

**Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2013-2032**

Inspector: Melvyn Middleton BA(Econ) DipTP DipMgmt MRTPI

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Ms. Sue Tiley,  
Planning Policy & Implementation Manager,  
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council,  
Welwyn Garden City,  
Hertfordshire AL8 6AE.

June 2021

***By email only***

Dear Ms Tiley

**Welwyn-Hatfield Local Plan Examination****Treatment of Green Belt boundaries**

1. In December 2020 you submitted a document (Treatment of Green Belt boundaries) to the Examination for consultation. Having read and considered your paper and all of the representations made in response to that document, I held a Hearing on 22 February 2021 to discuss the most contentious issues and to further clarify certain matters.
2. Your paper proposes that where Green Belt (GB) release is proposed to meet housing and other development needs and tree planting and other strategic landscaping that would strengthen the GB boundary and/or reduce the visual impact of the built development on the wider GB, is required, that should take place adjoining but outside of the allocation. The GB boundary would follow the edge of the built development and the proposed allocation. It also recognises that there may be exceptions to this rule. In principle I am satisfied that this is an appropriate way forward and that proposals in the LP that adopt this approach would be found sound.
3. Additionally, I agree with your rationale that has led to this proposed treatment. Any open land associated with a development, whether inside or outside of a proposed development site and

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abutting the GB, should remain within the GB if its extent is known. In that context the GB boundary should follow the edge of the built development. However, I recognise that the ability to achieve this at some sites, because of different ownerships, may not be known. In such circumstances, unless information to the contrary subsequently arises, any structural landscaping would take place within the proposed development site.

4. Additionally, in order to mitigate the visual impact of a development on the wider GB, in some instances, it may be more appropriate to implement such works within the area of the proposed allocation rather than outside of it. In such circumstances, I consider that the GB boundary should again be the edge of the built development. Indeed, if known at this stage, any proposed uses or intended works within a site that are compatible with GB designation should remain within the GB.
5. In this context you should consider whether such land should remain within the proposed development site or be removed from it. It may be that for reasons related to planning implementation, such land should remain within the proposed allocation, but it could be notated differently on the proposals map.
6. If that is the case then a similar approach could be taken in situations where land to be used for strategic landscaping is outside of the site as currently proposed i.e. it could be incorporated into the site but notated differently on the proposals map. Such a solution could be seamless where there is a common ownership but less so if there is not and there is no prior agreement.

Yours Sincerely

*M Middleton*

**Melvyn Middleton**

**Inspector**

**June 2021**