

Appendix A

Proposed response to Hertsmere Local Plan Issues and Options consultation

Thank you for consulting Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council on the Issues and Options relating to Hertsmere Borough Council's new Local plan.

Objectively assessed housing need

The consultation report identifies an objectively assessed need of approximately 9000 homes over the period 2019 to 2034. This figure is presented as a starting point for exploring potential growth options. Welwyn Hatfield welcomes this approach and supports Hertsmere seeking to meet its own growth needs in full.

Welwyn Hatfield notes that the Government has published its new proposed approach to identifying local housing needs. Welwyn Hatfield supports Hertsmere revisiting their assessment of their objectively assessed housing need once the Government has issued its finalised methodology and this forms part of national policy and guidance.

Unmet need in Welwyn Hatfield

Welwyn Hatfield has identified through the preparation of its Local Plan (currently subject to examination) that it is unable to meet its full objectively assessed housing need. In line with the NPPF and the Localism Act Welwyn Hatfield therefore has a duty to establish whether any neighbouring authorities have capacity to meet its unmet need. The consultation report does not make any reference to the possibility of Hertsmere meeting the unmet need of neighbouring authorities. In the Memorandum of Understanding between Welwyn Hatfield and Hertsmere, signed in May 2017, it was agreed that both authorities would work together to explore where opportunities exist to accommodate any of the Welwyn Hatfield shortfall against its objectively assessed need both within and beyond the plan period. Welwyn Hatfield therefore formally requests that as Hertsmere proceed with preparation of a new plan that it give consideration to whether it is in a position to meet some or all of Welwyn Hatfield's unmet housing needs.

Gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople needs

The consultation report states that the Local Plan will need to deliver other types of housing including sufficient pitches for gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople. We note the report states further work is needed to be carried out to establish the number of new pitches required in the Local Plan. Welwyn Hatfield considers that this work should be carried out as a priority so that it can appropriately inform the emerging Plan. In line with the agreement in the Memorandum of Understanding between the two authorities, both authorities have agreed that neither requires assistance from the other to help meet existing assessed needs at the current time. Both authorities have agreed that the matter of transit provision **and** the need for residential pitches to meet need arising from the South Mimms transit site should continue to be discussed between the authorities and recognised in the respective evidence base going forward. Welwyn Hatfield would therefore invite Hertsmere to engage with Welwyn Hatfield in line with the Duty to Cooperate on this matter which has cross boundary implications with Welwyn Hatfield. As the South Mimms transit site serves the whole county, Welwyn Hatfield would also urge Hertsmere to engage with all Hertfordshire districts and the County Council as a key service provider on the matter of transit and other provision.

Approaches for planning future growth

Welwyn Hatfield notes the five development approaches that are identified in the consultation document. It is considered that approaches 2 and 5 have most potential to impact Welwyn Hatfield.

Approach 2 proposes growth through new garden suburbs with a number of potential locations for development identified around Potters Bar. Welwyn Hatfield has no specific comments about these locations at this stage. Careful consideration will however need to be given to the infrastructure implications of growth already proposed in the vicinity of Potters Bar. Particular regard should be had to proposed allocations in the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan at Little Heath, Brookmans Park, Welham Green and Cuffley. Welwyn Hatfield supports continued cooperation with Hertsmere Borough Council and other infrastructure providers such as Hertfordshire County Council to ensure that proposed growth in the Potters Bar area is supported by the necessary infrastructure including education facilities, health facilities and community and sporting facilities.

Approach 5 proposes a new garden village west of the A1(M) on land bisected by the M25. It is stated that the village would be planned for 4,000 new homes with the scope to increase by at least 50% in the future. The consultation document does not identify a boundary for the proposed village rather it sets out a general area of search. It is noted that part of the area for search falls within Welwyn Hatfield. The proposal for a new garden village would involve substantial new development close to, or within the boundary of this borough and therefore has significant implications for Welwyn Hatfield. Welwyn Hatfield requests that a meeting with Hertsmere Borough Council be held as a priority to discuss the new garden village proposal and to help ensure that the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate relating to such a strategic proposal are discharged.

Welwyn Hatfield is not in a position to comment in detail on the proposed new garden village at this stage. However we consider it necessary to flag up a number of known planning constraints which relate to the area of search. These include North Mymms Park, which is a Grade I Listed Building, North Mymms Park which is an unregistered park and garden identified in Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, and a number of high value ecological sites including Redwell Wood, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and a number of other designated wildlife sites.

Notwithstanding the above points, Welwyn Hatfield wishes to make clear that if a proposal did come forward on land which falls partly within Welwyn Hatfield that any housing delivered on this land would be expected to contribute to Welwyn Hatfield's own housing need.

Duty to Co-operate

The consultation document raises a number of matters which are considered to fall within the Duty to Cooperate. Welwyn Hatfield welcomes further discussion with Hertsmere on these matters in the near future, in particular regarding:

- whether Hertsmere has capacity to meet some or all of Welwyn Hatfield's unmet housing need
- the infrastructure implications of development proposed in the Potters Bar area (both within Hertsmere and Welwyn Hatfield)
- Provision for Gypsies and Travellers including transit provision

- the wider infrastructure implications of the level of proposed growth across both Welwyn Hatfield and Hertsmere including identifying required infrastructure and addressing funding and delivery challenges
- the proposal for a new garden village in the north of Hertsmere which could involve substantial new development close to, or within the boundary of, Welwyn Hatfield.