



**WELWYN  
HATFIELD**

**Nick Long  
Corporate Director  
Public Protection, Planning and  
Governance**

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Melvyn Middleton  
Planning Inspectorate  
c/o Programme Officer  
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Dear Sir

### **Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Examination**

The Council writes following the Stage 9 Hearing Session held during February and March and the additional information requested by you relating to several sites.

### **Windfall**

Following the close of the Hearings Session, via the Programme Officer, we were asked to provide data on the number of dwellings provided from each windfall category in each year since 2005. Also, the total number in each year from the Other Uses category, the Business-Offices category, the Residential redevelopment category and the Agricultural rural dwellings category. This is to supplement the information (average data) provided and consulted upon earlier in the year. I enclose a table with the information requested as Appendix A to this letter.

### **SDS1 North East of Welwyn Garden City**

In response to the request to investigate the potential to accommodate additional dwellings, with specific reference to land to the east and north-west within the ownership of Homes England, the enclosed SoCG has been prepared. This is attached as Appendix B to this letter.

With regards to the expansion of the developable area to the east, on land within the ownership of Homes England, further evidence has now been sent to Historic England relating to opportunities to mitigate the impact on Panshanger Park. Historic England are now happy to accept the principle of development in that location. On this basis the Council are happy to revise the proposed Green Belt boundary in that location and increase the capacity for the site to 845 dwellings.

With regards to land to the north-west both Historic England and the Council continue to have significant concerns relating to the suitability of land in this location for development. Historic England consider there may be insufficient land to mitigate the harm to heritage assets and the Council have additional concerns relating to development on land identified as 'very high harm' and 'essential' in the Stage 3 Green Belt Study EX99.

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Homes England have undertaken to submit further information and an additional meeting between Homes England, Historic England and the Council will be undertaken within the next 4 weeks to agree a position on whether there is any potential to extend the allocation to include this land. This will be the subject of a further SoCG once the Parties have met to discuss the opportunities and constraints of this part of the site. This will be provided to the Programme Officer at the earliest opportunity.

During the Stage 9 Welwyn Garden City hearing session the Inspector asked for information on densities in the immediate area to SDS1. This is provided in the enclosed note in Appendix C to this letter.

### **SDS2 Birchall Garden Suburb**

Following comments made during the Stage 9 Hearings, the Council is to prepare further revisions to the strategy diagram Figure 12 in respect of the “Green Buffers” required to screen the development from the surrounding countryside. This is to include moving the proposed buffer alongside the A414 northwards, south of the existing hedge which forms the revised boundary to the site, so that it will run from the landscaped noise bund around Burnside to the Copse.

### **Dig1 East of New Road**

As requested, I enclose correspondence from English Heritage/Historic England relating to site Dig1 highlighting their repeated significant concerns over development of the site. The following responses are enclosed as Appendices D-F:

- English Heritage Consultation Document Response - March 2015
- Historic England Reg 19 Response - October 2016
- Historic England Promoted Sites Consultation Response - June 2019

### **HS22 (BrP4) Land west of Brookmans Park Railway Station**

It was requested that further analysis be undertaken of the southern boundary treatment of site HS22 (BrP4) together with whether additional screening on land also owned by the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) might be required. An addendum to the Statement of Common Ground SOCG (EX231) has been prepared and enclosed as Appendix G. A revised landscaping scheme has been prepared that includes:

- Amended development edge set back from the southern edge of the site providing for a belt of planting on the upper slopes of the local valley,
- A new tree belt along the southern edge between the development zone and wider countryside. To include a new earth bunding, planting with a mix of woodland species no less than 10m wide,
- To strengthen visual containment planting within RVC land to the south to supplement the existing vegetation, infill woodland tree species, and a new wooded copse to the west.

The SOCG addendum includes cross sections (included at a higher resolution as Annex A).

Notwithstanding the Council has proposed the deletion of HS22 (BrP4) (as it no longer supports the allocation due to its harm to the Green Belt), should the site be allocated, the Council considers a heritage site specific consideration would be appropriate. A Main Modification would require a Heritage Statement/Impact Assessment to assess the impact of traffic generated from this site via Bradmore Lane on heritage assets at Water End.

### **HS24 (BrP7) Land south of Hawkshead Road**

In response to the request that further analysis be undertaken of the western boundary treatment of site HS24 (BrP7), an addendum to SoCG (EX232) has been prepared and is enclosed as Appendix H to this letter. To provide greater height and visual containment, revisions include a tree belt and bund, and within the site, an additional tree corridor. The SoCG addendum includes cross sections (included at a higher resolution as Annex 1). These show that views from the footpath to the west of the site will be of the tree screen and the dwellings will not be visible.

### **BrP1 Bell Lane**

If site BrP1 was to be allocated, the Council considers the status of Bell Bar as a “Small Green Belt Village” within SP3, washed over by the Green Belt, would require change. The settlement hierarchy is contained in Policy SP3. “Bell Bar” would be deleted from the list of “Small Green Belt villages and settlements”. Brookmans Park would be renamed “Brookmans Park/Bell Bar”. The Green Belt boundary would be amended to exclude BrP1 and the adjoining area of buildings west of the A1000. References to Brookmans Park throughout the Plan would be amended as appropriate to read Brookmans Park/Bell Bar.

### **Little Heath / LHe4/5 (Videne and Studlands, Hawkshead Road)**

In response to a request for clarification on the Green Belt boundary west of LHe4/5 the enclosed plan has been prepared. The Play Area remains in the Green Belt while Kingdom Hall, the area of car parking, and buildings to the rear of the site are shown as removed from the Green Belt. This is attached as Appendix J to this letter.

### **HS15 (WGr1) Land east of London Road WE100 51-53 London Road, Woolmer Green**

In response to the discussion at the Stage 9 Hearings and the request for the potential for access arrangements between sites WE100 and HS15 (WGr1) the Council has considered the implications of the removal of the northern access to site HS15 (WGr1).

Following the stage 8 sessions, at which site HS15 (WGr1) was examined, it was requested that the Council consider the employment needs of the adjoining businesses to this site. The Council, after seeking clarification as to the requirements of the businesses and as a result of discussions with Hertfordshire Highways, have included modifications to the site specific considerations for site HS15 (WGr1) in Table 11 and to Policy SADM10 for EA10 for the provision of a small parcel of land within HS15 for employment use and to allow for the delivery of appropriate access arrangements via the northern access off London Road EX235. If the northern access to the site were to be removed this has the potential to result in a ransom situation, potentially delay delivery of site HS15 and would not allow for the provision of improved access arrangements for the existing businesses

As noted in the Council’s Stage 9 hearing statement for site WE100, the Council would support and encourage the landowners of the two sites to work together to ensure, amongst

other things, good quality connectivity and permeability between the sites and elsewhere in the village in line with SADM 3 'Sustainable Transport for All'. To meet this objective a further modification will be included in the Site Specific Considerations of these sites to allow for a secondary access to facilitate this if site WE100 was to be allocated.

### **Green Belt Boundaries Policy Requirement**

The Council supports in principle a Main Modification to require a comprehensive master planning approach for the treatment of Green Belt boundaries on sites over 100 dwellings. It is proposed that a Modification be prepared following consideration of your interim reports.

### **Request for additional site visits**

At the close of the Stage 9 Hearing Session, any representors who wanted the Inspector to make a site visit were asked to send the details through to the Council. A single request has been received by Aurora Properties in respect of BrP1 and BrP12a. Details of this request have been shared with the Programme Officer.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

Sue Tiley  
Planning Policy and Implementation Manager

### **Enclosures.**

- Appendix A Windfall by Year and Former Land Use
- Appendix B SDS1 SoCG
- Appendix C SDS1 Surrounding area densities
- Appendix D Dig1 English Heritage Consultation Document Response - March 2015
- Appendix E Dig1 Historic England Reg 19 Response - October 2016
- Appendix F Dig1 Historic England Promoted Sites Consultation Response - June 2019
- Appendix G HS22 BrP4 SoCG Addendum
- Annex 1 to Appendix G HS22 BrP4 SoCG Addendum
- Appendix H HS24 Appendix BrP7 SoCG Addendum
- Annex 1 to Appendix H HS24 BrP7 SoCG Addendum
- Appendix I LHe4/5 Green Belt Boundary Plan