

## **Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan - Exceptional circumstances for additional sites November 2020**

Taking account of the objectively assessed housing need and the availability of sites outside the green belt, the council considers there are exceptional circumstances for the release of the following green belt areas with a potential delivery of 1209 dwellings. All of the land would involve less than high harm to the green belt.

### **Low Green Belt Harm**

- WeG1: 51 Welham Manor, Welham Green for 16 dwellings which can be delivered in years 1-5. This site is in a sustainable location, adjoining a large excluded village and within walking distance of a range of shops, facilities, employment and bus services and the railway station. The site is previously developed land, of only moderate landscape sensitivity and avoids any potential green gap policy area. Heritage and other minor planning constraints can be mitigated.

### **Moderate Green Belt Harm**

- WeG3a: Land South of Welham Manor, Welham Green for 68 dwellings, delivery within 5 years. This site adjoins WeG1 (see above) and is in a similarly sustainable location. The landscape sensitivity is only moderate, and it does not impinge on a potential green gap policy area. Heritage and other planning constraints are resolvable.
- WeG10: Dixons Hill Road, Welham Green for 120 dwellings, which would be within the five year supply. The site is within walking distance of the good range of facilities and public transport serving Welham Green and is considered to be a sustainable location for development which accords with the plan's settlement strategy. Like the other Welham Green sites it is of only moderate landscape sensitivity.
- BrP1: Upper Bell Bar Lane, Brookmans Park with a capacity of 104 dwellings and which can be commenced in the first five years of the plan. The location is appropriate in sustainability terms, with day to day shopping within walking distance as well as the secondary school. Significant improvements to walking and cycling routes into Brookmans Park village centre, the railway station and primary school can be provided through the development of this site. There is limited landscape character or quality and no potential impingement on a green gap policy area. Heritage and other impacts can be mitigated.
- LHe4/5: Part of Studlands/Videne, Hawkshead Road for 36 dwellings and within the plan's five year supply. The site is in an appropriate location for new dwellings in terms of sustainable transport with nearby community facilities and regular bus services and is reasonably close to shopping and other day to day facilities. The site is not in a potential green gap policy area and is only of moderate landscape sensitivity. There are only limited planning constraints which can be mitigated.

### **Moderate – High Green Belt Harm**

- WGC4a: Extension to site SDS1, North East of Welwyn Garden City for an additional 165 dwellings. Dwellings are likely to be in years 6-10 after plan adoption. The existing allocation has planning permission, and its landscaping/planting regime wraps around and defines this discreet northward extension. The total site would then be 815 dwellings, improving its ability to provide and support community and other facilities. There is a nearby high frequency bus service into the town centre and other bus services within walking distance. Heritage and other planning constraints can be mitigated and landscape sensitivity of the site is only moderate.

- PB1: Enfield Chase Estate, land south of Coopers Lane Road, to be safeguarded for about 700 dwellings. This land adjoins the town of Potters Bar and could form a sustainable urban extension with good access to its infrastructure, employment and services. Existing bus access between the town's shopping areas and the adjoining residential area is very good and could be enhanced alongside improved walking and cycling links. An urban extension of this scale has the potential to provide new and enhanced community facilities serving a wider area, and in particular to update and expand the adjoining primary school. The site is part of a wider landholding and therefore has the potential to provide biodiversity net gain and other benefits. It is surplus public sector land and therefore its development would support government objectives for the delivery of homes. The area does not impact a potential green gap policy area. The proposal is that the land is removed from the green belt and safeguarded for future development. This recognises the potential to work with Hertsmere Council on a cross-boundary urban extension, for example through a joint Area Action Plan.