The borough-wide objectives (see Chapter 3) place particular emphasis on supporting the growth of the rural economy and working in partnership with relevant bodies and ensure that the towns of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield continue to fulfil their role as the main centres of economic activity within the borough.</p> <p>Building on these aspirations, Policy SP8 sets out the overarching strategy to guide the future growth of the local economy, encourage investment/jobs and allow the borough to reach its full potential.</p> |
| <p><i>Recognise and seek to address potential barriers to investment, including poor environment or any lack of infrastructure, services or housing (21)</i></p> | <p>The Local Plan includes a range of criteria-based policies to meet identified needs and address potential barriers to delivery and investment such as gaps in infrastructure provision, site preparation costs and poor quality environments. These include both supply and demand measures.</p> <p>Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council is working with developers and other partners (including adjoining councils, the county council, government agencies and business leaders) to secure/facilitate the delivery of sites and infrastructure provision through the use of public sector land, land assembly powers, funding from developers/government agencies towards infrastructure provision, environmental improvements (e.g. Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield town centres) and effective business improvement and car parking initiatives (see Policies SP11, SP12, SP13, SP16, SP20 and SP21).</p> <p>Priority will be given to the re-use of brownfield and infill sites (see Policies SP1, SP14, SADM1 and SADM34) within urban areas and redundant agricultural buildings. Other policy measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouraging the refurbishment of underutilised buildings and spaces within town centres (see Policies SADM20 and SADM22); • retaining, renewing and managing existing housing stock (see Policy SP2); • encouraging the provision of training facilities in employment areas (see Policy SP8) and other opportunities to improve the skills of the workforce, linked to the <i>Economic Development Strategy</i>⁴; |

⁴ <http://welhat.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=10582&p=0>

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimising the loss of employment uses (for example, through the use of article 4 directions and improvement plans) and retail floorspace within existing centres (see Policies SP2, SP6, SP8 and SADM10); and • protecting existing assets and improving the quality of the environment through the use of character appraisals, design codes, design panels and masterplans (see Policies SP9 and SP11). <p>The Local Plan identifies a number of measures to mitigate or overcome constraints to development, including upgrades to sewage treatment facilities, new school places, highway improvements to remove bottlenecks and public realm works (see Policies SP12, SP13 and SP14 and the tables of site specific considerations), taking into account the viability and deliverability of development allocations. These constraints have been identified through the <i>Infrastructure Delivery Plan (INF/20)</i> and <i>Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HOU/19 and 19a-t)</i>.</p> <p>The <i>Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment</i> (see refs above provides an up-to-date assessment of the deliverability of potential employment and housing sites. Further information on how the sites have been identified/assessed is set out in the <i>Employment Site Selection Background Paper (ECO/8/8a)</i>.</p> <p>Please note: the housing target for the early part of the plan period is lower than for the later part; this recognises the borough-wide infrastructure constraints (e.g. waste water treatment) which will prevent many of the proposed site allocations in the Local Plan from coming forward until later in the plan period.</p> |
| Ensuring the vitality of town centres (paragraphs 23-37) | |
| <p><i>Policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments, and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period (23)</i></p> | <p>The Local Plan sets out a positive strategy for promoting competitive town centres and maintaining and enhancing their vitality and viability, whilst maintaining their distinct character and sense of place (see Policies SP5, SP16, SP20 and SADM4). The vast majority of new retail, leisure and cultural developments will be focussed within the town centres of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield, while the larger villages will continue to play a complementary role in meeting the retail, community and service needs of the rural hinterland, consistent with the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy SP3.</p> <p>Policy SP5 clearly defines a network and hierarchy of centres which comprise: a major town centre (Welwyn Garden City), a town centre (Hatfield), a number of neighbourhood and village centres (both large and small) and individual small convenience stores. In addition, three new neighbourhood centres will come forward within the strategic development sites (see Policies SP19, SP22 and SP24) and at least one new convenience store at the former Panshanger airfield (see Policy SP18). The scale of retail development will need to be appropriate to the role and function of each centre. Small convenience shops will also be supported in other locations (see Policy SADM5).</p> |

Soundness test and key requirements

Evidence provided

The Local Plan also set out clear policies to protect and strengthen the role of the borough's centres and guide future development opportunities and change within them (for instance, the proportion of units that should remain in retail use within the defined frontages). The purpose of these designations (see policies SP20, SADM4 and SADM5) is to protect/increase the proportion of retail uses within the Core Retail Zones, particularly within the primary shopping frontages. Some flexibility is also provided (see Policies SADM4 and 5) to encourage a greater variety of uses within the town centres and ensure they remain competitive.

Policies SADM19, 22, 23 and 24 sets out the principles which will influence the scale, design and form of developments and the broad mix of uses within the Core Retail Zones and beyond. Shopping frontages have also been defined/identified within the larger neighbourhood centres and villages (see Policy SADM4). New retail floorspace within these areas will, however, be limited to no more than 500 square metres so that trade is not diverted from other centres.

Outside of existing centres, retail, leisure and office developments (apart from small convenience stores) will need to demonstrate compliance with the sequential and impact tests (see Policies SP5 and SADM5) to ensure they do not cause significant adverse harm to the vitality and viability of these centres.

The Local Plan also sets out a positive vision and development strategy for the future of each town centre (see Policies SP8, SP16 and SP20). Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council is working in partnership with a range of stakeholders (including local businesses, landowners and developers) to deliver significant development and investment opportunities within each town centre, with particular emphasis on enhancing the quality of the public realm, facilitating movement and access, attracting retail investment, creating a more balanced evening economy and encouraging a broader range of uses, such as housing.

The *Hatfield New Town Renewal Framework* (WH/16) forms part of the Hatfield 2030+ programme and sets out a series of priorities to stimulate growth and investment in the town centre. The town centre strategy (see Policy SP20) translates these priorities into specific objectives.

Welwyn Garden City has become a business improvement district (see Chapter 27 of the Local Plan). Local businesses have agreed to raise funds towards specific projects within the town centre, as set out in the business plan (*A Plan for Welwyn Garden City* – WH/17).

As part of its rolling programme of investment, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council is also seeking to renew and regenerate existing neighbourhood centres such as High View, Woodhall, Moors Walk and Parkhouse Court (see

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|--|
| | <p>Policies SP5, SP6 and SADM25). Development within the neighbourhood centre at High View will be carried out in accordance with the <i>High View Supplementary Planning Document</i> (WH/7 and 7a-h).</p> <p>These policies alongside other supporting tools such as streetscape manuals, conservation area appraisals and design guides will be used to ensure that new development contributes positively to the character and distinctiveness of the borough's centres (see Chapters 11, 14 and 27).</p> |
| <p><i>Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community services and residential development needed in town centres (23)</i></p> | <p>Policy SP2 of the Local Plan identifies a need to deliver 12,500 square metres of new retail floorspace to meet the forecasted expenditure growth in the period to 2026, as evidenced in the <i>Retail and Town Centre Needs Assessment Update</i> (RTC/5). This will comprise 1300 square metres of convenience floorspace and 10,600 square metres of comparison goods floorspace. These requirements have been distributed according to the hierarchy set out in Policy SP5.</p> <p>The bulk of these needs will be addressed through the proposed mixed-use site allocations (see Policies SADM19 and SADM22) and opportunity areas (see Policies SADM23 and SADM24) within the town centres and the new neighbourhood centres within the strategic development sites within or adjacent to Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield (see Policies SP6, SP17, SP19, SP22, SADM 21 and SADM26) to serve the day-to-day needs of new residents. The neighbourhood centres (e.g. High View) will also accommodate other complementary uses (e.g. leisure, cultural and community facilities).</p> <p>Specific sites (e.g. Town Centre North in Welwyn Garden City) and areas of opportunity have been set aside within the town centres to accommodate retail development (particularly comparison goods) and other complementary uses such as high-density housing and cultural/leisure/entertainment facilities (see Policies SADM19, SADM20). These are shown on the <i>Policies Map</i> (SUB/5/4, PMC/1).</p> <p>Each town centre has a Core Retail Zone. The Core Retail Zone (as shown on the Policies Map) includes the large stores/multiples that anchor the town centre (e.g. department stores) and the primary and secondary shopping frontages. Policies SP5 and SADM4 make it clear which uses (including changes of use to non-retail) would be permitted within these locations. Further details on how this policy will be implemented is set out in Appendix D of the Local Plan.</p> <p>Policy SP5 gives a broad indication of the levels and types of retail development (food and non-food goods) that will be appropriate within each centre. Additional comparison (non-food) floorspace will be directed towards Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield town centres. The quantum of new retail floorspace within the strategic development sites will be largely determined through the masterplanning process.</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|--|---|
| | <p>Long term forecasts (2026-2032) are more uncertain due to changes in shopping patterns (i.e. internet shopping) and population growth. Hence, forecasts will be kept under regular review during the plan period (see paragraph 1.7 of the <i>Retail and Town Centre Needs Assessment Update – RTC/5</i>).</p> |
| <p>Supporting a prosperous rural economy (paragraph 28)</p> | |
| <p><i>Support sustainable economic growth in rural areas. Planning strategies should promote a strong rural economy by taking a positive approach to new development. (28)</i></p> | <p>Maintaining a healthy and vibrant rural economy is a key objective of the Local Plan, with a view to enhancing the vitality of rural communities and maintaining a supply of agricultural land and other uses appropriate to the countryside (see Chapter 3).</p> <p>Policy SP25 sets out our approach to development and land use change within rural areas. The purpose of the policy is to support the economy of the rural areas (including sustainable farming and other related enterprises), whilst recognising the importance of protecting the borough’s environmental assets.</p> <p>Other policies give particular support to small-scale business diversification on farms which contribute to the viability of the farm and provide local employment (see Policy SP8) and encourage the reuse of existing commercial buildings/uses which benefit the local economy (see Policy SADM34). There is also a general presumption in favour of retaining and enhancing community facilities and local services which are important to the wellbeing of rural communities (see Policies SP6, SP25 and SADM7).</p> |
| <p>Promoting sustainable transport (paragraphs 29-41)</p> | |
| <p><i>Facilitate sustainable development whilst contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. (29)</i> <i>Balance the transport system in favour of sustainable transport modes and give people a real choice about how they travel whilst recognising that different policies will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions</i></p> | <p>Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has worked closely with infrastructure providers, neighbouring local authorities and government agencies on the infrastructure needs arising from the development proposed within the Local Plan. The evidence set out in the <i>Infrastructure Delivery Plan (INF/20)</i> has been gathered from a range of sources and duty to co-operate activity but includes transport modelling, water studies and viability assessments and further detail on this is set out in the <i>Infrastructure Topic Paper (TPA/5)</i>.</p> <p>The Local Plan sets out policies encouraging development which facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport and a range of transport choices such as public transport, cycling and walking (see Policies SP1, SP4, SP6, SP9, SP12, SADM3 and SADM7) across the entire network. Travel plans and travel assessments will be used to help implement these policies (see Policy SADM 2).</p> <p>The overall aim is to create a high quality integrated transport network across the borough which connects people to jobs, services and community facilities, protects the safety of users and minimise impacts on climate change (see</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|--|
| <p><i>will vary from urban to rural areas. (29)</i></p> <p><i>Encourage solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and congestion (29) including supporting a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport. (30)</i></p> <p><i>Local authorities should work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development. (31)</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure. (32)</i></p> <p><i>Ensure that developments which generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised. (34)</i></p> <p><i>Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. (35)</i></p> | <p>Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6). This aligns with the principles of the <i>Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan</i> (INF/8) and the <i>Hertfordshire Transport Vision 2050</i> (INF/17)</p> <p>The spatial strategy seeks to direct growth towards the most accessible locations of the borough, with good public transport links and access to job opportunities, services and facilities, principally towards the main towns of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield (see Policies SP1 and SP3).</p> <p>The Local Plan also seeks to encourage mixed-use developments at key strategic locations, such as strategic development sites and town centre opportunity areas (as set out in policies SP2, SP6, SP7, SADM4, SADM 10 SADM19, SADM22, SADM23 and SADM24).</p> <p>Strategic development site allocations will require the provision of education and community facilities, Gypsy and Traveller pitches, open spaces, utilities infrastructure (e.g. upgrades to existing waste water infrastructure) and improvements to the highway network (see Policies SP18, SP19, SP22 and SP24). The precise mix and composition of uses within these sites will be determined through the masterplanning process.</p> <p>Appendix 1 of the <i>Infrastructure Delivery Plan</i> sets out a schedule of known infrastructure schemes that will support the delivery of the Local Plan to 2032. Tables 9-18 of the Local Plan outline the key infrastructure requirements at the site-specific level within each settlement.</p> <p>Policy SADM12 sets out the main requirements for vehicle and cycle parking within new developments. The quantity and design of parking insofar as it impacts on highway safety and capacity is addressed within Policy SADM 2. Parking provision in the town centres is addressed within Policies SP16 and SP17.</p> <p>Proposals will be determined on a case by case basis, taking account of the car parking standards set out in the <i>Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Guidance</i>) and the Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (WH/9) other relevant considerations such as the context of the site and its wider surroundings. The Council has produced a set of interim standards which update the standards set out in the <i>Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Guidance</i> (WH/2) to bring them into line with latest government policy. These standards will be reviewed in due course (see Chapter 27).</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Policies should aim for a balance of land uses so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities. (37)</i></p> <p><i>For larger scale residential developments in particular, planning policies should promote a mix of uses in order to provide opportunities to undertake day-to-day activities including work on site. Where practical, particularly within large-scale developments, key facilities such as primary schools and local shops should be located within walking distance of most properties. (38)</i></p> <p><i>The setting of car parking standards including provision for town centres. (39-40)</i></p> <p><i>Local planning authorities should identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice. (41)</i></p> | |
| <p>3. Supporting high quality communications infrastructure (paragraphs 42-46)</p> | |
| <p><i>Support the expansion of the electronic communications networks, including</i></p> | <p>Policy SP13 of the Local Plan seeks to facilitate the expansion of appropriate physical and social infrastructure including high speed broadband and utility provision in association with new development to meet the future growth needs of the borough.</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|--|
| <p><i>telecommunications’ masts and high speed broadband. (43)</i></p> <p><i>Local planning authorities should not impose a ban on new telecommunications development in certain areas, impose blanket Article 4 directions over a wide area or a wide range of telecommunications development or insist on minimum distances between new telecommunications development and existing development. (44)</i></p> | <p>Developers will be expected to contribute to the reasonable costs of enhancing existing or new communications infrastructure, either through direct on-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution.</p> <p>The evidence relating to information technology and other communication networks is set out in the <i>Infrastructure Delivery Plan</i> (INF/20).</p> |
| <p>4. Delivering a wide choice of high quality housing (paragraphs 47-55)</p> | |
| <p><i>Identify and maintain a rolling supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirements; this should include an additional buffer of 5% or 20% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. 20% buffer applies where there has been persistent under delivery of housing(47)</i></p> | <p>The latest housing trajectory (covering the period from April 2015 to March 2016) identifies a sufficient range of deliverable sites to meet a 5-years supply of new housing plus the 5% buffer (see figure 9 of the <i>Annual Monitoring Report</i>, published in January 2017).</p> <p>The 2015/16 Annual Monitoring Report (IMF/1) stated that the borough has a 5.03 year supply of housing land, as assessed against the Local Plan target of 498 homes per annum for the 5- year period to 2021/22. This figure is therefore in line with expectations.</p> <p>This figure also includes an allowance for windfall sites (the evidence for windfall rates is set out in the <i>Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment</i> (HOUS/19/19a-t). Windfall sites will contribute to the supply of new housing within the borough, taking account of historic delivery rates and expected future trends (see Table 2 and SADM1).</p> |
| <p><i>Identify a supply of developable sites or broad locations for years 6-10 and, where possible, years 11-15 (47).</i></p> | <p>The <i>Annual Monitoring Report 2015/16 (IMP1)</i> also includes the projected supply of housing land over the remainder of the plan period as assessed against the Local Plan target. This identifies a sufficient supply of sites over years 6-10 and years 11-15. This is also shown in Appendix A of the Local Plan.</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|--|
| <i>Illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery through a trajectory; and set out a housing implementation strategy describing how a five year supply will be maintained. (47)</i> | <p>Appendix A of the Local Plan sets out the housing trajectory for the entire plan period. This trajectory will be monitored and updated on an annual basis (taking into account housing completions and planning permissions). Specific targets and indicators are set out in Table 19.</p> <p>The <i>Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment</i> (HOUS/19/19a-t) assesses the potential supply of sites to meet future housing needs over the plan period.</p> |
| <i>Set out the authority's approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances (47).</i> | <p>Policy SP9 of the Local Plan states that the new development should be of a density that is appropriate to the character and context of the location (typically between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare) and should combine efficient use of land with high quality design. High-density development will also be encouraged in accessible locations around transport hubs and town and neighbourhood centres, where appropriate (see Policies SP9, SP20 and SADM22).</p> <p>Density assumptions on the capacity of sites are based on a series of baseline scenarios which have been derived from best practice guidance (e.g. URBED/Llewellyn Davies and Tribal Architects). Site specific factors such as the sensitivity of the location, extent of car parking space, site size and open space needs have also been taken into account (see pages 14 and 15 of the <i>Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment</i> (HOUS/19/19a-t)</p> |
| <i>Plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic and market trends, and needs of different groups (50) and caters for housing demand and the scale of housing supply to meet this demand (159).</i> | <p>Policy SP7 of the Local Plan requires an appropriate mix of housing (including a range of sizes, types and tenures) to meet the needs of different groups, such as families with children, older people, people with disabilities and other vulnerable people, taking account of demographic trends, based on the evidence set out in the <i>Strategic Housing Market Assessment</i> (HOU/17) and the <i>Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment</i> (HOU/16/15/14). This will include the provision and expansion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-contained annexes to accommodate dependent relatives (see Policy SADM 11); • self-build and custom housing (see Policy SP7); • accessible and adaptable homes (i.e. at least 20% of all new development involving five or more dwellings - see Policy SP7); • purpose-built student accommodation (see Policies SP7 and SADM21); • specialist residential/nursing care accommodation including 500 additional bed spaces (see Policies SP2 and SP7); and • new Gypsy and Traveller pitches (see Policy SP7). <p>Wherever possible, the loss of existing dwellings and permanent authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites will be resisted (see Policies SP2 and SADM9).</p> <p>The objectively assessed need also takes into account the need for affordable housing. Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council estimates that affordable homes will account for 20% of all homes delivered in the borough (taking account of</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|--|
| | <p>viability evidence which will inform on-site delivery targets). The tenure need is assessed in the <i>Strategic Housing Market Assessment</i> (HOU/21/15/14) and will be negotiated on a site by site basis in light of the overall evidence.</p> <p>Policy SP7 also confirms that affordable housing provision should be delivered on site unless off-site provision or a financial contribution can be robustly justified and would result in the delivery of at least an equivalent number of new affordable homes or broadly an equivalent value.</p> |
| <p><i>In rural areas be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate (54).</i></p> <p><i>In rural areas housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.</i></p> | <p>The provision of affordable housing will also be supported within rural areas on small exception sites where it can be demonstrated with robust evidence (i.e. from local needs surveys) there is an identified need, subject to meet other policies relating to the Green Belt and countryside (see Policies SP7, SP25 and SADM34). This would apply to households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection to a rural area.</p> <p>Policy SADM34 allows isolated homes in the Green Belt where a rural worker has an essential need to live close to the place of enterprise or there are no suitable alternative available. New housing will also be permitted within existing villages and hamlets through limited infilling to meet local needs and maintain the vitality of existing rural communities.</p> |
| <p>5. Requiring good design (paragraphs 56-68)</p> | |
| <p><i>Develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area (58).</i></p> | <p>The Local Plan sets out a series of criteria-based Policies (SP9, SP10, SADM 11, SADM12 and SADM13) which seek to raise the quality of new development throughout the borough and achieve a high standard of design and sustainable construction which contributes to the character of the surrounding area.</p> <p>Policy SP9 sets out our overarching approach to design and states that designs and layouts should be legible, permeable, well-connected, safe, secure, inclusive, accessible and vibrant. It also sets out density standards and detailed criteria on tall buildings.</p> <p>Policy SP10 and SADM13 set out the expectations for sustainable design and construction.</p> <p>Applicants/developers will also be expected to consider the character and context of the site and the surrounding area, drawing on evidence from relevant documents such as supplementary planning documents (e.g. <i>Supplementary Design Guidance – WH/4</i>, design codes and conservation area appraisals.</p> <p>The strategic development sites will be laid out on garden city principles in accordance with Policies SP1, SP9 and SP15 of the Local Plan as set out in Chapter 14.</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|---|
| | <p>Development proposals within Welwyn Garden City will be required to demonstrate that they have responded to the key characteristics of the garden city (see policy SP15)</p> <p>The design of shopfronts, advertisements and signage will be expected to be of a high standard of design and incorporate the design principles and policies set out in the plan and supplementary planning guidance (see policy SADM6).</p> <p>New dwellings will also need to provide sufficient internal space to meet the needs of future occupiers based on national described space standards where viable and feasible (see policy SADM11).</p> <p>Other policies will also be relevant considerations in the location, design and layout of new development such as highway safety (SADM2), sustainable transport measures (SADM3), parking (SADM12), sustainable drainage systems (SADM14), and heritage (SADM15).</p> |
| 6. Promoting healthy communities (paragraphs 69-77) | |
| <p><i>Policies should aim to design places which: promote community interaction, including through mixed-use development; are safe and accessible environments; and are accessible developments (69).</i></p> | <p>Achieving healthy communities lies at the cornerstone of the Local Plan’s vision and objectives.</p> <p>Chapter 2 of the Local Plan summarises the main issues and priorities relating to health and wellbeing. These are: tackling obesity, increasing levels of physical activity and reducing health inequalities between communities.</p> <p>Chapters 4 to 26 of the Local Plan set out a series of policies which will seek to ensure that new developments adhere to the principles of healthy and sustainable living. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining, expanding and managing networks of open space and natural elements in and around the borough such as woodland, river corridors and active leisure routes and greenery of the urban environment (see Policies SP4, SP12 and SADM3); • steering development towards locations that offer good access to jobs and services as well as public transport, cycling and walking routes, thus reducing the need to travel (see Policies SP3, SP4, SP12 and SADM3); • positively supporting growth opportunities where it would reduce social and health inequalities and promote healthier lifestyles, such as good quality job opportunities, access to health care and new informal recreational spaces such as play areas (see Policies SP1, SP6 and SADM 7); • requiring proposals to demonstrate how they will manage the transport impacts of development and promote the most sustainable forms of travel (e.g. public transport, walking and cycling); |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting the use of renewable energy and low carbon technologies within new development (see Policies SP10, SP13 and SADM13) as an alternative to fossil fuels; • providing a mix of homes to meet the needs of all sections of the community, such as older people, wheelchair users, families with children and other vulnerable groups, including residential care accommodation, sheltered housing and wheelchair accessible and adaptable dwellings to enable people to live healthier and more independent lives (see policy SP2 and SP7); • supporting the retention, provision and enhancement of community facilities (e.g. doctor surgeries, hospitals and dentists) and other services such as shops and leisure facilities (see Policies SP5, SP6, SADM4 and SADM7); • requiring proposals to include assessments of potential impacts arising from contaminated land, air quality, noise vibration and other sources of pollution (see Policies SP11 and SADM18); • requiring proposals to demonstrate how they will achieve good standards of design and amenity such as active public spaces which provide opportunities for social interaction and the use of nationally described space standards to improve living and working conditions (see Policies SP9, SP10, SADM 9 and SADM11); • providing sufficient school places and facilitating the provision of new/expanded schools in appropriate and accessible locations (see Policies SP13 and SP14); • ensuring that the design of buildings and boundary treatments create safe and secure places (SP9); and • creating space for new allotments - see Policies SP10 and SP11). <p>As explained in Chapters 2, 11, 14 and 15 of the Local Plan, the emergence of garden cities and new towns (e.g. Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield) stemmed from a desire to encourage healthier lifestyles and create safe and accessible environments, close to open spaces and places of community interaction. This philosophy has been embedded into principles of the garden city as set out in Chapter 14. New developments within the strategic site allocations will be expected to become exemplars of sustainable and healthy living (see Chapters 3, 4, 14, 15 and 24).</p> <p>The <i>Infrastructure Delivery Plan</i> (INF/20/16) sets out the requirements relating to future primary and secondary health care provision.</p> <p>Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council will continue to work closely with NHS England, the Clinical Commissioning Groups and other emergency providers to ensure appropriate coverage of facilities across the borough (see Policy SP13).</p> <p>Applicants/developers will also need to consider the health impacts arising from large-scale development and set out appropriate actions to address these impacts as part of the environmental impact assessment (see Policy SP1).</p> |
| <i>Policies should plan positively for the provision and use of</i> | The Local Plan includes specific policies on the provision of community facilities, shared spaces and uses and other local services such as shops and businesses (see Policies SP6, SP5, SP21, SADM4, SADM5 and SADM7). |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|---|
| <p><i>shared space, community facilities and other local services (70).</i></p> | <p>There is a strong presumption in favour of retaining and preventing the loss of community, leisure, cultural and retail facilities and other services which are considered to be important for the communities they serve (see Policies SP3, SP6 and SADM7). These include: village halls, sport facilities within schools, town centre frontages (e.g. anchor stores) and local convenience units outside of designated centres.</p> <p>In addition, opportunities will be sought to promote the dual use and co-location of facilities and sites in sustainable locations such as the use of primary and secondary schools to serve the local community (see Policies SP6, SADM7, SP18, SP19, SP21, SP22 and SP24). This particularly applies to strategic development site allocations.</p> <p>Chapter 11 of the Local Plan contains policies that focus on the public realm and safe and accessible spaces. Policy SP9 states that the design and layout of public spaces and publicly accessible buildings should be inclusive, promote social interaction and provide opportunities for informal cultural and economic activities. In addition, communal garden spaces will be expected to meet the needs of the user and provide sufficient privacy or seclusion, particularly where residents do not have access to private balconies or other private external space (see policy SADM11). Policy SP12 in Chapter 12 sets out the requirements for new green infrastructure.</p> <p>SADM 8 allocates land at Southway as an extension to the existing cemetery to meet the identified need for new burial space.</p> |
| <p><i>Identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities; and set locally derived standards to provide these (73).</i></p> | <p>Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has identified deficits and surpluses of open space, sports and recreation facilities as set out in the <i>Assessment of Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation (OSC/2/2a-z/2aa-2a)</i>, <i>Sports Facility Study (OSC/3)</i>. The results from these audits are summarised in the supporting text in Chapter 12.</p> <p>The Local Plan affords strong protection to existing areas of open space, sport and recreation facilities and public rights of way from development (see Policies SP6, SP12, SP14, SADM7 and SADM17). In addition, opportunities are sought to improve access to open spaces and routes through the <i>Green Infrastructure Plan (ENV4/4a/3/3a)</i>, the <i>Green Corridor Stage 1 Strategic Framework Report 2016 (ENV/12)</i> and <i>Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan (HER/10)</i>.</p> <p>The standards relating to the provision of open space, outdoor sport and recreation set out in these studies are based on the Fields in Trust publication '<i>Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond The Six Acre Standard</i>' and are set out in the Sports Facilities Study (OSC/3) and referred to in the Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (WH/8).</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|--|
| | <p>Areas of urban open space which were previously designated as Urban Open Land to support the 2005 <i>Welwyn Hatfield District Plan</i> (WH/3b) have been carried forward into the new plan. The vast majority of these designations remain intact.</p> <p>The <i>Urban Open Land Assessment</i> (OSC/7) identifies new areas of urban open land and makes a few minor amendments to existing boundaries where incursions have occurred.</p> <p>Open space, sports and recreation provision will be sought (see Policies SP6 and SADM7) to address shortfalls and improve the quality and accessibility of existing facilities and the delivery of strategic green infrastructure projects through the <i>Green Corridor</i> (ENV/12), the <i>Hertfordshire Highlights Green Infrastructure Plan</i> (ENV/4) and <i>Welwyn Hatfield Green Infrastructure Plan</i> (ENV/3). Such provision will be directed towards accessible locations which offer sustainable transport choices and dual use/co-location opportunities such as neighbourhood centres, existing school sites and the university campus (also see policy SP21).</p> <p>New areas of open space will be provided alongside new development in accordance with the standards set out in the Planning Obligations SPD (see Policies SP11, SP12, SP13 and SADM17).</p> |
| <p><i>Enable local communities, through local and neighbourhood plans, to identify special protection green areas of particular importance to them – ‘Local Green Space’ (76-78).</i></p> | <p>Policies SP12 and SADM17 of the Local Plan continue the approach of protecting valuable areas of open space which have been designated as Urban Open Land in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. Areas of open land include allotments, amenity green spaces, cemeteries, civic spaces, outdoor play provision for children and teenagers, green corridors, outdoor sports facilities, parks and natural/semi-natural green space.</p> <p>New areas of open land will also be created and maintained during the plan period (see Policies SP11 and SADM8). The criteria for designating areas of Urban Open Land are outlined in the supporting text to policy SADM17.</p> |
| <p>1. Protecting Green Belt land (paragraphs 79-92)</p> | |
| <p><i>Local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and</i></p> | <p>The Local Plan seeks opportunities to encourage a range of beneficial uses within the Green Belt and open countryside such as sport and recreation facilities, landscape and biodiversity enhancements, refurbishment/redevelopment of redundant buildings/previously developed land (e.g. major developed sites in the Green Belt) and access to green infrastructure such as natural greenspace (see Policies SP12, SP25 and SADM34).</p> <p>Development proposals within the Green Belt will be expected to demonstrate that they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it (see the supporting text to Policies SP3 and SADM34).</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|---|
| <p><i>biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land. (81)</i></p> <p><i>Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. (83)</i></p> <p><i>When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. (84)</i></p> <p><i>Boundaries should be set using 'physical features likely to be permanent' amongst other things (85)</i></p> | <p>However, inappropriate development in the Green Belt will only be permitted in very special circumstances (see Policies SP14, SADM34 and paragraph 13.28 of the supporting text).</p> <p>In line with paragraph 89 of the NPPF Policy SADM34 sets out the exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and how proposals for such development will be assessed.</p> <p>Due to the shortfall of suitable land within existing urban areas, some Green Belt land will need to be released around the edge of the main towns and some of the excluded villages to deliver the growth targets set out in Policy SP2, whilst preserving the character of the existing settlement pattern and the openness of the Green Belt as far as possible. The implementation of the Green Corridor project set out in Policy SP12 will ensure that green links to strategic green infrastructure, wide enough to provide a wildlife corridor, will be incorporated into the masterplanning of the strategic development sites.</p> <p>Chapter 5 of the Local Plan sets out the exceptional circumstances that justifies the release of land from the Green Belt. The Green Belt Topic Paper (TPA/) discusses the evidence underpinning the review of the Green Belt which is set out in the <i>Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment – (GB/1/1a-c)</i> and the <i>Green Belt Review Stage 2 – (GB/2/2a-c, GB3/3a)</i> and how this was used to inform the approach to site selection which is set out in the and the <i>Housing and Employment Site Selection Background Papers (HOU/20/20a and ECO/8/8a)</i>.</p> <p>The boundary of the Green Belt (as amended) is defined in the Local Plan (see policy SP3). The approach to defining the new boundary is discussed in the Green Belt Topic Paper (TPA/2) which in general defaults to the nearest physical feature unless it is in a fragile gap. The general extent of the Green Belt will be maintained throughout the plan period.</p> <p>The schedule of changes from the 2005 <i>Welwyn Hatfield District Plan</i> to the 2016 <i>Policies Map (SUB/5,PMC/1)</i> lists which sites are being removed from the Green Belt. The sites proposed for allocation in the Green Belt amount to a loss of just under 4% of the borough's Green Belt.</p> <p>No Green Belt land has been identified as being suitable to be safeguarded to meet longer term needs beyond the end of the plan period.</p> |
| Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change (paragraphs 93-108) | |
| <p><i>Adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change taking full account of flood risk, coastal change and</i></p> | <p>The Local Plan sets out our response to tackling the impacts of climate change and sets out a range of mitigation and adaptation measures to create more resilient communities, taking account of local circumstances such as high water consumption, limited water availability and river and surface water flooding.</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|--|--|
| <p><i>water supply and demand considerations. (94)</i></p> | <p>Chapter 3 of the Local Plan sets out our long term vision of becoming an exemplar of garden city design and sustainable construction.</p> <p>Policy SP1 of the Local Plan makes it clear that adaptation and mitigation principles relating to climate change should be integral to the design and construction of new development. These include: energy and water efficiency measures, the use of low carbon and renewable energy, the provision of green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems.</p> <p>The spatial strategy (Chapters 5-6) seeks to steer development towards locations which minimise greenhouse gas emissions and reduce the risk of flooding such as those which offer good access to public transport, services and jobs and opportunities to reuse vacant underused land, principally towards the two main towns of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield (see Policies SP2 and SP3).</p> <p>Policies SP4, SADM2 and SADM3 will ensure new development include measures to promote more sustainable modes of transport. Policies SP10 and SADM13 set out the key principles and requirements which will improve the sustainability/environmental performance of new development and reduce carbon emissions. Policy SADM14 promotes the use of sustainability drainage systems to reduce the impact of new developments on surface run-off and flood risk.</p> <p>Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they will mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change over their lifetime (see Policies SP10 and SADM13).</p> <p>The requirements set out in the policies on sustainable design refer to nationally described standards (Building Futures Sustainable Tool Kit and BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) and are consistent with government guidance.</p> <p>Developments will also be expected to demonstrate that they will not cause pollution which will have an unacceptable impact on health, quality of life and the environment, including ground water, air and soil resources (see Policy SADM18).</p> |
| <p><i>Help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy through a strategy, policies maximising renewable and low carbon</i></p> | <p>The Local Plan sets out a clear policy framework to support the development of suitable renewable and low carbon technologies and supporting infrastructure at key strategic locations (see Policies SP1, SP10 and SADM13). In particular, major developments will need to demonstrate they have sought to maximise opportunities for renewable energy and low carbon sources of energy supply such as wind power, solar power and district heating (see Policy SADM13).</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|---|
| <p><i>energy, and identification of key energy sources. (97)</i></p> | <p>Applicants/developers will be required to prepare a Sustainable Design Statement or a BREEAM Pre-assessment Report. This statement will set how the design of the proposal reflects the energy hierarchy (the approach to reducing energy and carbon dioxide emissions) and how the opportunities and options for renewable and low carbon energy supply have been considered and the reasons for the chosen solution. The energy hierarchy is based on the following steps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 1: Energy efficient (i.e. passive) measures to reduce demand as far as possible such as green roofs, draught-proofing and insulation. • Step 2: Supply energy efficiently i.e. using decentralised low carbon energy sources where feasible. • Step 3: Use of renewable and low carbon technologies to meet the energy demands of a development. <p>The <i>Hertfordshire Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Technical Report</i> (INF/4) identifies opportunity areas for large-scale renewable energy schemes within the borough, including wind turbines, solar farms and district heating opportunity areas. It also sets out areas where such opportunities will be constrained (e.g. wind power turbines within existing built-up-areas).</p> |
| <p><i>Minimise vulnerability to climate change and manage the risk of flooding (99)</i></p> | <p>Chapters 2, 3 and 11 of the Local Plan provide an overview of the potential risks and challenges as well as opportunities arising from climate change, drawing on evidence from various sources, including strategic flood risk assessments, water cycle studies, infrastructure strategies and local investment plans. Climate change is placing significant stress on the borough's water resources (e.g. ground water aquifers) and ecosystems.</p> <p>The topic-based policies (Chapters 11-12) set out how the impacts arising from climate change (e.g. rising temperatures, changes in precipitation and extreme weather patterns) will be addressed. Specific adaptation measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • landscape design: site and building-level landscaping and features to promote climate change adaptation and flood risk (see policy SP10); • avoiding development within ground water aquifers (see policy SADM14); • building design and resilience such as water conservation measures (see SP10 and SADM13); • appropriate heating and cooling and sustainable drainage systems (see policy SP10); • open spaces and green networks: new open spaces within new developments; retention of existing open spaces and incentives to reduce emissions and avoid overheating (see Policies SP11, SP12 and SADM17); • flood risk management and reduction measures such as restoring/naturalising watercourses, maintaining flood storage areas, promoting more water space (e.g. along river corridors) and sustainable drainage systems, as identified through flood risk assessments (see policy SADM14); and • sustainable waste management: recycling and water-based harvesting (see policy SP10). |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|--|--|
| | <p>In addition, new development within the strategic development allocations will also be expected to incorporate adaptation measures to ensure climate resilience. Proposals should also be responsive to how the climate will change over their lifetime (see policy SP10).</p> <p>The Building Futures Sustainable Design Toolkit will be used to address climate change adaptation and vulnerability within new developments in response to Policies SP10, SADM 13 and SADM 14 (see Chapter 11). Other relevant tools include supplementary planning documents, design codes, development briefs and masterplans as appropriate.</p> <p>A sequential approach has been applied to the site selection process to ensure that development is steered away from medium-to-high risk flood zones, taking into account the analysis of flood risk set out within the <i>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</i> (ENV/10/10a-k, ENV/2)). However, none of the potential development sites which are at risk of flooding are located within medium-to-high risk flood areas. In such cases, development will be confined to flood zone 1. The results of the sequential approach are set out in the <i>Flood Risk Sequential and Exception Test Document</i> (ENV13/13a).</p> <p>Where appropriate, strategic development allocations (e.g. Brookmans Park and Marshmoor) will be expected to adopt a flood risk sequential approach to site layout and incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems to address surface water flood risk, both within and from the sites (see Policies SP18, SP19, SP22, SP23 and SADM31).</p> <p>In addition, caution has been exercised to ensure that new development does not have an adverse impact on existing water resources, primarily due to over abstraction in the Lea and Mimram corridors.</p> |
| <i>Take account of marine planning (105)</i> | This is not applicable to Welwyn and Hatfield. |
| <i>Manage risk from coastal change (106)</i> | This is not applicable to Welwyn and Hatfield. |
| Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (paragraphs 109-125) | |
| <i>Protect valued landscapes (109)</i> | <p>The Local Plan sets out a series of strategic policies to create, protect, enhance and manage networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure across the borough, including areas of landscape quality and locally important greenspace.</p> <p>Policy SP11 affords significant weight to protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1-3) and other environmental assets such as international nature conservation sites, areas of ancient woodland, conservation areas and registered Parks and Gardens. In addition, important areas of separation between built-up-areas will be</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|--|---|
| | <p>protected from development to maintain the distinct identity and physical setting of settlements and openness of the countryside (see policy SP12).</p> <p>Policy SP12 sets out the approach to the planning and delivery of strategic green infrastructure, including the key principles, mechanisms for delivery and opportunities and priorities. It also includes a proposal to create an east to west green corridor between Hertford, Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield and towards St. Albans, providing strategic connections linking existing green infrastructure assets.</p> <p>In addition, contributions will be sought from developers/landowners towards the delivery of strategic green infrastructure, improvements to the Lea and Mimram river corridors, new linkages to the public rights of way network and other projects identified in the <i>Green Infrastructure Plan</i> (see ENV4/4a, ENV/3/3a, ENV12).</p> <p>Policy SADM16 sets out the approach to assessing the impacts of development on ecology and landscape. The borough contains a number of distinctive landscapes which are sensitive to change, as illustrated within the <i>Landscape Character Area Assessment</i> (ENV/1).</p> <p>The <i>Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study</i> (ENV9/9a-n, ENV5/5a-j) considers the ability of the landscape to accommodate development in Green Belt and safeguarded locations in the borough. The assessment encompasses both the sensitivity of the landscape to change and its value. The <i>Green Belt Review Stage 2 and Addendum</i> (GB2/2a-c, 3/3a) includes an appraisal of the landscape and site context relating to land use, topography, land cover, boundary review, levels of enclosure and levels of openness in respect of Green Belt sites identified in the <i>Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment</i>, taking account of the <i>Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study</i>. The <i>Housing Site Selection Background Paper</i> (HOU/20/20a) sets out how the key findings from these assessments have been weighted and balanced on a site by site basis to select the most appropriate sites.</p> <p>Policy SADM17 sets out the approach to the designation and protection of areas of open space. Areas of open space and other key elements of the borough's strategic green infrastructure network (see Policy SP12) are shown on the <i>Policies Map</i> (SUB/4).</p> |
| <p><i>Prevent unacceptable risks from pollution and land instability (109)</i></p> | <p>Policy SADM18 of the Local Plan sets out the approach to dealing with contaminated land, soil pollution, air quality, noise and vibration and light pollution and seeks to ensure that pollution does not have an unacceptable impact on human health, general amenity, critical environment assets or the wider natural environment. It also sets out the standards and principles that will be used to assess or mitigate the effects of pollution arising from development.</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Planning policies should minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity (117)</i></p> <p><i>Planning policies should plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries (117)</i></p> | <p>Where appropriate, planning conditions or obligations will be used to ensure adequate levels of protection or mitigation against pollution.</p> <p>The planning for biodiversity, at a cross-boundary scale, has been undertaken, through the Local Wildlife Sites partnership, the identification Local Wildlife Sites and the mapping of ecological networks and will be delivered through the protection of critical assets and the provision of green infrastructure (Policy SP11 and SP12). The <i>Policies Map</i> (SUB/4). illustrates the key elements of the borough’s ecological and biodiversity resource.</p> <p>The Local Plan includes a series of policies to promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the recovery of priority species (see Policies SP11, SP12, SP13 and SADM16). The degree of protection afforded each asset will depend on its status, its significance and its importance with regard to the hierarchy of designations set out in Tables 7 and 8.</p> <p>Policy SP11 sets out the overarching approach to the preservation and enhancement of the borough’s biodiversity and geological assets. The mitigation hierarchy (i.e. avoid, reduce, remediate and compensate) will be expected to be followed to limit the adverse impacts on ecology and biodiversity arising from development. Policy SAM16 provides further detail on how this policy will be applied at the local level.</p> <p>There is a strong presumption against development which would result in the loss or harm to nature conservation sites of international, national and local importance and other statutory protected species and priority habitats.</p> |
| <p>Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraphs 126-141)</p> | |
| <p><i>Include a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk (126)</i></p> | <p>Policy SP11 of the Local Plan sets out the overall approach to the conservation and enhancement of the borough’s historic environment. Further detail on how development will be expected to protect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the borough and avoid significant harm to the significance of historic assets is set out in policies SP9 and SADM15.</p> <p>Particular emphasis is placed on preserving and enhancing the unique and special qualities of the garden city (Welwyn Garden City) and new town (Hatfield) and the setting of the historic landscape within the vicinity of the strategic development allocations (see Policies SP15, SP16, SP18, SP19 and SP22). The <i>Policies Map</i> (SUB/4) shows the borough’s conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and areas of archaeological significance.</p> <p>Specific examples of heritage assets and features which make a significant contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the borough (e.g. Hatfield House, Panshanger Park and the historic landscapes of Humphrey Repton and Capability Brown) are cited in the supporting text.</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|--|
| | <p>Known heritage assets such as scheduled monuments, listed buildings, registered Parks and Gardens as well as non-designated assets are recorded on the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (see www.hertfordshire.gov.uk).</p> <p>Developers/applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the historic environment is properly understood through careful analysis and recording in line with Policies SP9, SP11, SP15 and SADM 15.</p> <p>The Local Plan sets specific targets to avoid loss to protected heritage assets and reduce the number of protected heritage assets at risk (see Tables 19 and 20).</p> |
| Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals (paragraphs 142-149) | |
| <p><i>It is important that there is a sufficient supply of material to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. However, since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, it is important to make best use of them to secure their long-term conservation (142)</i></p> <p><i>Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of industrial materials (146)</i></p> | <p>Hertfordshire County Council (in its capacity as the minerals planning authority) is responsible for planning how the supply of minerals will be managed across the borough and the county as a whole.</p> <p>The <i>Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan</i> (HER/1) allocates land at Hatfield aerodrome (Preferred Area No.1 Land at Bae) as a preferred area for future mineral working. Policy 5 of this plan seeks to safeguard these and other mineral resources from unnecessary sterilisation. This approach has been taken into account in the selection of sites and the drafting of policies.</p> <p>In order to ensure that mineral resources are not unnecessarily sterilised a criterion has been included in the policies for the relevant strategic development sites to allow for the extraction of minerals provided it does not prejudice the delivery of housing within the plan period (see Policies SP18, SP19 and SP22).</p> |
| <p>Justified: The plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence. <i>To be 'justified' a DPD needs to be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>founded on a robust and credible evidence base involving: research / fact finding demonstrating how the choices made in the plan are backed up by facts; and evidence of participation of the local community and others having a stake in the area; and</i> • <i>the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives.</i> | |
| <p>Participation</p> <p><i>Has the consultation process allowed for effective</i></p> | <p>The <i>Consultation Statement</i> (SUB/1/1a-g) provides details of the consultation process, summarises the issues raised and explains how these have been taken into account. The statement also includes a full list of consultees.</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|---|
| <i>engagement of all interested parties?</i> | Consultation has been undertaken in line with the requirements set out in the adopted <i>Statement of Community Involvement</i> (ORD/1). The statement sets out the methods that have been used to consult with the public and key stakeholders. These include surveys and questionnaires, drop-in events, social networking, exhibitions, workshops and targeted measures to engage hard-to-reach groups. |
| <p>Research / fact-finding</p> <p><i>Is the plan justified by a sound and credible evidence base? What are the sources of evidence? How up to date, and how convincing is it? What assumptions were made in preparing the DPD? Were they reasonable and justified?</i></p> | <p>A comprehensive evidence base has been developed to support and inform the policies and proposals set out within the Local Plan. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a series of topic papers set out the approach taken to the selection of sites and the evolution of the policies, including how the key findings from the evidence base have informed this process; • a detailed analysis of future development needs covering economic development, housing, transport, infrastructure, retailing and community facilities etc; • a detailed analysis of the suitability, availability and deliverability of sites, including viability considerations; • detailed assessments of the potential effects of the policies and proposals set out in the plan across a range of objectives; and • statements of how the community and stakeholders have influenced the direction of the plan. <p>Copies of these and other documents (including details of the author and dates of publication) can be viewed and downloaded from the examination library.</p> <p>Chapter 2 of the Local Plan (Welwyn Hatfield Now) explains how the key objectives from other relevant plans and strategies have been taken into account.</p> |
| <p>Alternatives</p> <p><i>Can it be shown that the LPA's chosen approach is the most appropriate given the reasonable alternatives? Have the reasonable alternatives been considered and is there a clear audit trail showing how and why the preferred approach was arrived at? Where a balance had to be struck in taking decisions between</i></p> | <p>The <i>Sustainability Appraisal Report</i> (SUB/3) sets out how the alternatives were developed and evaluated during the early stages of the plan, and the reasons for selecting the preferred strategy and the reason for rejecting the alternatives.</p> <p>Chapters 4 and 5 of the report describes the process of developing options and alternatives and how these have been refined and tested against the objectives of the sustainability appraisal over the course of the preparation process. This assessment focusses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the spatial options in terms of the broad quantum of growth and the location/distribution of growth across settlements; • the alternative approaches to managing this growth and calculating future needs; |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|---|
| <p><i>competing alternatives, is it clear how and why the decisions were taken?</i></p> <p><i>Does the sustainability appraisal show how the different options perform and is it clear that sustainability considerations informed the content of the DPD from the start?</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the alternative approaches to the emerging vision and objectives set out in the plan, and how settlements should grow and develop over the course of the plan period; • the alternative approaches to the policies and proposals set out in the plan, including thresholds, standards, targets and guiding principles that will inform the scale and location of new development (including future infrastructure provision) and address future needs and priorities; and • the alternative approaches to town centre regeneration and physical change. <p>Annex 1 of the report includes an appraisal of the site allocations and the reasonable alternatives, along with recommendations of how the effects arising from future development could be mitigated or enhanced. Further detail on the process of refining and assessing options is set out in the <i>Statement of Consultation</i> (SUB/1/1a-g)</p> <p>Appendix 5 of the report provides a statement of the reasons for choosing or rejecting the inclusion of sites. The report also provides a thorough audit trail of how evidence and consultation has informed and influenced the development of the policies as well as the key assumptions.</p> <p>The <i>Housing Site Selection Background Paper</i> (HOU/20/20a) also gives a steer on which sites should be allocated within the plan, taking into account the cumulative impacts on settlements, infrastructure capacity and opportunities for delivering important community infrastructure such as schools and open space.</p> |
| <p>Effective: the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities.</p> <p><i>To be 'effective' a DPD needs to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>be deliverable;</i> • <i>demonstrate sound infrastructure delivery planning;</i> • <i>have no regulatory or national planning barriers to its delivery;</i> • <i>have delivery partners who are signed up to it;</i> • <i>be coherent with the strategies of neighbouring authorities;</i> • <i>demonstrate how the duty to co-operate has been fulfilled;</i> • <i>be flexible; and</i> • <i>be able to be monitored.</i> | |
| <p>Deliverable and coherent</p> <p><i>• Is it clear how the policies will meet the Plan's vision and objectives? Are there any obvious gaps in the policies,</i></p> | <p>The Local Plan sets out the spatial vision for the future of the borough and a series of overarching objectives; the policies have been developed to flow from these (see Chapter 3). The supporting text within each chapter explains how the policies relate to the objectives of the plan and other policies.</p> <p>Chapter 27 of the Local Plan sets out how we propose to deliver and monitor these policies. These policies are linked to a series of targets and indicators (see Tables 19 and 20). Some of the policies will need to be implemented within</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|---|
| <p>having regard to the objectives of the DPD?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the policies internally consistent? • Are there realistic timescales related to the objectives? • Does the DPD explain how its key policy objectives will be achieved? | <p>specific timescales (e.g. delivery of new homes), while others will be applied across the whole plan period. Appendices 2 and 3 includes the timescales for the delivery of the housing and employment site allocations.</p> <p>In addition, letters of support have been received from relevant agencies on the vision and objectives and the approach to delivery and implementation (as summarised in the <i>Consultation Statement</i> (SUB/1)</p> |
| <p>Infrastructure delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the infrastructure implications of the policies clearly been identified? • Are the delivery mechanisms and timescales for implementation of the policies clearly identified? • Is it clear who is going to deliver the required infrastructure and does the timing of the provision complement the timescale of the policies? | <p>Chapter 2 of the Local Plan identifies the infrastructure needs and requirements of the borough, as evidenced in greater detail in the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (see Appendix 1 of the <i>Infrastructure Delivery Plan (INF/20)</i>. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is a living document and these requirements will continue to be reviewed throughout the plan period.</p> <p>Site-specific infrastructure requirements (including highway works, provision of open space, access arrangements and ground investigations) are set out alongside the area-based policies within Chapters 14-25. A similar approach has been applied to the site allocations within existing town centres (see Chapters 14-15).</p> <p>Developers will be expected to contribute towards the reasonable costs of enhancing existing infrastructure or providing new physical, social and green infrastructure, through either direct provision or financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision. These contributions will be secured through section 106 agreements, unilateral undertakings, planning conditions and the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (once adopted). The <i>Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (WH/8)</i> sets out our approach towards requesting contributions from developers towards infrastructure and other provision.</p> <p>Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has commenced consultation on a preliminary charging schedule with a view to examination and adoption in early 2018. Once the charging schedule has been adopted, the <i>Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (WH/8)</i> will be updated.</p> <p>Chapter 27 also discusses partnership working arrangements and how key partners such as the local strategic partnership, town councils and neighbouring authorities will work together to deliver and implement the vision and objectives of the Local Plan.</p> <p>The <i>Welwyn Hatfield Combined Policy Viability Study Update (VIB/5)</i> assesses the economic viability of the emerging policies including the standards and requirements relating to the provision of affordable housing, open space and</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|---|
| | <p>infrastructure, taking account of current market conditions. The study includes an allowance for section 106 agreements based on the requirements set out in the Planning Obligations SPD. A separate study assesses the financial viability of the strategic development site allocations (<i>Strategic Sites Viability Testing Update Report VIB/7</i>).</p> |
| <p>Co-ordinated planning <i>Does the DPD reflect the concept of spatial planning? Does it go beyond traditional land use planning by bringing together and integrating policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes from a variety of agencies / organisations that influence the nature of places and how they function?</i></p> | <p>The Local Plan sets out a framework to guide development across the borough and shape and influence how places within it will change over the next 15 years.</p> <p>Chapter 2 describes the priorities and needs of the borough and explains how other plans and programmes will influence the future of places and the way they function (see also Chapter 27). These include: emerging local plans from neighbouring authorities (e.g. mineral and waste plans), economic growth plans, local transport plans and regeneration programmes (e.g. Hatfield 2030+).</p> <p>Chapter 3 sets out the vision on how the borough and its places will grow and develop in the future, including the main towns of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield. Chapters 14-25 set out the priorities, principles and key development opportunities within each of these places, taking into account the needs and aspirations of local communities. The spatial strategy (Chapters 4-6) sets out where new development will take place and when and how it will be delivered.</p> <p>Chapters 4-26 set out the policies on creating more vibrant, inclusive and more sustainable places, taking into account the principles of the garden city and objectives from other strategies and programmes at the national, regional and local level.</p> <p>Chapter 27 describes how Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council will engage proactively with other organisations to embed the policies of the Local Plan into other plans, programmes and strategies.</p> <p>Expressions of support and representations from bodies responsible for other strategies affecting the area are summarised in the <i>Consultation Statement</i> (SUB/1/1a-g).</p> |
| <p>Flexibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is the DPD flexible enough to respond to a variety of, or unexpected changes in, circumstances?</i> • <i>Does the DPD include the remedial actions that will be taken if the policies need adjustment?</i> </p> | <p>The Local Plan offers sufficient flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and priorities. These may include changes to government policy and legislation, economic downturns, advancements in technology and changes to the availability of public funding (see Chapter 27). Appropriate remedial action will be taken to ensure that policies remain relevant and up-to-date in the light of these factors, such as evidence reviews (e.g. retail capacity forecasting), technical work commissions and other 'soft' measures (e.g. article 4 directions) which may trigger revisions to policies or updates to existing guidance. In exceptional cases, this may prompt an early review of the plan.</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|---|--|
| | <p>The <i>Annual Monitoring Report</i> (IMP1/1a) provides a record of how much development has taken place in the borough, and compares progress made in previous years. It also evaluates the effectiveness of the policies, and identifies where changes will be necessary to ensure the plan remains relevant and up to date. It also give an indication on how well the plan is performing against expectations. If there is an insufficient land forward, the Local Plan targets will need to be reviewed (see Chapter 5).</p> <p>Various studies have been produced to assess the viability of the site allocations and policy approaches set out in the Local Plan (<i>Combined Policy Viability Study – VIB/5; Strategic Sites Viability Report – VIB/4</i> and <i>Panshanger Airport Viability – VIB/3/3a</i>).</p> |
| <p>Co-operation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is there sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the duty to co-operate has been undertaken appropriately for the plan being examined?</i> • <i>Is it clear who is intended to implement each part of the DPD? Where the actions required are outside the direct control of the LPA, is there evidence that there is the necessary commitment from the relevant organisation to the implementation of the policies?</i> | <p>By law, public bodies such as local authorities and government agencies have a duty to cooperate with each other on strategic and cross boundary issues.</p> <p>Effective and ongoing engagement has taken place with a number of duty-to-cooperate bodies throughout plan preparation to determine the specific priorities with cross-boundary implications involving Welwyn Hatfield and adjoining authorities so these matters are properly addressed in the Local Plan.</p> <p>The <i>Duty to Cooperate Statement</i> (DTC/3) sets out in more detail how the legal requirements relating to the duty to co-operate have been discharged.</p> |
| <p>Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does the DPD contain targets, and milestones which relate to the delivery of the policies, (including housing trajectories where the DPD contains housing allocations)?</i> • <i>Is it clear how targets are to be measured (by when, how and by whom) and are these linked to</i> | <p>Chapter 27 of the Local Plan explains our approach to delivery and implementation and explains how the policies will be monitored and reviewed. The effectiveness of the policies will be kept under review through the <i>Annual Monitoring Report</i>.</p> <p>Indicators and targets have been developed to monitor the implementation of the Local Plan (see Tables 19 and 20 of the Local Plan and Chapters 3-9 of the report). There are two types of indicators: contextual indicators and local plan indicators. Contextual indicators give an indication of how the borough is performing against targets. Local plan indicators assess how well the policies are performing against the objectives of the sustainability appraisal and the targets set out in the plan.</p> |

| Soundness test and key requirements | Evidence provided |
|--|--|
| <p><i>the production of the annual monitoring report?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Is it clear how the significant effects identified in the sustainability appraisal report will be taken forward in the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the plan, through the annual monitoring report?</i> | <p>Appendix A (see figures 17 and 18) sets out the latest housing and employment floorspace trajectories, including the estimated milestones of delivery and phasing assumptions.</p> <p>The latest <i>Annual Monitoring Report</i> (published in January 2017 – IMP/1) covers the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. It is divided into a series of chapters, which cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the health of the borough’s centres, progress on town centres (including the amount of retail, leisure and community provision built during the year) and progress on town centre development; • the state of the local economy, including changes in floorspace in employment uses and information on the number of new jobs and businesses in the borough; • the state of the borough’s environment including changes to protected assets, proportion of new development in flood risk areas or contrary to Environment Agency advice, changes to public rights of way network, parking standards, the sustainability of new buildings and information on carbon dioxide emissions; • the development of the borough’s infrastructure including its future infrastructure needs; and • the development and progress on the delivery of development site allocations set out in the Local Plan. |
| <p>Consistent with national policy: the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the framework. The DPD should not contradict or ignore national policy. Where there is a departure, there must be clear and convincing reasoning to justify the approach taken.</p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Does the DPD contain any policies or proposals which are not consistent with national policy and, if so, is there local justification?</i> <i>• Does the DPD contain policies that do not add anything to existing national guidance? If so, why have these been included?</i> | <p>The Local Plan explains how the presumption in favour of sustainable development will be applied at the local level. This will ensure that the policies are locally distinctive and do not unnecessarily duplicate the National Planning Policy Framework.</p> <p>Policy SP1 sets out the principles of sustainable development against which all development proposals in the borough will be assessed. It will also guide the preparation of neighbourhood plans and supplementary planning documents. These principles are consistent with the government’s approach to delivering sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Subsequent policies and proposals are also consistent with the key themes set out in this policy (see Chapter 4).</p> <p>Each chapter explains how each policy relates to the requirements set out in the National Planning Framework and other relevant guidance, and how it will put the principles of sustainable development into practice, taking into account the aspirations of the local community and stakeholders.</p> <p>A summary of the representations made on the proposed submission version of the Local Plan and our response to them is set out in the <i>Statement of Consultation</i> (SUB/1)</p> |

Appendix 2: Checklist for Gypsy and Traveller sites

The government's policies and requirements relating to Gypsy and Traveller sites is set out in "Planning Policy for Traveller Sites". This document should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework, including its implementation policies.

The government's overriding aim is to "ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic life of travellers whilst respecting the interests of the settled community". In particular, the government aims to:

- increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply;
- promote more private traveller site provision whilst recognising that there will always be those travellers who cannot provide their own sites;
- encourages local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale and requires them to use a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform the preparation of local plans and planning decisions;
- reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective; and
- ensure a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against locally set targets. This should ensure that the needs of the traveller population are met in a similar way, in terms of housing land allocations, to those of the settled population.

| Policy expectations | Evidence provided | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Using evidence to plan positively and manage development (paragraph 6) | | | |
| <i>Early and effective community engagement with both settled and traveller communities.</i> | Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has undertaken comprehensive and robust consultation to effectively engage with both traveller and settled communities, throughout the plan-making and evidence-gathering stages, to help identify the accommodation needs of these communities and the issues they face, as well as the most appropriate policy approaches to address them (i.e. criteria-based policies, broad locations and specific allocations for pitches). These stages are set out below. | | |
| | Stage / phase of the plan process | Matters covered | Relevant evidence |
| <i>Core Strategy Issues and Options (2009) – see LPD/1</i> Specific consultation was carried out with the | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views were sought on the provision of new pitches and the options for selecting and identifying sites (including broad locations) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern and Eastern Hertfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment ORS 2006 • Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Northern and Eastern Hertfordshire Scott Wilson 2007 | <i>Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation Statement (SUB/1f)</i> |

| Policy expectations | | Evidence provided | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | Gypsy and Traveller community. | | | |
| | <i>Core Strategy – How Many New Homes? (2011) - LPD/2</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential new housing targets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable | <i>Housing Targets Statement of Consultation (SUB/1c)</i> |
| | <i>Emerging Core Strategy and Land Outside of Urban Areas (2012) – see LPD/3/4</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies potential G & T site options in the Green Belt • Rejected options • Exceptional circumstances to warrant the release of Green Belt land | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gypsy and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (2011) – see (HOU/3)</i> | <i>Emerging Core Strategy and Land Outside of Urban Areas Consultation Statement (SUB/1b)</i> |
| | <i>Call for Sites 2013 carried out in association with the Gypsy and Traveller representative groups</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out the requirements, in accordance with best practice, for new pitch provision. • Asked for sites which met the requirements and were available to be submitted for assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gypsy and Traveller Land Availability Assessment 2014 (HOU/13) reported on the results of the call for sites</i> | <i>Suitable sites included in the Local Plan for allocation.</i> |
| | <i>Local Plan Consultation (2015) – see LPD/5</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets out an indicative target • Identifies additional site options • Emerging policies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gypsy and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (2011) – see (HOU/3)</i> • <i>Gypsy and Traveller Land Availability Assessment (2014) – see (HOU/13)</i> | <i>Local Plan Consultation Statement (SUB/1a)</i> |

| Policy expectations | Evidence provided | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| | <p><i>Proposed Submission Local Plan (2016) – see SUB/5/6/</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred sites/allocations • Preferred development strategy • Preferred policies | <p><i>Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople - Accommodation Needs Assessment (2016) – see (HOU/16)</i></p> <p><i>Housing Employment Land Availability Assessment (2016) – see (HOU/19/19a-t)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This incorporates and updates the findings from the <i>Gypsy and Traveller Land Availability Assessment (2014) – see (HOU/13)</i> | <p><i>Regulations 22 Consultation Statement (SUB/1)</i></p> |
| <p><i>Co-operate with travellers, their representative bodies and local support groups, other local authorities and relevant interest groups to prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of likely permanent and transit accommodation needs of their areas.</i></p> | <p>* Please note: each statement provides a summary of the main issues raised during the consultation and how the views of key stakeholders such as G & T communities have been taken into consideration, as well as details of the consultation methods that were used to engage with them.</p> <p>Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has produced an up-to-date assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs <i>Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Assessment (HOU/16)</i> to inform the Local Plan, through working in partnership with stakeholders such as Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment Group, Hertfordshire County Council and the NHS as well as individuals from the G & T communities.</p> <p>As part of this process, a comprehensive and robust consultation exercise was undertaken to gain a robust understanding of the accommodation needs of the G & T community. Site visits, surveys and interviews were carried out including with households that are now living in bricks and mortar accommodation.</p> <p>Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has worked in partnership with East Herts District Council (EHDC) to allocate site SDS2 - WGC5 (Birchall Garden Suburb, South East of Welwyn Garden City) which straddles the borough boundary within their respective local plans. The development is expected to include a Gypsy and Traveller site with an area sufficient to accommodate 11 pitches (WHBC) and 4 pitches (EHDC) to meet the needs of both authorities.</p> | | | |
| Planning for traveller sites (paragraphs 7-11) | | | | |
| <p><i>Set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers and plot targets for travelling showpeople which address</i></p> | <p>Policy SP7 of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan includes a requirement to deliver 61 pitches to meet the accommodation needs of G & T communities which will be phased over the plan period (2013-2032).</p> | | | |

| Policy expectations | Evidence provided |
|---|--|
| <p><i>the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in your area, working collaboratively with neighbouring LPAs.</i></p> <p><i>Set criteria to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally.</i></p> | <p>The Local Plan is proposing to allocate sufficient sites across the borough within sustainable locations to meet the full accommodation needs of the G & T communities (see Table 6 in Chapter 9). The pitches will be delivered as part of the strategic development sites, or on suitable sites close to them, or through the expansion of existing sites (see Policies SP18, 19, 22, 24 and SADM 28, 30, 35).</p> <p>Masterplans/supplementary planning documents will be brought forward to guide the provision of G & T pitches (including infrastructure requirements) within the strategic development sites. Proposals within G & T allocations will need to consider site-specific considerations and other policies within the Local Plan.</p> <p>The criteria for the identification of sites included in the government's technical guidance (paragraph 13) has been taken into consideration within the <i>Gypsy & Traveller Land Availability Assessment (HOU/13)</i> and <i>Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HOU/19/19a-t)</i>.</p> <p>The Local Plan has not included a specific criteria-based policy for assessing proposals for G & T sites as the proposed allocations are expected to meet the full accommodation needs of these and the Local Plan policies as a whole, along with the requirements set out in national guidance, are considered adequate for determining windfall applications for G & T sites.</p> <p>Welwyn Hatfield has an existing travelling showpeople site (Foxes Lane, Welham Green) and there is no need to identify new plots (HOU/16).</p> <p>The latest <i>Annual Monitoring Report (2016)</i> indicates that there is a 4.13 years supply of G & T pitches. However, 19 pitches are expected to be delivered by 2022 (see Table 6 of the Local Plan), in association with the strategic development sites (of which applications for 18 pitches have been submitted). Also, temporary consent has been granted for a site for a single pitch. In addition a transit site in South Mimms within Hertsmere Borough is available to meet the short term needs of the wider area (IMP/1).</p> |
| Sites in rural areas and the countryside (paragraph 12) | |
| <p><i>When assessing the suitability of sites in rural or semi-rural settings, LPAs should ensure that the scale of such sites do not dominate the nearest settled community.</i></p> | <p>The <i>Gypsy and Traveller Land Availability Assessment (HOU/13)</i> assessed the suitability of sites. These findings have been incorporated into the latest <i>Housing Employment Land Availability Assessment (HOU/19/19a-t)</i>.</p> <p>New G & T allocations will either be delivered on or close to the strategic development sites around the main towns of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield (see Table 6 in chapter 9). The number of pitches will be expected to</p> |

| Policy expectations | Evidence provided |
|--|--|
| | <p>be proportional to the number of dwellings proposed on these sites. The size of any new site is not expected to exceed 15 pitches and in most cases will be smaller (see policy SP7).</p> <p>Existing sites in Oaklands and Mardley Heath, Mill Green and Welham Green which are to be expanded will also not exceed 15 pitches in total.</p> |
| Rural exception sites (paragraph 13) | |
| <p><i>If there is a lack of affordable land to meet local traveller needs, LPAs in rural areas, where viable and practical, should consider allocating and releasing sites solely for affordable travellers' sites.</i></p> | <p>Welwyn Hatfield has an existing public G & T site in Holywell. There is also an existing public transit site in South Mimms which serves the whole of the county.</p> <p>The <i>Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople - Accommodation Needs Assessment (HOU/16)</i> identifies a need to provide 10 pitches to meet the needs of households on the waiting list who want to move onto the Holywell site. An allowance has also been made for those households who do not currently have a place to stay and are currently living on the road site within the calculation of need.</p> <p>The tenure of Gypsy and Traveller pitches will be negotiated as part of the S106 obligations for the Strategic Development Sites. The Local Plan identifies sufficient land in the right places to meet the full accommodation needs of G & T communities over the plan period (2013-2032).</p> |
| Traveller sites in Green Belt (paragraphs 14-15) | |
| <p><i>Traveller sites (both permanent and temporary) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development.</i></p> <p><i>Exceptional limited alteration to the defined Green Belt boundary (which might be to accommodate a site inset within the Green Belt) to meet a specific, identified need for a traveller site ... should be done only through the plan-making process.</i></p> | <p>Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has exceptionally, through the Local Plan process, proposed to allocate suitable G & T sites within the Green Belt in order to positively plan for sustainable development. There are no suitable non-Green Belt sites available in the borough to accommodate permanent or temporary pitches.</p> <p>The strategic <i>Green Belt Review Assessment (GB/2/2a-b and GB/3/3a)</i> has assessed G & T sites against the five purpose tests of the Green Belt designation, and how they contribute to the openness/permanence of the Green Belt.</p> <p>Site HS35 (Foxes Lane) is to be allocated and removed from the Green Belt. Sites GTLAA03 and HS32 (Four Oaks) is to be removed from the Green Belt as part of larger boundary reviews. Sites HS33 (Barbaraville, Mill Green) and HS34 (Coopers Green Lane) are shown as inset within the Green Belt. Other G & T allocations will be delivered in association with strategic development sites (see Policies SP19, 22, 23 and 24). Further details about the site selection process is provided within the <i>Housing Site Selection Background Paper (HOU/20)</i>.</p> |
| Mixed planning use traveller sites (paragraphs 16-18) | |
| <p><i>Local planning authorities should consider, wherever possible, including traveller sites suitable for</i></p> | <p>The <i>Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople - Accommodation Needs Assessment (HOU/16)</i> did not identify any additional need for travelling showpeople.</p> |

| Policy expectations | Evidence provided |
|---|---|
| <i>mixed residential and business uses, having regard to the safety and amenity of the occupants and neighbouring residents.</i> | The local/national policies (i.e. presumption in favour of sustainable development) are considered sufficiently adequate to determine any proposals for mixed-use residential and employment pitches. |
| Major development projects (paragraph 19) | |
| <i>Local planning authorities should work with the planning applicant and the affected traveller community to identify a site or sites suitable for relocation of the community if a major development proposal requires the permanent or temporary relocation of a traveller site.</i> | This is not applicable. |