

# WHLP Examination – Stage 8 Hearings

12/20

Marshmoor Policy Area SDS7 (WeG4b)  
and Site Allocation Policy SADM 30

## Statement of Common Ground

by

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## Purpose of the Statement of Common Ground

1. The Examination Hearing on 30 July 2020 considered the Marshmoor Proposed Allocation in the submitted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (WHLP) which is for approximately 40,500 sq. metres of B1 employment floorspace and around 80 no. dwellings.
2. Gascoyne Cecil Estates' representations to the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission WHLP supported the allocation of the site in relation to the proposed employment floorspace and provision but objected to the proposed residential capacity, seeking an increase in the capacity of the allocation to around 120 no. dwellings, providing an opportunity for people to live and work in close proximity<sup>1</sup>.
3. In response to the Council's concerns with regards to the capacity of the existing primary school in Welham Green, which the Estate understood was the basis on which they were resisting an increase in the size of the residential allocation at Marshmoor, the Estate's Regulation 19 representations<sup>2</sup> clarified that education capacity was not a constraining factor because the proposed dwellings would be "designed to support and be occupied by those employed on the site". Paragraph 38 of the representations continue by stating that:

**"The Estate's objective is to provide small unit accommodation (for example, 1 and 2 bed flats) attractive to start-up business employees, graduates and new professionals as opposed to family housing. There will be a degree of linkage between the new business units and the proposed residential development. The proposed increase in capacity to 120 dwellings should therefore not create additional pressure on the existing school."**

4. At the Examination Hearing on 30 July 2020, there was a discussion on the type of accommodation proposed as part of the allocation of the site and this Statement of Common Ground has been prepared in response to that discussion to assist the Inspector.

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<sup>1</sup> See Paragraph 12 of GCE's Regulation 19 representations on Policy SADM30

<sup>2</sup> See Paragraph 38 of GCE's Regulation 19 representations relating to Policy SADM30

5. The Council have advised that the education constraints were not the reason for 80 dwelling capacity restriction. Instead it was based on the HELAA assessment of constraints.
6. The Council have now updated their assessment to reflect the nature of the accommodation likely to be provided. This would allow for a higher density development reflecting it will comprise of 1 and 2 bedroom units. It is therefore considered appropriate to increase the capacity of the site by another 20 dwellings.

### **Scope of the Statement of Common Ground**

7. The scope of the SoCG is to confirm the agreed position between GCE and WHBC in relation to both the amount and use of the residential element of the Marshmoor allocation, providing certainty for the Inspector when determining the soundness of the allocation in Policy SADM 30 and Policy SP23, which sets out the policy requirements of the Marshmoor Policy Area.

### **Relevant Parties to this Statement of Common Ground**

8. The principal parties who have agreed the Statement of Common Ground are:
  - (i) Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council who is the Local Planning Authority responsible for the preparation of the Submitted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan;
  - (ii) Gascoyne Cecil Estates who is a long-term major landowner with extensive land ownership interests in the Borough and in particular at Marshmoor.

### **Areas of Agreement**

9. The Parties are in agreement on the following matters:
  - (a) The Marshmoor allocation provides a unique opportunity to deliver an employment development aimed at life sciences and research and development and the Council's employment evidence supports this employment use.
  - (b) The proposed allocation will make a significant contribution to the forecast employment floorspace and jobs requirements that have

been identified in the evidence base supporting the WHLP with an estimated jobs potential of between 1,400 and 1,900 jobs depending on employment mix.

- (c) The residential allocation at Marshmoor in the submitted WHLP is intended to contribute to the Objectively Assessed Housing Needs of the Borough being within Use Class C3.
- (d) The Estate agrees that the residential dwellings developed on the site would primarily be 1 – 2 bedroom accommodation which would meet the needs of some of those employed on the site, hereafter referred to as “Marshmoor Workers”.
- (e) Following further consideration of the site and the likely nature of dwellings of this type, it is considered that the site could accommodate around 100 dwellings.
- (f) The revised allocation capacity of around 100 dwellings will be occupied by workers employed at the site in the proposed employment use and controlled through planning obligations and/or planning conditions at the planning application stage.
- (g) The parties agree that with the Inspector’s agreement, a Main Modification to Policy SADM 30 is proposed to modify the residential allocation in Policy SDS7 (WeG4b) to around 100 no. dwellings for C3 use for workers employed on the site.
- (h) The parties agree that it will be possible to control the occupation of the proposed dwellings through planning conditions and/or planning obligations in a Section 106 Agreement forming part of the approval of a planning application seeking development of the allocated site.
- (i) Amendments to the second paragraph of Policy SP 23 are agreed as follows:

Site SDS7 is allocated for a mixed use development comprising 40,500sqm of Class E(g) employment floorspace and 100 no. dwellings (Class C3) providing affordable accommodation for those employed on the site. This will be secured through planning condition or legal agreement. Once completed, all Class E(g) development on



SDS7 will be afforded the same policy protection as that provided by Policy SADM10.

**Areas of Disagreement between the Parties**

**10.** None

JB Planning Associates  
18 December 2020  
Final





