

Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2013-2032

Inspector: Melvyn Middleton BA(Econ) DipTP DipMgmt MRTPI

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12 May 2022

Mr. Christopher Dale,
Head of Planning,
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

By email only

Dear Mr . Dale,

Welwyn-Hatfield Local Plan Examination

1. In your letter of 8 March 2022^[1], you asked me to comment on the points raised by the Right Honourable Grant Shapps MP, in his letter of 27 February 2022^[2], to your Council's Leader, Councillor Tony Kingsbury about housing numbers and locations. I set out my reasoning and conclusions on the Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need for the full plan period (currently 2016-36), in my letter of June 2021^[3] and more recently referred to the matter in my letters of 16 February 2022^[4] and 5 April 2022^[5]. I do not have anything further to add to this.
2. Nevertheless, I must stress that I am not asking for the plan to provide a supply of land that would meet the housing need for the full plan period (i.e. 15,200 dwellings), only one that would meet it for the first ten years post adoption, plus that element of the pre-adoption requirement that was not met. This is in line with government policy.
3. The only site that I have found to be sound and whose potential development was individually considered to result in high harm, when assessed as a part of your stage 3 Green Belt study, was HS22^[6]. It was a part of your regulation 19 proposals and for the reasons that I set out in paragraphs 110-116 of my letter of 23 October 2020^[7], I agreed with your soundness assessment.

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4. I do appreciate that the issues are complex and controversial and that there are matters that are difficult to reconcile. Nevertheless, I hope that my two most recent letters provide for a positive way forward. I look forward to receiving the Council's response to my letter of 5 April 2022 at an early date.

Yours sincerely,

M Middleton

Melvyn Middleton

[1] Examination Document (EX) 284

[2] EX 284B

[3] EX 274

[4] EX 283

[5] EX 285

[6] Land West of Brookmans Park Railway Station.

[7] Ex Inspector's preliminary conclusions and advice, paras 110-116