

Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2013-2032
Inspector: Melvyn Middleton BA(Econ) DipTP DipMgmt MRTPI
Programme Officer: Mrs Louise St John Howe

8 December

Mr. Chris Carter
Assistant Director - Planning
Welwyn Hatfield Brough Council

by email only

Dear Mr Carter,

Welwyn- Hatfield Local Plan Examination - Main Modifications

1. In my letter to you of 6 September 2022, at paragraph 3, I concluded that it would be in the best interests of all concerned if an up-to-date Local Plan was to be put in place as soon as possible. That was despite my conclusion that at the present time you are not able to demonstrate a ten-year supply of housing land on adoption, as required by paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, which is the version under which this plan is being examined.
2. Your predecessor's letter of 15 December 2020 requested that in accordance with Section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, I recommend Main Modifications to the Council that would make the Local Plan sound and legally compliant. I have now received the outstanding revisions to the draft Main Modifications from yourself and I am satisfied that they are necessary to make the plan sound. Would you convey my thanks to your staff for the help that they have provided to enable me to conclude this work.
3. The attached schedule (ref: 1198207 Welwyn Hatfield Main Modifications Schedule 051222) contains the comprehensive set of Main Modifications that I currently consider to be necessary to make this plan sound. Would you please proceed to advertise and consult on these as required by Section 20(8) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and without delay.

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4. In advertising them would you inform the representors that despite my involvement in their preparation, I will nevertheless need to take account of all relevant responses to the consultation before concluding whether or not a change, along the lines outlined in the MMs, is required to make the plan sound. I will set out my reasons for any further changes in my final report.

5. Additionally, would you point out that representations should only refer to the changes to policy, proposals and supporting text that are covered by MMs and that any which refer to text that is not covered by a MM, will not be considered by myself. Furthermore, Additional Modifications (AMs), which are changes that do not materially affect the policies of the plan or their interpretation are the sole responsibility of the Council. They include typographical mistakes, data updates etc. For convenience some have been included in the amended text, if that text is also covered by a MM.

Would you point out that any representations against AMs should be referred directly and separately to the Council and not to myself via the Programme Officer.

6. In addition to the MMs consultation, you should also consult on your proposed changes to the Policies Map, your Housing Paper, and the updated Sustainability Appraisal. A decision as to whether or not to consult on the remaining AMs is a matter for your Council. Would you also provide the Examination with a revised timetable for the undertaking of the remaining processes that need to be fulfilled before the plan can be adopted.

Yours Sincerely

M Middleton

Melvyn Middleton

Inspector