

**Director of Environment
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Sent by email to:
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Email: Antony.Proietti@hertfordshire.gov.uk
My ref:
Your ref:
Date: 27 October 2020

Dear Sue

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Local Plan Examination – Consideration of Site HS11, Land at South Way, Hatfield

At the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) Examination in Public session regarding Welham Green/South Hatfield (on 30 July 2020), it was concluded that authorities would consider further the suitability of Site HS11, Land at South Way, Hatfield.

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) has the following comments below to assist with the response to the Inspector on this matter.

1) HS11 Site Viability

Growth and Infrastructure Unit Requirements

HCC have considered the Turner Morum viability analysis that the land promoter submitted for this site in August 2020. In terms of the S106 financial requirements, HCC agree with the figures and costs which have been included within the assessment. Furthermore, we note that, based on this information, the viability position of the site is such that it includes sufficient financial contributions to mitigate the impact of the development on HCC services. Therefore, in this regard, HCC considers that the scheme is viable and deliverable, and is comfortable with the viability position at this stage of the local plan allocation.

Highways Requirements

HCC as Highway Authority did not raise concerns regarding the viability of the site as proposed in the 2016 submitted plan.

A site of this scale, including a school and the highways access, sustainable links and improvements is not considered unusual in terms of other sites in Hertfordshire that we have experience with.

The Promoter has provided a relevant report with the detailed highways infrastructure associated with the site, and the costs of that infrastructure, which we are happy to agree with. We feel they evidence a realistic picture of highway costs at this stage. It should be noted that there is already some significant sustainable transport infrastructure in place that the site can utilise, notably the NCN12 cycle bridge to the East.

Further off-site works relating to the Growth and Transport Plan schemes associated with the site would be part of the Transport Assessment and subsequent negotiation. These other planning mechanisms at a later stage would ensure fair and reasonable contributions are sought to make the site acceptable in terms of meeting our Local Transport Plan objectives, and we do not feel they would challenge the site's viability.

In summary, HCC agrees with the transport infrastructure costs provided by the promoter.

In terms of distances to services and amenities, HCC also agrees with the clarification presented by the promoter.

HCC's comments at this stage will not prejudice the outcome of the Transport Assessment.

2) Primary School Site Within HS11

For the level of growth currently being considered in the Local Plan, a new 2 Form of Entry (FE) primary school is required for this area. Beyond HS11, the authority is not aware of any other sites available that could provide a 2FE primary school in the locality.

The county council welcomes the inclusion of a 2FE primary school within the HS11 site allocation. It is noted that there is an illustrative masterplan that has been drawn up which has formed the basis of discussions with the land promoter and WHBC. The masterplan includes an indicative site for the new primary school although the school site will be confirmed at the planning application stage. For it to be acceptable, the primary school site will need to meet HCC's Primary School Land Specification, for which more details will need to be provided at the planning application stage.

3) Primary School Site Within New Barnfield

The Inspector requested specific additional information from Hertfordshire County Council in relation to the potential consideration of locating the 2FE primary school at the alternative nearby site known as New Barnfield.

A 2FE primary school can theoretically be accommodated on the New Barnfield site. However, the county council has concerns that including this provision on the New Barnfield site will impact on what else can be accommodated on the site. For example, locating a primary school on the New Barnfield site would have implications for the size of secondary school which may also need to be provided in this location.

Furthermore, HCC has significant concerns with locating a new primary school at New Barnfield. For sustainability reasons and in order to engender a sense of community, HCCs preference is for new primary schools to be located as part of residential developments, close to the local community that it is serving. For these reasons, and given the relatively remote location, New Barnfield would not be a good location for the new primary school.

HCC have specifically been asked their views on whether a 'through school' can be accommodated at the New Barnfield site. The term 'all through school' relates to provision across school phases. For example, offering education from Reception through to Year 11 provided by one institution. An all-through offer can be delivered through a variety of configurations of provision. This includes; co-located but separate primary school and secondary school buildings on the same site, primary school and secondary school sites adjacent or close by in the same locality run by the same organisation, or more integrated provision on the same site with some core facilities shared across the phases.

Although there may be opportunities for some shared facilities, at this strategic planning stage, the key point is that even if a primary school and secondary school were delivered on the New Barnfield site as an 'all-through school' the land take will still be the same. As with other sites required for new education provision, HCC seeks maximum site areas at the strategic planning stage to ensure that the school is fully compliant with BB103 site standards. Significantly, there will not be less land required for school provision at New Barnfield just because it is provided as an 'all-through school'.

Therefore, HCCs comments above, that '*locating a primary school on the New Barnfield site would have implications for the size of the secondary school which may also need to be provided in this location*', would apply at this stage regardless of whether or not the primary school and secondary school were separate or delivered as an 'all-through school'.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any clarification in relation to this response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Antony Proietti". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'A'.

Antony Proietti

Growth Area Team Leader (North East Growth Area), Growth & Infrastructure Unit