

Appendix B: Place Narrative

Welwyn Hatfield: where history keeps on being made...

It's where, in 1558, a young Elizabeth became a queen; where de Havilland and his fellow pioneers blazed a trail in the world of aviation; and where Ebenezer Howard – founding father of the global garden city movement – lived and died. It's a past rich in inspiration, excellence, and innovation. And for Welwyn Hatfield, there is so much more to come.

People have always wanted to live here, and that's not going to change – it's something to celebrate, embracing the challenges that presents. Our abundance of trees and green spaces belies our proximity to London, and we understand how important this sense of space and closeness to nature is to our communities. Future generations will increasingly value the physical and mental health benefits of living, working and spending time in such a clean and attractive space. We will make sure they can.

Like everywhere, our town and village centres must adapt and evolve to new ways of working and shopping, of travel and leisure. But we have every reason to be fearless as we take these opportunities – steeped in our learning from growing garden cities and vibrant new towns, we have a culture of planning for change in a way that protects and promotes all that is most treasured by our communities.

Home to industry leaders in research, science and logistics, our potential for economic growth is phenomenal. Our pioneering spirit runs deep. As we create ever-stronger links between our forward-thinking businesses and world-class centres of further education to forge exciting career pathways, we can attract, develop, and retain the very best in the world.

We may never return to Howard's ideal of a self-contained place where people can find everything they want or need, if only because the world has become so much smaller, and our outlook so much broader, since his time. But our talented, passionate people, and our diverse, engaged communities, can ensure we fully realise our huge potential as the heart of Hertfordshire, a perfect blend of town and country.

Nobody can say what our world will look like in 20 or 30 years' time, but one thing we can be sure of – Welwyn Hatfield will continue to produce the pioneers of the future, and be a place where history will keep on being made.