

# Consultation Statement

This is the Consultation Statement for the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre North Draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as required by Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Statement of Community Involvement. The regulations require that a SPD is accompanied by a Consultation Statement setting out the following:

- The persons consulted when preparing the SPD;
- A summary of the main issues raised by those persons; and
- How the issues have been addressed in the SPD.

There were three key stages of consultation:

1. Pre-production identification of issues and opportunities through an 'Action Planning Day' event.
2. A stakeholder workshop to identify and develop key design principles and a preferred approach to developing the site.
3. Consultation on the draft SPD.

## 1. Pre-production Consultation

### Methods of consultation

- 1.1 The draft SPD was informed by:
  - An internal working group of relevant council officers formed to develop the draft SPD.
  - An 'Action Planning Day' was held on 15 September 2006 as part of the initial process of identifying key issues and opportunities relevant to the site and to allow local residents, businesses, community groups and other organisations the opportunity to express their views on key issues related to the site.
  - Meetings held with key stakeholders that had a particular interest in a section of the draft SPD or the document as a whole. Informal discussion via email or telephone on particular issues also took place.
  - A workshop was held with local councillors from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and other key stakeholders on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013 to develop key design principles and consider development options for the site.
  - Consultation on the scoping assessment that relates to the accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment.

### Who was consulted

- 1.2 The following were consulted:
  - Land owners.
  - Service providers from teams within Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
  - Ward councillors and members of the Cabinet and the Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
  - Officers from Hertfordshire County Council Environment Dept.
  - Representatives from the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Partnership.
  - Representatives from Hertfordshire County Council Environment Dept, Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Partnership, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Welwyn Garden City Society, University of

Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith Group, Welwyn Hatfield MPs Office, Oaklands College, Mid Valley Residents Association and Panshanger People who all attended the workshop on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

- Statutory consultees on the SEA Scoping Report.

### **Summary of the main issues raised**

1.3 The 'Action Planning Day' produced the following suggestions in relation to the Town Centre North site:

- Remove queuing into John Lewis car park.
- Deal with the congestion on Stonehills.
- Develop a strong pedestrian link between the Howard Centre and John Lewis, with good retailing.
- The John Lewis building is a landmark with distinctive fascia and portals which should be maintained.
- Anniversary Gardens should be adapted as a market place.
- Develop new retail for the John Lewis car park, along with restaurants and evening economy uses on Wigmores South.
- Develop stronger links between John Lewis and Campus West.

1.4 In addition, the following issues were raised either through project meetings or were discussed at the workshop held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013:

- The need to demonstrate how the development of this site ties in with the strategy for the town centre.
- The type of development approach to be taken i.e. smaller phased development versus a more comprehensive approach.
- The height and design of the proposed development blocks and potential overshadowing.
- The need to manage the tension between respecting the character of the conservation area and the business needs of retailers.
- The need for active retail frontages.
- The need to support and promote evening economy.
- The potential to explore a larger scheme.
- The potential to consider pedestrianise Stonehills as part of any proposals.
- Support for removing the roundabout and using this part of the site for development.
- The need to address servicing and access for vehicles.
- The positive and negative aspects of a basement car park.
- The need to link in with HCC's future improvements to the bus interchange.
- That retention of open space and the amount of open space to be retained is important.
- That the open space/public realm should have a strong landscape design and makes use of the existing iron work in the area.
- The need to highlight potential for biodiversity enhancements, a positive approach to the protection of heritage assets and the need to consider flood risk, the use of sustainable drainage and the need to protect local groundwater sources.

## How these issues were addressed in the draft SPD

- 1.5 The comments raised as part of the pre-production consultation have informed the approach taken in the draft SPD and the Indicative Development Approach set out in the document. The draft SPD includes:
- Explanation of the wider town centre strategy and the inclusion of a plan to demonstrate how the Town Centre North site is part of this strategy.
  - Explanation of the key heritage, access, circulation, movement and design issues that should be considered in developing any proposals for the site.
  - Criterion relating to the type of land uses the council wishes to see on the site and why they are important to the future vitality and viability of the town centre.
  - Criterion relating to five key design principles that are specific to the site with the aim of ensuring that future development of the site appears as an organic extension to the town centre. These design principles relate to the creation of a high quality development; maximising the potential of the site; creating a high quality, active and vibrant public realm; the relationship of the site with the wider town centre; and promoting a sustainable design.
  - Plans and explanatory text setting out how the council envisages that the site could be developed referred to as the 'Indicative Development Approach'. This also sets out how a basement car park could be introduced.
  - A section setting out other key planning considerations that are relevant to the development of the Town Centre North site such as flood risk, groundwater protection and sustainability.

## 2. Consultation on the Draft SPD

- 2.1 Consultation on the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre North Draft Supplementary Planning Document took place for six weeks from 24 January to 10 March 2014.
- 2.2 The draft SPD was also subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment<sup>1</sup> (SEA) and the findings of this assessment were set out in the Strategic Environmental Assessment report (which includes a Non Technical Summary) accompanying the draft SPD which was also subject to consultation.
- 2.3 During this period this consultation statement, the draft SPD and the accompanying SEA report could be viewed online at [www.welhat.gov.uk/wgcspd](http://www.welhat.gov.uk/wgcspd) and at the following locations:
- Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's offices
  - Welwyn Garden City Library
  - Woodhall Library
  - Herts County Council Mobile Library
- 2.4 An exhibition on the draft SPD was held on Saturday 8 February 2014 from 10.30am to 5pm in the Howard Centre, Welwyn Garden City town centre.

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<sup>1</sup> the main purpose of which is to promote sustainable development by ensuring that environmental considerations are included in the plan making process

After this event the exhibition boards were placed in an empty unit in the Howard Centre until the end of the consultation period.

- 2.5 A summary leaflet was prepared which outlined the methods by which comments could be made. These included:
- Filling out a prepared questionnaire and post it back to Welwyn Hatfield Council.
  - Visiting [www.welhat.gov.uk/wgcspd](http://www.welhat.gov.uk/wgcspd) and filling the prepared questionnaire online.
  - emailing comments to [planningpolicy@welhat.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@welhat.gov.uk)

### **Who was consulted?**

- 2.7 In accordance with Regulation of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2012, and the Statement of Community Involvement the council consulted by letter and email with the specific consultation bodies, duty to cooperate bodies, general consultation bodies and other consultation bodies/organisations relevant to the topic of the SPD. These included:

- Adventist Community Church
- Affinity Water
- Age Concern Hertfordshire
- Ancient Monuments Society
- Arqiva Ltd
- Arriva - The Shires and Essex
- Ayot St Lawrence Parish Council
- Ayot St Peter Parish Meeting
- Baha'is of Welwyn Garden City
- Bethesda Christian Fellowship
- Bride Hall Holdings Ltd
- British Gas Properties
- British Telecommunications Property
- Broxbourne Borough Council
- BT Openreach
- Built Environment Advisory and Management Service (BEAMS)
- Burycroft Residents
- Cable & Wireless UK
- Christchurch Baptist
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Danesbury Residents Association
- Debenhams
- Digswell Residents Association
- Digswell Women's Institute
- Head of GP Premises
- East Hertfordshire District Council
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Essendon Parish Council
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Finesse Leisure Partnership
- Fire Rescue Service
- First Capital Connect
- First Church of Christian Scientist
- Fountain of Life Church
- Friends Meeting House
- Garden History Society
- Gascoyne Cecil Estates
- Groundwork Hertfordshire
- Handside Women's Institute
- Hatfield Town Council
- Hertfordshire Action on Disability
- Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre
- Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- Hertfordshire County Council

- Hertfordshire Forward – Countywide Local Strategic Partnership
- Hertfordshire Gardens Trust
- Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership
- Hertfordshire Society for the Blind
- Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- Herts Bus and Coach Operators Association
- Herts International Church
- Hertsmere Borough Council
- Highways Agency
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Hornbeams Society
- Howlands Baptist Church
- Hutchison 3G UK Limited
- Impact Christian Centre
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- John Lewis PLC
- London Borough of Enfield
- Ludwick Way Methodist Church
- Mardley Heath Women's Institute
- MENTER (East of England Black and Minority Ethnic Network)
- Mid Valley Residents Association
- Mid-Herts Footpaths Society
- Mobile Operators Association
- National Grid
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- NHS Hertfordshire
- North Hertfordshire District Council
- North Mymms Parish Council
- Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council
- Oaklands College
- Orange Personal Communication Services Ltd
- Outdoor Advertising Association
- Panshanger Church
- Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire
- Post Office Property Holdings
- Ramblers Association
- Spenhill Regeneration Ltd
- Sport England
- St Albans City and District Council
- Stanborough School
- Stevenage Borough Council
- Telefonica UK Limited
- Thames Water Property
- The Ayots and Welwyn Women's Institute
- The Office of Rail Regulation
- The Residents Association of Welwyn Heath
- Twentieth Century Society
- UK Power Networks
- University Of Hertfordshire
- Uno Bus
- Vineyard Barn Methodist Church
- Virgin Media Limited
- Vodafone Limited
- Welwyn Garden City Spiritualist Church
- Welwyn & District Local History Society
- Welwyn Archaeological Society
- Welwyn Evangelical Church
- Welwyn Garden City Free Church
- Welwyn Garden City Hebrew Congregation
- Welwyn Garden City Housing Association
- Welwyn Garden City Society
- Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Partnership
- Welwyn Hatfield (Community & Voluntary Services)
- Welwyn Hatfield Access Group
- Welwyn Hatfield Alliance
- Welwyn Hatfield Chamber of Commerce

- Welwyn Hatfield Community Housing Trust
- Welwyn Hatfield Council Councillors
- Welwyn Hatfield Cycle Forum
- Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith Group
- Welwyn Hatfield Islamic Society
- Welwyn Hatfield National Trust Association
- Welwyn Hatfield Polish Forum
- Welwyn Hatfield Tenants Panel
- Welwyn Hatfield YMCA
- Welwyn Parish Council
- Welwyn Planning & Amenity Group
- Westfield Residents Association
- WGC Central Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses
- WGC Rotary Club & Anglican Churches
- Woodhall Lane United Reformed Church
- Woolmer Green Parish Council
- YMCA
- Public Health Partnership

2.8 In addition, an email was sent to every organisation business and person on the council's consultation database informing them that the SPD was available for comment.

2.9 A total of 123 responses were received and these are available to view online at [www.welhat.gov.uk](http://www.welhat.gov.uk).

### 3. Summary of Amendments to the SPD

3.1 A number of amendments have been made to the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre North Supplementary Planning Document to reflect the comments raised as part of the statutory consultation process and these are set out in Section 4.

## **4. Summary of the main issues raised and how these issues have been addressed in the SPD**

- 4.1 All of the comments submitted as part of this consultation have been considered. The table that follows provides a summary of the key issues received as they relate to the topics set out in the questionnaire along with the council's response to these points. Comments are available in full on the council's consultation portal.

Question	Summary of Reponses Received	Council response						
<p><b>i. Key considerations – do you agree with the key considerations in the draft SPD that relate to heritage, access, circulation and design?</b></p> <p><b>If you disagree or strongly disagree what changes would you suggest?</b></p>	<p>Of the 80 respondents who responded directly to this question the following breakdown is given:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><b>Strongly Agree/Agree</b></td> <td><b>41</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree/Strongly Disagree</td> <td>31</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No view</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>Summary of key issues raised in relation to this question:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objection to the principle of development on this site.</li> </ul> <p>In relation to pedestrians and cyclists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough consideration has been made in relation to cycle access and provision for cyclists.</li> <li>• Wider access issues for pedestrians and cyclists from the north and east need to be considered and a safe and pleasant access into the town centre must be included.</li> <li>• The introduction of 20mph zone on roads in the town centre should be considered.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The traffic issues relating to Stonehills need to be addressed.</li> <li>• Development of this site would result in significant impacts on the town centre during construction.</li> </ul>	<b>Strongly Agree/Agree</b>	<b>41</b>	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	31	No view	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principle of development on this site was established following the adoption of the 2005 Local Plan, which allocates this site for future retail development.</li> <li>• Comments in relation to pedestrian and cycle access are noted. A meeting has been held with members of the Welwyn Hatfield Cycle Forum to better understand some of the points raised in relation to cycle access and the needs of cyclists. The points relating to pedestrian access have also been reviewed. The SPD has been amended to include additional text under heading 6.4 ‘Access, Circulation and Movement Issues’. The SPD cannot introduce speed restrictions in the town centre.</li> <li>• Comments relating to Stonehills are noted. No changes are made as the SPD does highlight the opportunity to review the future role of Stonehills under Design Principle 4.</li> <li>• Comments are noted. Paragraph 8.10 states that developers will be required to minimise the impact of building works. Impacts would be considered in greater detail at planning application stage.</li> </ul>
<b>Strongly Agree/Agree</b>	<b>41</b>							
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	31							
No view	8							

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need to attract key retailers to this site.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on attracting key retailers are noted. No changes to the SPD are proposed as it does provide guidance on the types of retail unit required.</li> </ul>						
<p><b>ii. Land use objectives – do you agree with the land use objectives of additional retail, residential, open space, events &amp; activities and evening economy?</b></p> <p><b>If you disagree or strongly disagree what changes would you suggest?</b></p>	<p>Of the 81 respondents who directly responded to this question the following breakdown is given:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><b>Disagree/Strongly Disagree</b></td> <td><b>49</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td> <td>31</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No view</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>Summary of key issues raised in relation to this question:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objection to the principle of development on this site. The main objections raised relate to the need for additional retail floorspace, the loss of open space and concern that the proposals are not in spirit of Garden City. Those respondents who commented on this issue argue that there is sufficient retail in the town centre and that what we do have is already struggling given the number of charity shops and vacant units in the town centre. Concern is also raised that this would impact on the viability of the existing retail units in the town centre.</li> <li>• Various comments were received from individuals expressing a view on the type of retailers/evening economy we do or don't need.</li> </ul>	<b>Disagree/Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>49</b>	Strongly Agree/Agree	31	No view	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments questioning the need for additional retail development and the allocation of this site are noted. This site was originally allocated in the 2005 Local Plan to accommodate 9,300sqm of additional retail floorspace. The SPD has been informed by the Council's Retail and Town Centre Needs Assessment which advises that the council should be planning for approximately 5,000sqm of retail floorspace over the next 5 to 10 years. It is recognised that there are currently vacancies in the town centre, the council has taken account of the current economic circumstances is planning to meet future retail needs. The SPD requires the re-provision of open space.</li> <li>• Comments on the types of retailer that are/aren't needed are noted. Whilst the council may be able to influence the type of town centre uses (i.e. precise mix of A1/A2/A3/A3/A4 uses) of any future development scheme it would not have control as to the tenants. No changes to the SPD are proposed as it does provide guidance on the types of retail unit required but cannot specify tenants.</li> </ul>
<b>Disagree/Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>49</b>							
Strongly Agree/Agree	31							
No view	1							

- The council should focus on making the existing retail units and/or the Howard Centre work better before additional retail is considered.

- The former Shredded Wheat site would be a more appropriate location for the types of land uses proposed for this site.

- Development should be at the southern (Sainsbury's) end of the town centre.

In relation to residential:

- Disagree with provision of residential units as there are enough flats in WGC town centre already. Concern that this is over development of the site.
- Comment that this site should be prioritised for residential development over retail.

- Comments relating to the existing retail units/Howard Centre are noted. The council does not own any of the retail units in the town centre or the Howard Centre and so is limited in what it can do to improve these. However, the council is working with the Town Centre Partnership to promote and strengthen the town centre and support retailers.

- Comments related to the former Shredded Wheat site are noted. This site is part of a wider 16 ha development site known as Broadwater Road West. This land is allocated in the District Plan for employment, housing, leisure and rail related uses. This site is therefore not allocated for retail purposes and sits outside the town centre boundary. Development of this site should comply with the Broadwater Road West SPD. The relationship between the two sites is however important and has been taken into account in drawing up the proposals and planning requirements set out in the brief.

- Comments are noted. Development at the southern end of the town centre has already taken place in accordance with the town centre strategy as set out in the adopted District Plan 2005.

- Comments are noted. As stated above the site is allocated for retail development. No changes to the SPD are proposed in relation to the introduction of residential uses at upper floors as this will help to meet our housing need and will diversify uses and create activity in the town centre.

	<p>In relation to alternative land uses (to be considered alongside retail):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment that a hotel use would be appropriate.</li> <li>• Comment suggesting that an indoor bowls facility should be included in one of the blocks to replace the facility that closed at Gosling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments in relation to alternative land uses are noted. No changes to the SPD are proposed in relation to these proposed land uses. Whilst these land uses are not unacceptable in a town centre location, the council has taken a view as to their relative priority. It should be noted that the fundamental reason for bringing the site forward for development is to deliver additional retail floorspace in the town centre. These alternative uses could be complimentary to a retail use and would not be out of place in a town centre environment. However, work undertaken on the SPD (and the Indicative Development Approach promoted in the SPD) has demonstrated that the likelihood of these uses coming forward – either as a result of market demand or as a result of development viability – is relatively low.</li> </ul>
<p><b>iii. Please give your response to the key design principles for the site:</b></p> <p><b>a) Design Principle 1: Creating a High Quality Development</b></p> <p><b>If you disagree or strongly disagree what changes would you suggest?</b></p>	<p>Of the 79 respondents who directly responded to this question the following breakdown is given:</p> <p><b>Strongly Agree/Agree      47</b>  Disagree/Strongly Disagree    29  No view                                    3</p> <p><u>Summary of key issues raised in relation to this question:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several comments were raised in relation to concern at building heights; the density of development and that development of the site will result in an enclosed scheme. The open spacious feel of streets is important in the town centre and a key character of the garden city.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments are noted. Design Principle 1 has been revised and no longer prescribes a maximum building height but states that building mass should be proportional to the streets adjacent to the site and the new square to be created. In addition Design Principle 2 has been revised and advises that the blocks should not</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed views as to whether a more contemporary design approach would be detrimental to the character of the town centre and that a more traditional architectural design would be better.</li> </ul>	<p>exceed the height of the John Lewis store. In addition Design Principle 2 will ensure that development of the site does not feel overbearing to those at ground level by highlighting the need to maintain views into and out of the town centre; restricting the height of new building and ensuring the layout respects current building lines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments on architectural styling are noted. Paragraph 6.10 states that the architecture of any new development will not be defined by the SPD. Design Principle 2 has been revised to ensure that development of this site will 'Sustain and Enhance the Significance of the Heritage Asset' and advises that development should promote an architectural language that respects and harmonises with the town centre. The neo Georgian architecture of the town is recognised in the SPD but a contemporary approach could also be considered.</li> </ul>						
<p><b>b) Design Principle 2: Maximise the Potential of the Site</b></p> <p><b>If you disagree or strongly disagree what changes would you suggest?</b></p>	<p>Of the 80 respondents who directly responded to this question the following breakdown is given:</p> <table data-bbox="562 932 987 1034"> <tr> <td><b>Strongly Agree/Agree</b></td> <td><b>40</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree/Strongly Disagree</td> <td>36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No view</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>Summary of key issues raised in relation to this question:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objection to the principle of development on this site on the basis that the economic potential of this site is placed above the current value of the site.</li> </ul>	<b>Strongly Agree/Agree</b>	<b>40</b>	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	36	No view	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As stated above, the principle of development on this site was established following the adoption of the 2005 Local Plan, which allocates this site for future retail development.</li> </ul>
<b>Strongly Agree/Agree</b>	<b>40</b>							
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	36							
No view	4							

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments that a greater emphasis should be made on not destroying ambience of garden city. Its character is important if it is to compete with other towns.</li> <li>• Concern that too much open space is being lost and that views to other parts of the garden city will change detrimentally as a result of development.</li> <li>• To maximise the sites potential it has to be well designed and add quality space/urban realm.</li> <li>• Roof terraces and gardens are high maintenance and should not be considered.</li> <li>• Support for retail but not residential on upper floors.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments are noted. It is considered that the title of this design principle gave the wrong impression and so could be misunderstood. Design Principle 2 has therefore been revised and some of its content has been incorporated into Design Principle 1. Design Principle 2 is now entitled 'Sustain and Enhance the Significance of the Heritage Asset'. It has been amended to emphasise the heritage considerations respond to the heritage issues raised and to ensure the character of the garden city is retained.</li> <li>• Comments are noted. The focus of the SPD (and the reason for bringing this site forward for development) is to provide additional retail floorspace in the town centre. The need to retain a useable and defined area of replacement open space is stated in the SPD at Chapter 4 – Land Use Objectives. Key views as highlighted by the WGC Conservation Area Appraisal are identified in the SPD and in the revised Design Principle 2.</li> <li>• Comments are noted. Design Principles 1 and 3 specifically focus on achieving a high quality development and public realm.</li> <li>• Comments are noted. No changes to the SPD are proposed in relation to the introduction of roof terraces &amp; roof gardens. This aspect of the SPD was supported by the Environment Agency and will help to improve the biodiversity of the site.</li> <li>• Comments are noted. As stated above, no changes to the SPD are proposed in relation to the introduction of residential uses at upper floors as this will help to meet our housing need and will diversify uses and create activity in the town centre.</li> </ul> |
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern that the provision of another supermarket will not enhance the quality of the retail provision in the town.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments are noted. Paragraph 4.3 states that the council should plan for comparison goods retail floorspace (not convenience floorspace) and so a supermarket is not planned for this site.</li> </ul>
<p><b>c) Design Principle 3: Create a High Quality, Active and Vibrant Public Realm</b></p> <p><b>If you disagree or strongly disagree what changes would you suggest?</b></p>	<p>Of the 76 respondents who directly responded to this question the following breakdown is given:</p> <p><b>Strongly Agree/Agree      45</b> Disagree/Strongly Disagree   28 No view                              3</p> <p><u>Summary of key issues raised in relation to this question:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern that the area of open space on the site is significantly reduced in size and that the development of the site will only maximise the economic potential of the site.</li> <li>Concern at promoting bespoke paving patterns and comments that the council should consider future management and maintenance as there is not a good track record of managing the public realm in the town centre.</li> <li>Civic spaces already exist in the town centre and are misused by gathering youths.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The principle of development on this site was established following the adoption of the 2005 Local Plan, which allocates this site to meet an identified retail need up to 2025. The focus of the SPD (and the reason for bringing this site forward for development) is to provide additional retail floorspace in the town centre. The need to retain a useable and defined area of replacement open space is stated in the SPD at Chapter 4 – Land Use Objectives.</li> <li>Comments are noted. No changes to the SPD are proposed. The future management and maintenance of any new public realm will be a matter considered at planning application stage.</li> <li>Comments related are noted. No changes to the SPD are proposed in relation to the introduction of new civic space. The SPD recommends consultation with Herts Constabulary in relation to crime and prevention and will reduce the risk of civic spaces being misused.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern that residents in the town centre would be troubled by noise as a result of an active vibrant public realm on the size of the site promoted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments in relation to noise issues are noted. Chapter 7 – Other Planning Considerations highlights the need for early and close liaison with the council’s Environmental Health team in relation to potential noise issues.</li> </ul>
<p><b>d) Design Principle 4: Relationship with the Wider Town Centre</b></p> <p><b>If you disagree or strongly disagree what changes would you suggest?</b></p>	<p>Of the 79 respondents who directly responded to this question the following breakdown is given:</p> <p><b>Strongly Agree/Agree      42</b>  Disagree/Strongly Disagree    28  No view                                    9</p> <p><u>Summary of key issues raised in relation to this question:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments that the opportunity should be taken to improve the whole of the town centre and that Howardsgate and Stonehills should be pedestrianised.</li> </ul> <p>With regards to the bus station:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern regarding the current state of the bus station and that it should be included in the plan area.</li> <li>Comment that the bus station is not adequately addressed in the SPD.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments are noted. No changes to the SPD are proposed. The purpose of the SPD is to provide detailed planning guidance in relation to the Town Centre North site, however, Design Principle 4 does highlight the opportunity to review the future role of Stonehills given that the northern end of Stonehills forms part of the development site and will therefore have a direct relationship with any development on the site.</li> <li>Comments relating to the bus station are noted. The bus station is outside the boundary of the development site, however, Hertfordshire County Council are reviewing the layout of the bus station. Design Principle 4 and paragraph 7.6 set out the need to work with Hertfordshire County Council and any future proposals for the bus station.</li> </ul>

With regards to the provision of car parking:

- Comments that more space should be dedicated to parking to avoid additional on street parking in the surrounding areas to the detriment of local residents.
- Concern that there will not be enough free parking for John Lewis and Debenhams customers.
- Comments that a reduced car approach should be adopted.
- Comments that the opportunity to improve provision for cycling has not been properly considered.
- Disagreement at prioritising pedestrians wherever possible and concerns in relation to the pedestrianisation of the town centre.
- Concern that the proposed highway layout is restrictive due to the lack of a right hand turn and that bus traffic will take up significant capacity of the new junction.

- Comments relating to the provision of car parking are noted. No changes are proposed to the SPD with regard to car parking as there is sufficient parking to meet current standards. The Indicative Development Approach does demonstrate how additional car parking could be provided at basement level which would include provision for shoppers and future residents. It is considered important to ensure there is sufficient parking to ensure the town centre remains attractive to all users.
- Comments are noted. As stated above the SPD has been amended to include additional text on cycle issues and Design Principle 4 has been amended to highlight the need to enable the delivery of improved cycle routes to connect the town centre to the wider cycle network.
- Comments are noted. No changes are proposed to the SPD with regard to the prioritisation of pedestrians. This is a sustainable approach to development of the site and the needs of vehicular traffic are recognised in the SPD.
- Comments on the highway layout are noted. The highway layout proposed is based on indicative assessment work. The SPD has been amended at paragraph 7.5 to advise that the introduction of an all movement junction would be considered if it can be shown to function successfully and not to have a detrimental impact on the wider highway network.



- Comment that however poor the ecology on this site, it is better than more hard landscaping and green/brown walls which have no form of public interaction for the pedestrian.
- Comment that there should be more emphasis on enhancing the ecological value of the site by insisting that every development block must incorporate roof gardens or landscaped roof gardens or a green wall.
- Concern that the SPD does not set any clear targets with regard to sustainability e.g. BREEAM.

set a precedent for the reduction of green space. The need to retain a useable and defined area of replacement open space is stated in the SPD at Chapter 4 – Land Use Objectives. All other green open space in the town centre primary retail core is protected as Urban Open Land.

- Comments are noted. The land use objectives set out in the SPD include the re-provision of open space and the Design Principles highlight the role of landscaping and green spaces in the town centre. Design Principle 5 has been amended to state that development should contribute and link to the network of green spaces and tree planting in the town centre.
- Comments are noted and are contrary to comments listed above in relation to Design Principle 2 that green roofs and walls are high maintenance and should be avoided. Design Principle 1 – Create a High Quality Development states that development should consider vertical planting, roof gardens or landscaped roof terraces. This aspect of the SPD was supported by the Environment Agency and will help to improve the biodiversity of the site.
- Comments are noted. The SPD supplements the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan and therefore cannot set BREEAM targets. Design Principle 5 does however highlight the opportunities for sustainable design and promotes a range of options that should be considered.



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment noting that unless the residential units are for over 60s or single occupancy the amount of parking given over to residents is likely to reduce the parking for shoppers.</li> <li>• Comments noting that the proposed access/egress to the underground car park is close to the bus station; a pedestrian crossing and that the proposed signalised junction configuration is complicated and will deter users. Access via the Council's car park (Cherry Tree) under Bridge Road is suggested.</li> <li>• Comments noting that a basement car park should not be considered as they attract crime, that people do not like using them and that they are regarded as unsafe particularly for women.</li> <li>• Comment to suggest that Hunters Bridge car park should be redeveloped as an alternative with cars going underground and any additional parking required being placed on the Broadwater Road West development site.</li> <li>• Comment noting that this would be an improvement to the existing John Lewis store car park as it would place car parking underground.</li> <li>• Viability of basement car park questioned.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment noted. Any development of the site would need to have regard to the council's adopted parking standards. The proposed basement car park would have the ability to provide for shoppers and residents but this would be considered in more detail at planning application stage.</li> <li>• Comments are noted. No objection to the principle of this arrangement is made by Hertfordshire County Council Highways. Detailed design of the access/egress arrangements would be considered at planning application stage. The SPD has been amended at paragraph 7.5 to advise that should an alternative junction proposals be put forward these would also be considered at planning application stage.</li> <li>• Comments are noted. No changes are proposed to the SPD as Chapter 7 – Other Planning Considerations advocates early consultation with Hertfordshire Constabulary in relation to crime and prevention and design.</li> <li>• Comments are noted. No changes are proposed to the SPD as there is no requirement for additional town centre parking. The Broadwater Road West development site is identified for mixed use development and it the subject of a separate masterplan and SPD.</li> <li>• Comment is noted.</li> <li>• The council has been advised by Colliers International in preparing the SPD. Work undertaken by Colliers in relation to viability suggests that the Indicative Development Approach (inc basement car park) is viable.</li> </ul> |
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<p><b>v) Indicative Development Approach – what if anything would you change about the approach set out in the draft SPD?</b></p>	<p>Of the 123 respondents 59 directly responded to this question. Set out below is a summary of key issues raised in relation to this question:</p> <p><u>Summary of comments on Indicative Development Approach</u></p> <p><u>Principle of development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Again those who raised objections in relation to the development of the site reiterated their comments but some also noted support for improvements to the existing public realm, open space and in some cases removal of the roundabout</li> </ul> <p><u>General comments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns that this is an over development of site, that the proposals are high density, that the development is too big for such a small area and is out of keeping with the rest of the town.</li> <li>• Comments that the indicative development approach will destroy the current open aspect; will appear crammed and will block natural light making it a less welcoming space.</li> <li>• Comments noting that this is an imaginative scheme and support for the approach as written.</li> <li>• Comment noting the scheme is very disappointing.</li> </ul> <p><u>In relation to building heights:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The emphasis should be on going into the ground rather than up.</li> <li>• Development should be no more than two storeys in height.</li> <li>• Three storey blocks are preferred.</li> <li>• Four storey development seems too high.</li> <li>• Development should not go above the John Lewis store in height.</li> <li>• There may be an opportunity for taller buildings on the site - does the SPD have to be prescriptive?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments objecting to the development of the site are noted. As stated above the principle of development on this site was established following the adoption of the 2005 Local Plan, which allocates this site for future retail development.</li> <li>• These general comments are noted. The council has amended the design of the Garden Block to set back the upper floors (reducing its bulk) and both the Garden and Island Block have been amended to set in their top floors. The council considers that there is sufficient distance between the blocks and the adjacent buildings to ensure that the development does not have a detrimental impact on the character or openness of the town centre.</li> <li>• Comments in relation to building heights are noted but there are clearly mixed views. The council considers that development on the site should not exceed the height of the John Lewis store and this is set out in Design Principle 2. The Garden Block and the Island Block have been amended to set in their top floors to highlight the need to maintain an open and spacious feel and to enable 'sky views' between the upper floor of the block and the adjacent buildings.</li> </ul>
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In relation to the proposed block layout:

- Drawing a line from the Howard Centre to the John Lewis store is too primitive an approach to developing this site.
- Development should follow a rectilinear plan to tie with the wider town centre.
- Comments that two development blocks would be better than three, with mixed views as to which block should be removed.
- The area occupied by the Island Block should not be developed but carefully landscaped to provide a visual link to Campus area and views into the town centre.
- The Garden Block should be removed.
- The scheme should allow for the future redevelopment of other adjoining blocks.
- The proposed green space will be in shadow for most of year.
- Three development blocks are inconsistent with the Welwyn Garden City design of open vistas.
- The road between the proposed Garden Block and John Lewis store would be in shade and would reduce the impact of the John Lewis window displays.

In relation to detailed design:

- The style should be neo Georgian.
- High quality modern architecture should be considered and encouraged.
- Design should be innovative and in keeping with the Garden City ethos such as the Sainsbury's living wall.
- The blocks should make use of canopies to protect shoppers. The need for covered shelter is also suggested.
- The design should include balconies to provide character and overlooking to public open space.
- There should be no inert frontages at ground level.
- Commercial occupiers may require first

- The comments in relation to the proposed layout of the Indicative Development Approach are noted. It is considered key to the approach to support the pedestrian desire line between the Howard Centre and the John Lewis store. The key views as noted in the WGC Conservation Area Appraisal are also maintained. The council considers that the three development blocks would be needed to meet the prescribed retail need of approximately 5,000sqm. The council has amended the design of the Garden Block to set back the upper floors. This will reduce the bulk of the block and will reduce any overshadowing of the green space. A ground floor triangular element does remain, however, as it is considered that this will enable the block to manage the change in topography east/west across the site and will also allow an active relationship with the proposed area of open space. This approach has been discussed with English Heritage as stated below.

- The comments relating to the detailed design of the blocks are noted. The council advises that this is an 'Indicative Development Approach' and considers that these are matters that would be considered at planning application stage. Design Principle 1 highlights the need to include active retail frontages and avoid blank facades. Design Principle 2 acknowledges that either a traditional or contemporary approach could be taken forward.

	<p>floor/mezzanine accommodation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Query as to whether there will be roof gardens on all three development blocks?</li> </ul> <p><u>Open Space</u></p> <p><u>In relation to the size of the open space:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments that the proposed green open space is too small, that as much open space should be retained as possible and that the hard landscaped space is too small.</li> <li>• The amount of civic space should be increased by reducing the size of the Garden Block</li> <li>• Comments that the proposed space too small for events/activities to create a hub and is also disjointed for an evening economy/restaurant area.</li> </ul> <p><u>In relation to the shape/design of the open space:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objections to a triangular area of green open space – that is has no precedent in terms of garden city design.</li> <li>• Comments that the green open space must be square or rectangular.</li> <li>• The proposed open space does not improve overall feel of the town.</li> <li>• The proposed open space should become more of a central feature of the scheme rather than a ‘cut through’.</li> <li>• Open space will be isolated and surrounded by areas of hard paving.</li> </ul> <p><u>In relation to the usability of the open space:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed open space needs to be inviting to encourage people to sit out.</li> <li>• Need to encourage more markets.</li> <li>• Should include play equipment for children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments in relation to the size of open space are noted. As stated above, the focus of the SPD (and the reason for bringing this site forward for development) is to meet an identified retail need. No changes are proposed to the Indicative Development Approach in relation to the provision of open space. The council considers that the level of green open space and hard landscaped space is sufficient for future events and is well related to the proposed development blocks. This total area of usable open space is similar to that already provided for on site.</li> <li>• Comments relating to the shape/design of the open space are noted. No changes are proposed to the Indicative Development Approach. The council considers that the approach does provide a central area of open space and that this will become a well used area of open space. It is considered that the open space does not have to meet the formality of design offered by Howardsgate and Parkway.</li> <li>• Comments relating to the usability of the open space are noted. No changes are proposed to the Indicative Development Approach as it is considered that these are matters that would be</li> </ul>
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	<p><u>Development Blocks</u></p> <p><u>In relation to the Island Block:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should bookend the open space.</li> <li>• Should include apartment style residences.</li> <li>• This block has two, possibly three dead frontages.</li> <li>• Block is too dominant at five storeys.</li> <li>• Block is rather dominant overlooking Bridge Road.</li> </ul> <p><u>In relation to Garden Block:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will reduce light and vistas; reduces the open aspect; this area should be used as additional open space.</li> <li>• Massing will overshadow the open landscape and some of shops in Stonehills.</li> <li>• This block is oddly shaped – it does not lend itself to a useful retail unit or historical setting.</li> <li>• A triangular shaped block is silly.</li> </ul> <p><u>In relation to the Stonehills Block:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Block should be improved as already provides retail.</li> <li>• Is not suitable for a car park access.</li> </ul>	<p>considered in more detail at planning application stage. Design Principle 3 sets out the requirement to deliver a high quality public realm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments in relation to the Island Block are noted. The design of the Island Block has been revised to bring in the upper floors to ensure good 'sky space' between the blocks, enabling key views into the town centre to remain open – particularly for those entering the town centre from the north, via The Campus.</li> <li>• Comments relating to the Garden Block are noted. As stated above the council considers that all three blocks are required to meet the prescribed level of retail need. The design of the Garden Block has been revised to bring in the upper floor on the eastern side of the building. This will leave a ground floor diagonal element but with the upper floors set in it is not considered that this will compromise the grid structure prevalent in the town centre, and will continue to create an animated ground floor environment to support the central area of open space.</li> <li>• Comments relating to the Stonehills Block are noted. No changes are proposed to the Stonehills Block in response to these representations.</li> </ul>
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Access/Highways

In relation to pedestrian access:

- A safe and pleasant access from east and north is needed before detailed planning of site can start.
- The area is still disjointed by roads and traffic.
- The council should increase the pedestrianisation of Howardsgate and Stonehills to make better use of these green areas – the loss of on street parking would be offset by the new underground car park.
- Pedestrianisation will result in more parking problems.
- Pedestrianisation would make access to this part of town easier.
- The pedestrian linkages with Howardsgate are not picked up.
- The indicative development approach is not linked to the rest of town centre.
- Opposing views as to whether the subway between the John Lewis store and the council offices should be retained or should be filled in and replaced with surface level crossing points.

In relation to cycling:

- Comments that the scheme should make provision for cyclists and cycling.
- Suggestion of an off road cycle path from Broadwater Rd to Valley Rd along Bridge Rd.
- Suggestion of an off road route from Sherrardspark Rd round east side Campus across Bridge Rd to Campus.
- Suggest a link to the cycle route at the rear of Campus East car park.
- Cycling over Hunters Bridge and around the Campus is impossible.
- Need to create a cycle route into town centre on Bridge Road with a subway under Bridge Road.

- The comments in relation to pedestrian access, cycling and the highway layout are noted. The indicative highway layout has been revised to enable an improved public realm, to highlight opportunities for cycle links and the need for improved links across Bridge Road to connect to the northern part of the town centre. These amendments include:
  1. Realigning Wigmores North between John Lewis and the Island Block so that it is more centrally located and creating a shared space zone. This will allow for more public realm between the Island Block and the John Lewis building. This is likely to result in the loss of the subway link and a surface level crossing between the Council offices and the John Lewis building would need to be introduced.
  2. Realigning the newly created road between the Island Block and Hunters Bridge MSCP so that it is more centrally located. Again this would be facilitated by the removal of the subway link in this area. This would also allow for a more generous public realm around the Island Block and would create a new junction with Bridge Road. To prioritise pedestrian crossings at the new junction what are the ideas of a 'super crossing' is suggested to enable diagonal movement.
- The need for cycle parking and the need to ensure that future development of this site facilitates improved connectivity to the wider cycle network is also set out at paragraphs 6.19 and 6.20.

	<p><u>In relation to the highway layout:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Off road servicing is essential.</li> <li>• Too many road access/egress points will conflict with pedestrians and cause traffic delays.</li> <li>• Circumnavigation issues if travelling south/east out of Osborne Way.</li> <li>• There will be delay due to the introduction of traffic lights.</li> <li>• Stonehills should be pedestrianised.</li> <li>• Stonehills should become a through road to allow cars to access this area.</li> <li>• Roads are already at maximum capacity in peak times – additional traffic is unsustainable.</li> <li>• Need to consider larger vehicles using this layout.</li> <li>• Need to consider the impact of delivery vehicles.</li> <li>• Need to retain access to the Hunters Bridge car park from Bridge Rd.</li> <li>• The road layout is restrictive if trying to exit towards Panshanger. The lack of a right hand exit will mean traffic doubling back around the Campus – crossing the new lights twice. Suggest use of Wigmores North as a better alternative access.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on the highway layout are noted. As stated above, the highway layout proposed is based on indicative assessment work. The SPD has been amended at paragraph 7.5 to advise that the introduction of an all movement junction would be considered if it can be shown to function successfully and not to have a detrimental impact on the wider highway network. As noted above Design Principle 4 does highlight the opportunity to review the future role of Stonehills given that the northern end of Stonehills forms part of the development site and will therefore have a direct relationship with any development on the site.</li> </ul>
<p>vi) <b>Any other comments on the draft SPD?</b></p>	<p>Of the 123 respondents 95 directly responded to this question. Set out below is a summary of key issues raised in relation to this question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Natural England</b> – note the town centre boundary is 600m from the Sherrardspark Wood SSSI and that consideration should be given to ensure that any planned development does not adversely affect this site. Advise that the SPD should cross refer to any local area landscape character assessments to ensure that the SPD makes a positive contribution to character and functions of the landscape. Reference is made to Green Infrastructure and its role and that the SPD could usefully promote high quality and multifunctional green infrastructure. Notes that the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments from Natural England are noted. In preparing the SPD consideration has been made to the distance of the site in relation to Sherrardspark Wood SSSI. The SPD has been revised at paragraph 6.32 to highlight distance of the site from Sherrardspark Wood SSSI.</li> </ul>

SPD should have recognised and reference any designated wildlife sites and other biodiversity habitats in the immediate area. The local wildlife trust and local environmental record centre should be consulted and the local and national biodiversity action plans referenced where appropriate.

- **English Heritage** – welcome the clear references to the heritage of Welwyn Garden City and the site itself. Note that the key considerations and design principles set out in chapters 5 and 6 seem broadly appropriate in terms of historic environment issues. Comments are given on the indicative development approach. The site and shape of the existing open space should be retained. The town centre follows a grid pattern with few diagonals and so the encroachment of the Garden Block is referred to as regrettable. For the same reasons the Garden Block should reflect the grid pattern and be square/rectangular in shape. English Heritage note the existing Stonehills block is of an architectural style similar to much of the town centre, makes a positive contribution to the conservation area and suggest the SPD is clearer with regards to this block and its incorporation into any wider redevelopment. Advise that the overall height and bulk of new buildings will need to be sympathetic to the conservation area and suggest that the Island Block could be rather dominant overlooking Bridge Road to the north and the open space to the south.  
Updated comments - further discussion has taken place on the revised SPD and Indicative Development Approach. English Heritage consider that the revised Garden Block could form the basis of a design that reflects the grid layout while providing additional retail floor space at ground floor and advise that they are supportive of the other revisions proposed.

- Comments from English Heritage are noted. The design of the Garden Block has been revised to bring in the upper floor on the eastern side of the building and set in the top floor. This will leave a ground floor diagonal element but with the upper floors set in it is not considered that this will compromise the grid structure prevalent in the town centre, and will continue to create an animated ground floor environment to support the central area of open space, whilst enabling the provision of new retail floorspace. In relation to the Stonehills Block, additional text is given at paragraph 5.2 to explain the components of the Indicative Development Approach and the Stonehills Block.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hertfordshire County Council Archaeology</b> – are pleased that reference to local policy regarding archaeology has been included and that the SPD highlights the potential of the site to contain heritage assets. Recommend that the planning application checklist given at paragraph 9.8 should include the need for an archaeological and historic buildings assessment and if necessary evaluation as a first stage of archaeological investigations.</li> <li>• <b>Environment Agency</b> – support the reference to sustainable design but consider that this should be pushed further and that there should be a greater emphasis on the incorporation of green sustainable drainage systems. Reference is made to green/living roofs, ponds and swales and that these will help to achieve the aims of District Plan Policy R11 (Biodiversity and Development). Refer to the fact that the Hertfordshire County Council Interim SuDS policy requires SuDS to be integrated within public space. Further commentary is given on the use of green roofs and the EA consider this would provide a visible reminder of sustainability and suit the garden city image.</li> <li>• <b>Highways Agency</b> – have no specific comments to make but highlight the need for development to allow for sustainable transport links to reduce reliance on cars and support the development of a Town Centre North travel plan as part of any proposals for the site.</li> <li>• <b>Hertfordshire County Council Highways</b> – advise that in that it is critical that buses using the interchange have reliable journey times and where possible priority within the local road network. Therefore, in the vicinity of the bus station it is suggested that a bus priority at exit of bus station is a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments from HCC Archaeology are noted. The planning application checklist at paragraph 8.8 has been amended to include reference to an archaeological and historic buildings assessment. Reference to the potential of the site to contain archaeology is now stated at paragraph 7.23.</li> <li>• Comments from the Environment Agency are noted. Paragraphs 7.10 to 7.13 now refer to floor risk and have been amended to emphasise the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems and the potential role of HCC as Lead Local Flood Authority for Hertfordshire.</li> <li>• Comments from the Highways Agency are noted. The SPD has been amended at paragraphs 6.19 and 6.20 to highlight the improvements sought for cyclists. The requirement for a travel plan is set out in the SPD at paragraph 8.8.</li> <li>• Comments from HCC Highways are noted. The SPD has been amended and additional text has been added at paragraphs 7.6 and 8.4 to note the advice in relation to the bus interchange and the potential for wider highway improvements.</li> </ul>
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method to be investigated in the future. Furthermore, the introduction of the ramp access to the basement car park adjacent to the bus station exit will need special attention to ensure that no delays are created. HCC advise that they have been working on the design of a new bus station which is to be delivered 2015/16 and consider that the two projects can work together in the future. HCC note that the draft SPD highlights the need for potential wider highway improvements which have been identified as a result of testing the highway network against the combined growth across the town. HCC note, however, the need to link individual levels of traffic growth to specific highway improvement to ensure the delivery of such project occur at the appropriate time and are funded by an appropriate process.

- **St Albans City and District Council (SADC)** – raise several concerns and detailed queries in relation to the draft SPD and its evidence base. SADC query whether there is adequate comparison goods need/retail expenditure evidence to support both the council's WGC and Hatfield schemes without compromising the vitality and viability of town centres in their borough, especially St Albans City Centre. SADC consider there to be the lack of an up to date policy to underpin the SPD comparison retailing proposals. SADC query the conflict between SPD and council's retail study update 2012 and suggest the figures quoted at para 3.15 of the SPD are not supported by the retail study update 2012. SADC further consider there to be a conflict between the evidence base and the SPD as para 3.12 of the SPD notes that for comparison goods, the retail study 2012 recommends 'development in WGC town centre (about 5000sq m gross)' whilst the SPD indicative development approach shows a floorspace of 5,801sqm which is higher than the retail study

- Comments from St. Albans City and District Council are noted. The council consider that the level of comparison retail floorspace proposed for the Town Centre North site can be fully justified and that there is no conflict between the evidence base and the SPD. Do not consider it appropriate to plan for the decline of the centre as is implied by this representation. No changes to SPD are proposed.

recommends. Furthermore, the SPD states at that the council would consider larger scheme should the opportunity arise. SADC consider there to be a lack of evidence to justify a higher scale of comparison floorspace and are concerned at the possible impact on vitality and viability on St Albans City Centre. SADC query the methodology of the retail study update 2012 as it appears to have a large study area that incorporates the majority of the SADC district. This is argued to mean that the proposed floorspace is underpinned by only 44% of the comparison expenditure / need from within our borough and that the majority of expenditure, approx 56%, is from outside the district, including St Albans. SADC consider there is a relatively low proportion of comparison expenditure need in our borough compared to the relatively high scale of comparison retail proposals in our borough (cumulatively at Hatfield & WGC) and are concerned at the possible effect on vitality and viability of town centres in SADC's district as well as unsustainable patterns of travel. SADC consider it would be useful to have more information in retail study 2012 to explain/quantify high street comparison floorspace and to differentiate from other forms of comparison retailing which do not require high street floorspace e.g. internet retailing & bulky goods. SADC query the reliability of long term forecasting in the retail study update 2012 and whether it is a reliable basis for the proposed level of comparison retail floorspace in the SPD and possible implications for town centres in SADC district. SADC would like floorspaces for proposed town centre uses other than comparison retailing to be clarified. SADC suggest that if the level of comparison retail floorspace cannot be fully justified, it is considered that other town centre uses or introduction of residential use at ground floor should be considered as an alternative to comparison

	<p>retailing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Office of Rail Regulation</b> – consider that the proposals do not affect the current or (future) operation of the mainline network or heritage railways.</li> <li>• <b>NHS North &amp; East Herts</b> – support the councils wish to improve Welwyn Garden City as a retail destination and sustainable thriving town. Charter House is noted as being adjacent to the town centre north site and so it is requested that any disruption be kept to a minimum during construction. It is also noted that staff often use Anniversary Gardens and the request to see a similar space retained in the design is made.</li> <li>• <b>Thames Water</b> – refer to paragraph 5.24 and the opportunity for incorporating uses at basement floor level. Advise that applications for basement level development should incorporate protection to the property to avoid the risk of backflow at a later date. Refer to design principle 5 and state support for SuDS and the aim of reducing water consumption. With regard to trees Thames Water note that the indiscriminate planting of trees and shrubs can cause damage to underground infrastructure and consideration to be given to species/location of planting. Refer to paragraph 8.9 and support reference to water conservation and the efficient use of water. Refer to paragraph 8.13/14 and support reference to SuDS and the acknowledgment that a Flood Risk Assessment should consider all forms of flooding including the risk of sewer flooding. Support the inclusion of paragraphs 8.21/22 and the need to work closely to deliver the infrastructure required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments from Office of Rail Regulation are noted.</li> <li>• Comments from NHS North &amp; East Herts are noted. As stated above paragraph 8.10 refers to construction impacts which would be considered in more detail at planning application stage. The SPD sets out the requirement to re-provide open space. No changes to SPD are proposed.</li> <li>• Comments from Thames Water are noted. The need for close liaison given that infrastructure constraints can impact delivery due to the lead in times needed to upgrade existing supplies is stated at paragraph 7.19.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Herts Biological Records Centre (HBRC)</b>– note the reduction of open green space locally, although this is already largely isolated and consider the proposed open space to be retained will be even more isolated, smaller and surrounded by significant areas of hard surfacing. HBRC suggest that the retention of some open space where the current roundabout is would retain some connectivity between this area and the larger open area to the west, although there is limited ecological justification for this. HBRC note that the roundabout area currently provides an ecological resource locally given the nature of the trees and shrubs present whilst the proposed open area is unlikely to provide a similar greenspace area both in extent and character, so there will be a locally significant loss ecologically. However, this is considered to be consistent with the context of the designed and formal urban landscape in the town which this SPD addresses and would not be sufficient to represent an ecological objection to the proposals. Nevertheless, HBRC consider that some consideration for this aspect could be given in the design of the open space which would be left, particularly as this aspect has not been identified within the SEA.</li> </ul> <p><b>Businesses/Landowners:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bride Hall Investments</b> – confirm that Bride Hall Investments have a land holding within the scope of the Town Centre North site and SPD. Support is given to the principle of redeveloping the site with a suitable mix of uses befitting its town centre location. However, whilst the principle is supported, concern is raised regarding the indicative development approach set out in the draft SPD. To deliver this preferred approach it is considered that substantial works would be required to local infrastructure, the cost of which would be substantial. In addition, the formation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments from HBRC are noted. No changes to SPD are proposed. This site is allocated for retail development. As stated above in relation to the Indicative Development Approach, the council considers that the level of green open space and hard landscaped space is sufficient. This total area of usable open space is equal to that already provided for on site.</li> <li>• Comments from Bride Hall Investments are noted. No changes to SPD are proposed. The council wishes to see a comprehensive approach to the development of the site and has been advised by Colliers International in preparing the SPD. Work undertaken by Colliers in relation to viability suggests that the Indicative Development Approach is viable. The SPD does state at paragraph 6.2 that the council will work with landowners and other stakeholders and will consider other alternatives that achieve the</li> </ul>
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	<p>of an underground car park would be a significant intervention and would also require significant funds to be facilitated. Comments on the extent and approach to building a basement car park are also given and so whilst the aspiration for the preferred development approach is noted, Bride Hall Investments do not consider this to be a viable proposal due to the significant upfront cost. A more flexible approach is suggested based on a phased approach to development that would allow different land ownerships to be brought forward either independently or collectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sainsbury's (Indigo Planning)</b> – note that the SPD has only undertaken preliminary highway assessments and so would like to be kept fully informed of transport proposals to ensure that development does not have a detrimental impact on the operation of the Sainsbury's store.</li> <li>• <b>Howard Centre</b> (owned by Coal Pension Properties) – welcome the proposals for more residential space in the town centre and are pleased that the pedestrian desire line between Howard Centre and John Lewis is retained but consider that the Stonehills block could be reshaped to improve this view. Consider that there is adequate parking in the town centre and so question the value of underground car park given the cost and disruption during the build. Consider that A3, A4 and D2 uses should be encouraged to develop the evening/leisure economy in the town. Consider that the provision of additional retail floorspace may not have the desired effect due to the current overprovision of retail floorspace in the town centre and argue that the town centre footfall is not high enough to attract national retailers. Consider that the Howard Centre already has the capacity to deliver larger unit sizes.</li> </ul>	<p>objectives of the brief.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments from Sainsbury's are noted. No changes to SPD are proposed.</li> <li>• Comments from the Howard Centre are noted. The council's evidence base advises there is a need for larger retail units and whilst the Howard Centre may have the capacity to deliver such units these have not been provided to date. No changes to SPD are proposed.</li> </ul>
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Reservations are expressed at the retail capacity figures given the experiences of the Howard Centre in attracting retailers but welcome improvements to the town centre, particularly residential and evening economy/leisure improvements.

- **John Lewis Partnership (JLP)** – seek to ensure the continued vitality of their store and outline support for the continued vitality and viability of the town centre, however, JLP note that the floorspace should be appropriate to the demand and capacity of the existing town centre and not an open ended brief. JLP supports the aims of the SPD and the principles for guiding development. JLP is supportive, in principle, to the enhancement and development of the area and supports the aspiration for clawing back the high outflow of expenditure. The improvement of connectivity between the north and the town centre is also considered to help ensure the vitality of the town centre and ensure better access. The SPD allocates 5,801sqm of retail floorspace but the caveat that the council would also be willing to consider a larger scheme is not considered to be robust nor evidence based and given the size of the site it would not be favourable to allow larger developments. As the anchor retailer to the town centre, JLP would like to ensure continued visual presence and consider that scale and massing of the blocks shown in the Indicative Development Approach will detrimentally impact on strategic views and access towards the JLP store (particularly the Garden Block). Design Principle 4 does not ensure legible linkage with the JLP store and key nodes within the town centre and should be addressed. It is argued that certain aspects of the design are unfavourable with regards to accessibility and permeability. JLP do not consider that the proposed Stonehills block follows the street pattern and narrows the landscaped pedestrian route

- Comments from JLP are noted. Paragraph 6.1 has been revised to clarify that a larger development site (rather than a larger scale of development) would be considered as is set out in policy TCR 4 of the District Plan. A meeting has been held with JLP to discuss their comments. The council considers that the key view and desire line to the side entrance of the JLP store is identified in the SPD and is maintained in the Indicative Development Approach. The council has amended the design of the Garden Block to bring in the upper floors on the eastern side of the building which will further enable views to the JLP store. The road layout around the store has also been amended to enable shared space and an improved public realm around the store. Wigmores North is now realigned between John Lewis and the Island Block so that it is more centrally located and proposes a shared space zone. This will allow for more public realm between the two buildings. This is likely to result in the loss of the subway link and a surface level crossing between the Council offices and the John Lewis building would need to be introduced. With regard to the proposed basement car park – this design is at an indicative stage only but the SPD has been amended to confirm that this would allow for the re-provision of the JLP car parking spaces currently provided on site. Any future access to the store would be a detailed design matter that would be considered at planning application stage. Similarly the

	<p>restricting visibility from the entrance of the Howard Centre which is considered to be a key strategic access point. Furthermore, JLP consider that the neither the design principles or the indicative development approach protect the key strategic visual and pedestrian access between the town centre and the store. JLP consider the underground car park to be a sustainable and positive action for the area as it will improve the quality of the urban public realm. However, this essential pre-requisite is mentioned solely in the indicative section, not providing the certainty required by JLP. Furthermore, no indication of capacity or number of spaces is included. JLP have the intention that the underground car park will connect with the basement level of the store so as to provide ease of access. JLP consider that this design arrangement be included at para 3.28 as well as in Design Principle 2. JLP considers that the indicative development approach may have a detrimental impact on the public realm due to the loss of a large portion of Anniversary Gardens and that this need to be balanced against the quantum of development, as well as the additional area which could be created by the relocation of the car park. JLP recommend that additional work is undertake to express the nature and from of both formal and soft urban realm as this is critical to the character of the garden city and a valuable resource and should not be sacrificed. JLP note that the store is identified as a key unlisted building but considers the indicative design approach to be contrary to Design Principle 4 as the heritage asset would not be enhanced, nor would existing valued buildings be satisfactorily preserved. JLP consider that the appropriate respect is not given to the site pertaining to its significance in design terms and more work is required in this regard.</p>	<p>development approach set out in the SPD is indicative and not a detailed planning proposal. The council considers that John Lewis are referring to matters that are of a detailed nature and would be considered as part of any future planning application. The role of the SPD and the Design Principles it contains is to provide detailed guidance that the council would use to assess the any future development scheme. Design Principle 2 has been amended to specifically refer to the need to sustain and enhance the significance of the heritage asset. In addition Design Principle 3 refers to the creation of a high quality public realm. Whilst the store is noted as being identified as a key unlisted building in the Conservation Area Appraisal this is primarily due to the significance of the frontage facing onto the Campus. Comments relating to the Garden Block are noted. The design of the Garden Block has been revised to bring in the upper floor on the eastern side of the building. This will leave a ground floor diagonal element but with the upper floors set in it is not considered that this will compromise the grid structure prevalent in the town centre, and will continue to create an animated ground floor environment to support the central area of open space. No objections are raised by English Heritage in relation to the proposed Indicative Development Approach and its relationship with the John Lewis store.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Country Properties</b> – responded to the questionnaire and generally agree with the key considerations highlighted in the SPD, land use objectives for the site, the design principles and the idea of a basement car park.</li> <li>• <b>P&amp;A Lee Property Investments (Howardsgate &amp; Wigmores North)</b> – agree with the draft heritage and design policies but disagree with the proposals for the road access and circulation. Concerns raised include the number of road access and egress points, the proximity of the bus station and underground car park exits and the delay to traffic intending to exit Osborn Way to travel east. It is suggested that the road to the east of John Lewis is unnecessary and its elimination would create more open space, less conflict with pedestrians and one less access onto Bridge Road. Support is given for the additional retail, residential and open space objectives but disagree with the proposal for A4 drinking and bar uses on the basis that this would be inappropriate and unwise in what is intended to be a part residential area with high quality retail and A3 restaurants. It is argued that this type of evening economy should be centred at Campus West, away from residential uses and with its own access and parking. The idea of a basement car park is supported but the following points are also made; click and collect is not mentioned in the SPD but there will be the need for quick access by car to collect and depart. The specification for the car park should address this; again the point is made that the access arrangements to the car park may deter shoppers rather than encourage them and it is suggested that access/egress is via College Way south, under the council’s car park and Bridge Road. With regard to the indicative development approach it is suggested that the Island Block would be likely to fail as it has</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments from County Properties are noted. No changes to SPD are proposed.</li> <li>• Comments from P&amp;A Lee Property Investments are noted. The Town Centre North site includes the Bridge Road roundabout. In order to make use of this part of the site for development an alternative highway layout is promoted in the SPD. The council used Paramics simulation software to investigate the feasibility of the revised highway arrangement and worked with HCC Highways officers to ensure that the layout promoted would be acceptable. No objection to the principle of this arrangement is made by Hertfordshire County Council Highways. Detailed design of the access/egress arrangements would be considered at planning application stage. The SPD has been amended at paragraph 7.5 to advise that should an alternative access/egress arrangement were promoted, this would also be considered at planning application stage. It is considered that the road to the east of the John Lewis store is necessary to enable servicing to the John Lewis store, however, this has been amended to be shown as shared space for both pedestrians and vehicles. In relation to comments on the Island Block as stated above this has been amended to set it the top floor to ensure that it does not appear dominant and to enable sky views between the block and the John Lewis store. In relation to the comments on affordable housing the SPD supplements the Wewlyn Hatfield District Plan and cannot set policy. The need for the provision of affordable housing is however, set out at paragraph 7.9.</li> </ul>
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	<p>two/three dead frontages and too dominant in height. It is suggested that this area would be better allocated to open space and that an alternative would be to place development on the footprint of the Garden Block, the Stonehills Block and the open space. It is considered to be a mistake for the council not to have a specific policy for the type and mix of affordable housing for this town centre site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Spenhill Developments Ltd</b> – advise they are supportive of the aims and objectives of the SPD and have no objections to its content. However, Spen Hill consider that it is critical that in implementation of the SPD any development approved takes account of and does not compromise or prejudice the forthcoming redevelopment of Spen Hill's adjoining site at the Former Shredded Wheat Factory.</li> <li>• <b>Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)</b> – note that the HCA was formed in 2008 and took on titles and interests of the former Commission for New Towns. As such the HCA retains the ownership of land and highways throughout Welwyn Garden City although much of this has now been transferred to the council. Advise that the HCA are the national housing and regeneration agency governed by four statutory objectives. Beyond these objectives the HCA operating areas and local area teams work in partnership with local authorities, LEPS, the private and third sectors. Reference is made to the Local Investment Plan and the agreed objectives between the council and the HCA. Given the statutory objectives of the HCA, and the agreed Local Investment Plan, the area team are supportive of plans to regenerate new towns in Hertfordshire and welcomes proposals for both commercial and residential development in the draft SPD which should encourage new investment and increase the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments from Spenhill are noted. No changes to SPD are proposed.</li> <li>• Comments from the HCA are noted. No changes to SPD are proposed.</li> </ul>
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	<p>diversity of uses in the centre.</p> <p><b>Interest Groups/Other:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Arriva (The Shires &amp; Essex)</b> – advise that Bus Operators would not be keen to see changes as suggested in para 3.11 of the SPD regarding the movement of the Bus Station to Stonehills and changing the current Bus Station to Retail use but note that this suggestion has not been pursued. Arriva note that whilst the SPD acknowledges the importance of the Bus Station as a "focal point" and confirms the high level of use, none of the lines showing significant pedestrian flows start or finish in the bus station. Arriva advise that Bus Operators would not be averse in principle to the loss of the roundabout at the junction of Osborn Way and Bridge Road and Wigmores North, since this is not required for any turning movements, which can be done in the Bus Station. However it is essential that the new "T" junction of Osborn Way with Bridge Road at Waitrose is fully signalised and that buses are able to make turns in all directions at this junction. Furthermore, the phasing of those signals needs to ensure that no unnecessary delay is caused to buses departing from the Bus Station. Arriva express concern about the proposed entrance/exit to the basement car park which appears to be within 10 metres of the exit from the Bus Station in Osborn Way as this would appear to be a source of potential significant vehicle conflict and suggest an alternative access for cars to this basement be provided off Wigmores North.</li> <li>• <b>Woodland Trust</b> – consider more could be made of the role of Green Infrastructure and the contribution of trees in particular with reference to Design Principle 5 (Promoting a Sustainable Design) and reference is made to several key reports/guidance documents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments from Arriva are noted. As stated above in response to the comments from HCC Highways additional text has been added at paragraphs 7.6 and 8.4 to note the advice in relation to the bus interchange and the potential for wider highway improvements.</li> <li>• Comments from the Woodland Trust are noted. The SPD has been amended at paragraphs 6.30 and 6.31 to highlight the role of both existing trees, that the planting of new trees will be encouraged and the benefits that trees can</li> </ul>
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	<p>Under the heading of sustainability and paragraphs 8.9-8.12 the Trust would like to see the role of trees included in addition to the promotion of brown/green walls. Similarly the trust considers that paragraph 8.14 should refer to the role of trees in relation to the issue of flood risk. Finally the Trust highlight that there is no heading for health &amp; wellbeing or air quality and expect that some consideration of trees/urban design/ green infrastructure and its impact on health, wellbeing and air quality should be referenced in the SPD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Partnership Board (TCP)</b> – would like to see additional short term car parking and would like to see an element of free parking (as currently exists on Stonehills) kept within the site as this is attractive to shoppers. The TCP consider that the design should incorporate the new bus station and the taxi rank to ease congestion and that the new development area should be designed with the necessary security features to make users feel safe (as is achieved in the existing town centre). Whilst the open space would be reduced the TCP are supportive of development achieving a more enhanced open space and a scheme that would complement the existing retail offer in the town centre. The TCP consider that the design should incorporate as much additional space as possible for businesses and facilitates to encourage the evening and leisure economy. The need to mask service areas, ensure that building heights do not impair light levels/create draught corridors, allow green spaces to be protected and trees to grow as well as the need to ensure that the retail design is flexible enough to accommodate changes in use and size to meet future needs are all noted. The TCP support having more pedestrian walkways.</li> </ul>	<p>provide. In addition Design Principle 5 – Promote a Sustainable Design has been to refer to the planting of new trees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments from the WGC Town Centre Partnership Board are noted. The purpose of the SPD is to guide the future development of the Town Centre North development site – the bus station and taxi rank are outside of the development site and are outside the scope of the document. The SPD does, however, recognise the need to work alongside plans for the future improvements to the bus station being considered by Hertfordshire County Council.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Welwyn Hatfield Chamber of Commerce</b> – support the mix of retail and residential but are concerned at the associated inadequate opportunities for parking. Concern at Anniversary Gardens being halved is noted. The chamber would like to see the light and bright principles of Welwyn Garden City maintained and so would prefer 3 storey building heights. On street ground level parking would be desirable for traders and the use of shared space is supported. However, the pedestrianisation of Stonehills is not supported but a 20mph speed limit would be accepted and the idea of Stonehills becoming a one way route to enable traffic to pass through the pedestrianised area is suggested. The need for comprehensive development to deliver a basement car park is noted but as much on street car parking will disappear concern is raised that on street disabled parking should be maintained. The proposal to re-use the ornamental street furniture is considered to be somewhat second hand and it is suggested that the celebratory arch could provide an interesting gateway into the town in placed on the Gosling roundabout.</li> <li>• <b>Herts Gardens Trust</b> – advise that they are also commenting on behalf of Garden History Society. The Trust generally supports the key considerations, land use objectives, design principles, and the idea of a basement car park. The only comment raised in relation to the indicative development approach is that the position of the underground car park access is close to pedestrian crossing and the bus station which could cause problems.</li> <li>• <b>Welwyn Hatfield Cycle Forum</b> – oppose the plans in their current form due to the lack of consideration for cyclists and cycle movements. The forum considers that there is currently no effective north/south or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments from the WH Chamber of Commerce are noted. As stated above there are mixed views in relation to building heights. The council considers that development on the site should not exceed the height of the John Lewis store and this is set out in Design Principle 2. The Garden Block and the Island Block have been amended to set in their top floors to highlight the need to maintain an open and spacious feel and to enable 'sky views' between the upper floor of the block and the adjacent buildings surrounding the site. A shared space zone has been introduced between the John Lewis store and the Garden Block and Island Block. Comments in relation to the pedestrianisation of Stonehills are noted, however, the SPD cannot set speed limits in the town centre. The SPD demonstrates how additional parking could be provided through a basement car park, this would include provision for disabled drivers.</li> <li>• Comments from the Herts Garden Trust are noted. As stated above additional text has been added at paragraphs 7.6 and 8.4 to note the advice in relation to the bus interchange and the potential for wider highway improvements. No changes to the SPD are proposed.</li> <li>• Comments from the WH Cycle Forum are noted. A meeting has been held with members of the Welwyn Hatfield Cycle Forum to better understand some of the points raised in relation to</li> </ul>
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east/west cycle routes in Welwyn Garden City and that the development does nothing to change this. The forum considers that S106 payments from the proposed scheme could be used to create several suggested off road cycle routes.

- **Welwyn Garden City Society** – welcome and endorse the proposals for this site but question the shopping trends/retail assumptions. Note that the scheme is dependent on being built out as a single entity that lacks the potential for phasing primarily due to the basement car park. Consider that the number of spaces delivered is unlikely to justify the costs and the impacts that would result from such a car park. Note that whilst the link between the Howard Centre and John Lewis is identified there is no attempt to link more positively with Howardsgate to regenerate that area. Consider that the massing of the buildings should not exceed that of the adjoining buildings (John Lewis in particular) and there is the need to avoid an overpowering ‘canyoning’ effect of having buildings over three storeys overlooking pedestrian routes. The Society consider that the proposals should include housing which should provide a social mix rather than high cost private accommodation. Consider the redeveloped Stonehills block should have a frontage to the bus station and argue that office use at first/second floor in this location would also be beneficial. Note that the retail/commercial servicing to the blocks would either conflict with the basement car park or the pedestrian areas as servicing is likely to be at ground level. The revised traffic arrangements are considered to be confusing and the restricted junction at Bridge Road would

cycle access and the needs of cyclists. The points relating to pedestrian access have also been reviewed. The SPD has been amended to include additional text under heading 6.4 ‘Access, Circulation and Movement Issues’ and the Indicative Development Approach includes the proposal to accommodate a cycle lane on Bridge Road. The SPD cannot introduce speed restrictions in the town centre.

- Comments from the WGC Society are noted. As stated above this site was originally allocated in the 2005 Local Plan to accommodate 9,300sqm of additional retail floorspace. The SPD has been informed by the Council’s Retail and Town Centre Needs Assessment which advises that the council should be planning for approximately 5,000sqm of retail floorspace over the next 5 to 10 years. It is recognised that there are currently vacancies in the town centre, the council has taken account of the current economic circumstances is planning to meet future retail needs. The council wishes to see a comprehensive approach to the development of the site and has been advised by Colliers International in preparing the SPD. Development appraisals undertaken by Colliers confirm that the Indicative Development Approach is viable. Comments in relation to building heights are noted. Design Principle 2 states that no development should exceed the height of the John Lewis store and the Garden Block and the Island Block have both been amended to set in their top floors to highlight the need to maintain an open and spacious feel and to enable ‘sky views’ between the upper floor of the block and the adjacent buildings surrounding the site. The need for the provision of affordable housing

	<p>result in significant traffic movements. It is further considered that the access/egress to car park through a single point would create conflict and difficulties and it is suggested that there may be merit in replacing Hunters Bridge car park or at least improving the frontage onto the pedestrian route to Waitrose. Finally, due to the routing of the Campus roundabout, the Society are concerned at the creation of one way gyratory system via Parkway, Church Road and Osborne Way to access the basement car park and the associated significant environmental problems that would result from this traffic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Mid Valley Residents Association</b> – agree with the key considerations in the draft SPD but disagree with the land use objectives relating to additional retail and the evening economy whilst supporting residential development, opens space and events/activities. Comments on design relate to the use of high quality materials, limiting heights to 3 storey and the use of an imaginative design that reflects the garden city ethos. In terms of maximising the potential of the site it is suggested that development is reduced to two blocks with the area allocated for the garden block being used as open space and with two underground parking areas for private and service/delivery use. Further comments on design relate to the view that the proposed traffic layout conflicts directly with the stated objectives, creating an alternative contentious traffic flow; that the pedestrian access from any underground car park should to be logical; to eliminate or reduce size by half in all dimensions to proposed Garden Block; that the Bridge Road crossover for pedestrians should be underground and that the car park should be reduced in size as previously identified.</li></ul>	<p>is set out at paragraph 7.9.</p> <p>In relation to comments on the highway layout as stated above the SPD has been amended at paragraphs 7.5 to advise that the council and Hertfordshire County Council are willing to consider alternative junction proposals provided these do not result in a significant detrimental impact on the local highway network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comments from the Mid Valley Residents Association are noted. As stated above, this site is allocated for retail development and the council considers that three blocks are required to meet the retail needs of the borough. As stated above there are mixed views in relation to building heights. The council considers that development on the site should not exceed the height of the John Lewis store and this is set out in Design Principle 2. The Garden Block and the Island Block have been amended to set in their top floors to highlight the need to maintain an open and spacious feel and to enable ‘sky views’ between the upper floor of the block and the adjacent buildings surrounding the site. In relation to the highway layout as stated above the SPD has been amended at paragraphs 7.5 to advise that the council and Hertfordshire County Council are willing to consider alternative junction proposals provided these do not result in a significant detrimental impact on the local highway network.</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Welwyn Parish Council</b> – consider that the restricted right turn (except for buses) at Bridge Road will inconvenience residents of Welwyn travelling south into town centre and will result in vehicles travelling a considerable distance within Welwyn Garden City on roads that are already congested with consequential environmental costs.</li> <li>• <b>Sherrardspark Wood Wardens Society</b> – suggest that the open space appears to be too small, which will be claustrophobic and shaded from much of the day and suggest that the open green space is made larger.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments from Welwyn Parish Council are noted. As stated above the SPD has been amended at paragraphs 7.5 to advise that the council and Hertfordshire County Council are willing to consider alternative junction proposals provided these do not result in a significant detrimental impact on the local highway network.</li> <li>• Comments from Sherrardspark Wood Wardens Society are noted. This site is allocated for retail development. As stated above in relation to the Indicative Development Approach, the council considers that the level of green open space and hard landscaped space is sufficient. This total area of usable open space is equal to that already provided for on site.</li> </ul>
<p><b>vii) Strategic Environmental Assessment – Do you have any comments on the SEA that accompanies the draft SPD?</b></p>	<p>Of the 123 respondents 34 directly responded to this question. Set out below is a summary of key issues raised in relation to this question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural England welcomes the inclusion of SEA objective 4.6 which considers whether the SPD will protect and enhance biodiversity, taking into account the impacts of climate change which has been scoped back into the assessment.</li> <li>• HCC Archaeology comment that table 3 of Long Term Objective 4 should include the protection and enhancement of historic assets. This includes historic buildings as well as designated and as yet unidentified archaeological remains, parks and gardens etc. Improvements to the public realm, such as green infrastructure should consider the historic environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted. No amendments to SEA required</li> <li>• Noted. As is set out in Table 3 of the Dec 2013 SEA report, Objective 4 (Improving the Environment) is inclusive of objective 4.5 (will the plan, policy or proposal protect and enhance the borough’s character, sense of place and local distinctiveness, historical and cultural assets?) and the SEA considers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and policies that provide positive protection and enhancement of archaeological sites (including scheduled ancient monuments), conservation areas,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herts Biological Records Centre were unclear as to how the SEA can consider Long Term Objective 4 - Improving the Environment (enhanced open space) to be positive given that the formal garden area will be reduced by half and the roundabout open space lost completely. The net loss of greenspace has not been considered and so in these respects it can only be negative although it is acknowledged the effect of the proposals seeks to provide a high quality urban environment.</li> <li>• Comment noting that the area of greenspace is being reduced and the impact on drainage needs to be taken into account.</li> <li>• Comment suggesting that an indoor bowls facility should be included in one of the blocks to replace the facility that closed at Gosling. This would bring income and as long as there is adequate parking</li> </ul>	<p>historic settlement cores, listed buildings, parks and gardens, etc., including their setting, improving access and interpretation, and promotion of heritage-led regeneration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive design policies for built development that respect town character (including use of local materials/vernacular), for example where relevant to the 'garden city'.</li> <li>• Reassurance that development will be adapted to deal with extreme weather events.</li> <li>• Improvements to the public realm including green infrastructure, greenspace, tree planting/shading, safe walking and informal recreational areas, especially in more deprived neighbourhoods.</li> </ul> <p>No amendments to SEA required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted. The SEA Report sets out the justification for the SEA score in relation to Objective 4 (Improving the Environment) and in particular Objective 4.4 (will the plan, policy or proposal protect and enhance open space and landscape character retaining local distinctiveness?). Whilst the net loss of greenspace is not referred to (as the SPD is promoting replacement open space), the quality of the open space was considered. These comments have been considered in the final appraisal of the SPD through the SEA addendum.</li> <li>• Noted. SPD includes reference to drainage. No amendments to SEA required.</li> <li>• Noted. These comments have been considered in the final appraisal of the SPD through the SEA addendum and as noted above under land use objectives no changes to the SPD are proposed.</li> </ul>
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	<p>would not cause added strain to infrastructure. It would also bring the older generation into the town centre so helping the daytime and night-time economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment noting that the SEA devotes very little to the impact of cars and their apparent prioritisation and resultant pollution.</li> <li>• Comment noting that construction could take 2-3 years and the significant and possible long term impact that could result on the whole area.</li> <li>• Comment noting that every opportunity should be taken for new planting.</li> <li>• Comment that the failure to include active travel must be addressed.</li> <li>• Comment noting that there is an opportunity to create a new benchmark for the future.</li> <li>• Comment noting that the SEA is rubbish as the open space no enhanced but destroyed, that development will not protect the sites character and that the illustration accompanying the assessment is misleading as it shows green leaves which the scheme will remove.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted. SEA Framework does consider these issues (SEA objectives 4.2 and 4.3). No amendments to SEA required.</li> <li>• Noted. SEA report does consider temporary impacts. No amendments to SEA required.</li> <li>• Noted. SPD does include guidance on landscaping. No amendments to SEA required.</li> <li>• Noted. SEA Framework does consider these issues (SEA objectives 4.2 and 4.3). This has been considered as part of the revisions to the SPD. No amendments to SEA required.</li> <li>• Noted. No amendments to SEA required.</li> <li>• Noted. The SEA Report sets out the justification for the SEA score in relation to Objective 4 (Improving the Environment) and in particular Objective 4.4 (will the plan, policy or proposal protect and enhance open space and landscape character retaining local distinctiveness?). Whilst the net loss of greenspace is not referred to (as the SPD is promoting replacement open space), the quality of the open space was considered. These comments have been considered in the final appraisal of the SPD through the SEA addendum.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment stating that the SEA is very weak and tokenistic.</li> <li>• Comment noting that as all of the SEA conclusions are positives this shows little regard for upheaval and the impact of development plus end costs.</li> <li>• Comment noting that the SEA should consider additional noise pollution resulting from more shops.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted. No further comments given to explain why this view is held. No amendments to SEA required.</li> <li>• Noted. The SEA report does list the significant positive effects. Mixed and negligible effects were also found. Temporary effects were also considered. No amendments to SEA required.</li> <li>• Noted. Noise was considered as part of the SEA process under objective 4.4 (will the plan, policy or proposal protect and enhance open space and landscape character retaining local distinctiveness?) and the SEA considers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimisation of noise and light pollution from development.</li> </ul> Chapter 7 of the SPD (Other Planning Considerations) sets out how the issue of noise should be considered in relation to any future planning application on the site. No amendments to SEA required. </li> </ul>
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<p><b>viii) Consultation Feedback</b></p> <p><b>a) Did you find the consultation useful?</b></p> <p><b>b) How did you find out about the consultation – top 3 responses:</b></p> <p><b>c) What could we do to improve our consultation?</b></p>	<p>Of the 78 respondents who directly responded to this question the following breakdown is given:</p> <p>Yes: 65 No: 13 No Response: 45</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local Paper.</li> <li>2. Other (e.g. email via objective, word of mouth or via exhibition).</li> <li>3. Council Website.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appeal to a wider section of the public.</li> <li>• More staff at the public exhibition to answer questions.</li> <li>• A second exhibition.</li> <li>• Find out what people want to know earlier.</li> <li>• Include walking, cycling and disabled groups in preliminary meetings.</li> <li>• Questions are biased in favour of the scheme.</li> <li>• Options for tick boxes do not relate to proposals – allow approval but do not allow express opinion on intentions.</li> <li>• Advertise more widely.</li> <li>• Better publicity.</li> <li>• Inform residents within a 15mile radius via leaflets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consultation feedback is noted and will be considered in relation to future consultation events undertaken by the council's planning team.</li> </ul>
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